

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:25:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223508110

Documents (100)

1. [*Sri Lanka 's 'Black July' riots, 25 years later*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

2. [*Sri Lankan military accused of shelling village in 'safe zone,' killing 67*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

3. [*Suicide Bomb Kills at Least 28 in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

4. [*TAMIL FILM STARS PROTEST KILLINGS IN SRI LANKA*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

5. [*Civilian casualties: Setting the record straight*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

6. [UPI NewsTrack TopNews](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

7. [Promising development in Lanka in 2007 - Minister](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

8. [Sri Lanka AT the UN Security Council](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

9. [STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUES CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEET ON SRI LANKA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

10. [Why Bangkok attracts all kinds of criminals Analysts say Thai capital is popular for its graft and ease of access](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

11. [*Suicide blast kills 12 Lanka cops*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

12. [*Northern Sri Lankan Hospital Shelled, Nine Killed*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

13. [*IN BRIEF*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

14. [*Exhibition postponed in Sri Lanka after blasts*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

15. [*Two explosions in Sri Lanka , 23 dead*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

16. [Bomb blast in Sri Lanka 's capital kills 4, wounds 20, military says](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

17. [Dehiwala train blast kills eight](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

18. [Suicide bomber was a 'missing person' - Government](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

19. [US seeks democracy and HR in Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

20. [Daring rescue of civilians launched](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

21. [Country situation bleak as predicted](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

22. [Eleven killed in Sri Lanka bomb ahead of key local polls](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

23. [4th Ld Explosion kills 10, injures 20 including minister in southern Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

24. [UN concerned about staff, civilians caught in Sri Lanka conflict =](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

25. [ROUNDUP: 35 killed in fighting in northern Sri Lanka after polls](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

26. [ROUNDUP: Clashes kill 35 as rebel splinter group wins Sri Lanka vote](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

27. [Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1000 GMT, Feb. 9](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

28. [Headlines in major Indian newspapers](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

29. [Sri Lanka moves in on rebel HQ, vows to take Tiger supremo](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

30. [One arrested in Dehiwala railway blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

31. [CID says female suspect consumed cyanide](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

32. [POLITICS TN LANKA ACTORS FAST TWO CHENNAI](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

33. [Prabhakaran will get fair trial in India : US envoy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

34. [MEDDLERS FORGET own incivility](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

35. [Tamil Nadu boils over Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

36. [Sri Lanka allegedly shelled 'safe zone,' killed 67](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

37. [9 dead, over 100 injured in suicide attack in Sri Lanka capital](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

38. [Rebels attack army base in northern Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

39. [Trapped between cornered Tigers and hostile army](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

40. [Suicide bomber kills 28 in Sri Lanka war zone; Suspected Tamil Tiger blows herself up while being frisked by soldiers at refugee camp checkpoint](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

41. [New GA for Vavuniya](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

42. [*Trapped between cornered Tigers and hostile army*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

43. [*Sri Lanka allegedly shelled 'safe zone,' killed 67*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

44. [*Rebels attack army base in northern Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

45. [*Trapped between cornered Tigers and hostile army*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

46. [*UN DEPLORES SUICIDE ATTACK IN NORTHERN SRI LANKA*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

47. [*Sri Lanka : Rebels attack army base in north*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

48. [Sri Lankan Government Must Act Now to Protect 300,000 Displaced](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

49. [The crawl to terminate Sea Tigers](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

50. [Another 281 civilians rescued from terror clutches with navy assistance - Mullaitivu](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

51. [99 suspects arrested after Akuressa blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

52. [RISING CIVILIAN DEATH TOLL IN SRI LANKAN CONFLICT](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

53. [*Needed, a diplomatic offensive*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

54. [*45 WOUNDED IN PARCEL BOMB BLAST IN COLOMBO*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

55. [*World - Amnesty accuses Sri Lankan fighters of risking civilian lives*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

56. [*Eastern election can lead to new discontents*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

57. [*12 Police Constables killed in suicide blast*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

58. [*Firm resolve to defeat terrorism, evolve political solution*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

59. [*Rajiv Gandhi statue damaged in Chennai*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

60. [*Action in Sri Lanka Letters to the Editor*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

61. [*Civilians butchered in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

62. [*Sri Lanka slams OHCHR*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

63. [SRI LANKA : NO LESSONS LEARNT FROM 'BLACK JULY' OF 1983](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

64. [Four killed as Tamil Tiger rebels fire at bus: military](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

65. ['There should be an unconditional ceasefire by both sides'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

66. [Navy rescues civilian captives in Mullaitivu](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

67. [Safety of Wanni civilians: A priority for the Government](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

68. [43 to 45 wounded in Colombo market blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

69. [*Amnesty Condemns Female Suicide Attack In Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

70. [*Violence Escalates at Gospel for Asia's Sri Lanka Bible College*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

71. [*Top US Senators worried over Sri Lanka violence*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

72. [*Accomplice in Rajiv Gandhi assassination seeks release Latest bid for freedom comes soon after late Indian PM's daughter visits her in jail*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

73. [*Sri Lanka minister escapes assassination bid*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

74. [*Lanka model for healthcare: PM*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

75. [*Female suicide bomber kills 24 in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

76. [*Female suicide bomber kills 24 in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

77. [*Female suicide bomber kills 24 in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

78. [*Not just freedom, but freedom with peace*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

79. [UNSG: Groping in New Moon darkness](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

80. [Why talk about the past? in Sri Lanka SRI LANKA : No Lessons Learnt From 'Black July' of 1984](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

81. [TIGER PLANES SHOT DOWN](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

82. [SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT MUST ACT NOW TO PROTECT 300,000 DISPLACED](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

83. ['Film Corp director' behind Colombo massacres held](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

84. [Civilians slowing Sri Lanka advance: defence chief](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

85. [Will the Colombians silently move to the victor?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

86. [Bringing solace to women and their families- Women's Empowerment Minister](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

87. [Tigers killed one civilian fleeing fighting: Sri Lanka army](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

88. [A Tiger rattling of chains](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

89. [Contenders vie for high stakes at EP election](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

90. [PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

91. [At Least 17 Civilians Killed In Rebel Firing, Says Sri Lankan Military](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

92. [THE WEEK AHEAD FEB.8-FEB.14](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

93. [Sri Lankan rebel bases bombed as 30 die in clashes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

94. [World Report](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

95. [Civilians die as bomb rocks shopping mall](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

96. [AFP World News Summary](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

97. [Sri Lankan loyalties in flux Murder of contractor's family highlights danger for residents who defy government factions](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

98. [30 rebel bunkers destroyed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

99. [Obituary: AT Moorthy: A Sri Lankan diplomat, he resigned his post over Tamil conflict](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

100. [*Sri Lankan celebrates 60th anniversary as bus attack kills 12 civilians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

Sri Lanka's 'Black July' riots, 25 years later

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

July 24, 2008 Thursday

National Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A12

Length: 657 words

Byline: National Post

Body

Twenty-five years ago this week, as many as 1,000 Sri Lankan Tamils were killed in what came to be known as the "Black July" riots. Majority Sinhalese nationalists, including Buddhist monks, went door-to-door in Sri Lankan cities looking for Tamils (who are predominately Hindu). The Sinhalese mobs dragged their victims into the street and either beat them to death with clubs and pipes or placed gasoline-soaked tires around their necks and set them alight, then stood back and watched as they burned alive. Almost all those killed were innocent civilians, including many women and children. Few, if any, were Tamil Tiger terrorists, whose ambush killing of 13 government soldiers set off the carnage on July 23, 1983.

Thousands of Tamil homes and shops were also looted, then burned to the ground. More than half of the nearly 250,000 Tamils now in Canada -- the largest expatriate Sri Lankan Tamil population in the world -- came here as part of the exodus that followed these infamous pogroms.

The friction between Tamil and Sinhalese residents of the island once known as Ceylon goes back centuries. During British rule, Tamils held most of the senior indigenous positions in commerce, the professions and the bureaucracy. This is partly the result of their greater willingness than their Sinhalese countrymen to accept missionary education and British institutions, and partly because of British unwillingness to integrate Buddhists into the upper echelons of society and imperial government.

After independence in 1948, however, Sinhalese majority governments implemented a form of reverse discrimination known as the "policy of standardization," which made Sinhalese the sole official language and brought most businesses under state control, then reserved most major government jobs and contracts for the Sinhalese.

The result was a marginalization of Sri Lanka's 3.2 million Tamils and a rise in Tamil militancy, particularly after the bloody mayhem of July, 1983. Over time, the Tamil Tigers developed into a combined insurgent army and terrorist group based in the northern and eastern parts of the country, which the Tigers seek to transform into an independent Tamil homeland known as "Tamil Eelam."

During the country's on-and-off quarter-century-long civil war, nearly 70,000 people have died, many of them Tamils. Reports claim Sri Lankan security agents routinely resort to torture of Tamil prisoners. In other cases, suspected Tigers routinely have "disappeared" while awaiting trial.

Sri Lanka 's 'Black July' riots, 25 years later

Yet despite all this, most of the world has little sympathy for the Tamil cause. And the reason is simple: The **Tamil Tigers** are just as brutal -- and in some cases, far more brutal -- than the Sri Lankan government itself.

Over the years, the Tigers have executed dozens of suicide bombings and terrorist attacks. (A Tiger suicide bomber killed Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, for instance, while a Tiger assassin murdered Sri Lankan president Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993.) The Tigers' other crimes include blocking reconstruction aid to the tsunami-ravaged east coast, abducting Sinhalese civilians and forcibly recruiting child soldiers from Tamil families.

Sadly, the Tigers' thuggish mindset has infected the Canadian Tamil community as well: Tiger front organizations have extorted millions of dollars from Tamil businesses in Toronto and other cities, often threatening harm to relatives back in Sri Lanka if business owners fail to comply. Given all this, Stephen Harper's government was entirely correct to put the Tigers -- and its front organizations -- on Canada's list of outlawed terrorist organizations.

Too many Tamils -- both here and in Sri Lanka -- equate support for political independence with support for the Tigers' brutal methods. As a result, the world has forgotten the many genuinely horrible injustices wrought upon the Tamils. This is the fate of any group that puts its faith in terrorism instead of politics.

Load-Date: July 24, 2008

End of Document

Sri Lankan military accused of shelling village in 'safe zone,' killing 67

The Canadian Press(CP)
January 22, 2009 Thursday

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Section: FOREIGN GENERAL NEWS

Length: 637 words

Byline: RAVI NESSMAN, AP

Body

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka _ The Sri Lankan military shelled a village and a makeshift hospital inside a government-declared "safe zone" for civilians in the north Thursday, killing at least 30 people and injuring scores of others, local health officials said.

The military denied hitting the hospital and said it was taking precautions to protect civilians. Health officials said at least 67 civilians were killed in shelling since Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the military announced the capture of a building the rebels had used as their main operations centre in their fight against the advancing army.

With the government's offensive against the **Tamil Tigers** escalating, international aid groups are increasingly concerned about the safety of the hundreds of thousands of civilians reportedly living inside the shrinking pocket of rebel-held territory in the northeast.

Human rights groups have accused the rebels of forcing civilians to stay in the area to act as human shields _ a charge the rebels deny.

In an effort to coax civilians to leave, the government dropped leaflets throughout the region Wednesday announcing the establishment of a "safe zone" on the edge of rebel-held territory that it would not attack. Civilians there would then be transferred across the front lines, the military said.

But an hour after the leaflets were dropped, two shells hit a makeshift hospital located in a school in Vallipunam, a village inside the "safe zone," said Kandasamy Tharmakulasingham, a local health official. No one was injured in that attack, he told The Associated Press.

On Thursday morning, the hospital and the nearby village were hit again in an attack so devastating that health officials had difficulty counting the bodies because many of them were dismembered, he said.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharaja, the district's top health official, said the bodies of at least 30 people killed in the attack _ five of them hospital patients _ were brought to the morgue. Another 117 people _ 66 of them **women** and children _ were injured, he said.

"There are a lot of bodies elsewhere, but they have not collected those bodies," he said, adding that the shelling was ongoing.

Sri Lankan military accused of shelling village in 'safe zone,' killing 67

The shells came from the government-controlled area near the town of Oddusuddan, he said.

At least 37 other civilians were killed in shelling Tuesday and Wednesday, bringing the three-day death toll to 67, he said. That figure only included the bodies brought to the morgue, he said. Many others were so badly torn apart, relatives buried them immediately, he said.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara denied the military hit a hospital or a civilian village. "We have demarcated the safety zone, and we didn't fire into that area," he said.

Independent accounts of the fighting are not available because journalists are barred from the war zone.

Meanwhile, government troops captured what appeared to be the rebels' main operations centre, where they found detailed maps of troop deployments throughout the region, Nanayakkara said. The rebels appeared to have set up a new centre elsewhere before the army moved in, he said.

In recent months, the army has pushed the rebels out of much of the territory they once controlled in the north, capturing the group's administrative capital of Kilinochchi and forcing the group into a broad retreat.

Police in Malaysia said they were on the lookout for the rebels' leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, following speculation he might run to Southeast Asia, national police chief Musa Hassan was quoted as telling the New Straits Times newspaper.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 to establish an independent state for minority Tamils, who have suffered decades of marginalization at the hands of successive governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority.

More than 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Load-Date: January 23, 2009

Suicide Bomb Kills at Least 28 in Sri Lanka

The New York Times
February 10, 2009 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

Length: 609 words

Byline: By THOMAS FULLER

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

A **female** suicide bomber hiding among refugees fleeing the war zone in northern Sri Lanka killed at least 20 soldiers and 8 civilians at a checkpoint on Monday, the government said.

A string of victories in recent weeks raised hopes that more than two decades of intermittent civil war between government forces and the rebels known as the **Tamil Tigers** may soon be over. But the attack raised the prospect that the Tigers would revert to their hallmark tactics of guerrilla warfare and suicide attacks if they lose control of their final patch of territory -- about 60 square miles south of the Jaffna Peninsula.

The attack, the first of its magnitude in a month, also left dozens wounded. It took place in the northern district of Mullaitivu in an area that the government said had been wrested from the rebels.

The bomber joined civilians being searched by government soldiers after they fled the war zone in the north of the country, where government forces have taken several rebel strongholds and pushed the rebel into a wedge. The authorities have urged noncombatants to flee into areas under the government's control, but tens of thousands of civilians -- perhaps as many as 250,000 -- may be trapped.

On Monday, some 800 civilians had crossed the front lines and were being searched by soldiers before being sent to camps farther afield. The bomber detonated her explosives as she was being searched, said Gen. Udaya Nanayakkara, a spokesman for the Sri Lankan military. Sri Lankan television showed images of bodies, including that of a child, being carried away from the site of the attack.

General Nanayakkara said that the military would now change its procedures for processing civilians fleeing the fighting. "We'll have to check civilians one by one," he said. "It's going to take more time."

The government is pressing ahead with its campaign against the **Tamil Tigers**, which the United States and the European Union list as a terrorist group. Since its founding in 1976, the organization has been fighting for a separate state for the Tamil minority and has been held responsible for about 200 suicide attacks.

The government announced Monday that its fighter jets attacked what it described as a rebel naval facility. On Saturday, 15 to 20 rebels were killed when they tried to cross into government-held territory, the Defense Ministry said.

Suicide Bomb Kills at Least 28 in Sri Lanka

But the offensive is hamstrung by the presence of the civilians caught in the war zone, some of which is thick jungle. The government says it has been encouraged by the thousands of civilians who have left rebel-held territory, and says it is providing camps for all those displaced by the conflict.

But Monday's attack exposed both the danger for civilians and the difficulty for the military in separating fighters from refugees.

Sri Lanka's president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, predicted in a speech to the nation last week that within "a few days we will decisively defeat the terrorist force that many repeatedly kept saying was invincible."

But analysts say that defeating the rebels -- let alone quelling subsequent guerrilla activity -- could take weeks or months.

"I don't see this being conclusively wrapped up in the next few days," said Alan Keenan, an analyst for the International Crisis Group who is based in Colombo. "My sense is that some remnants will survive and that we have weeks to go."

Meanwhile, Colombo, the capital, is under heavy military and police surveillance, with soldiers patrolling the streets and vehicles routinely stopped at dozens of sandbagged checkpoints. Residents are constantly reminded to be vigilant and to report anything suspicious.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: Soldiers and medical workers carried a child hurt Monday by a bombing in northern Sri Lanka.(PHOTOGRAPH BY REUTERS)

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

End of Document

TAMIL FILM STARS PROTEST KILLINGS IN SRI LANKA

Indo-Asian News Service

November 1, 2008 Saturday 5:59 PM EST

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Length: 558 words

Byline: Alkesh Sharma Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Chennai, Nov. 01 -- (IANS) Leading names of the Tamil film industry, including superstars Rajnikant and Kamal Hasan, joined in a day-long hunger strike here Saturday to demand an immediate end to the killings of innocent ethnic minority civilians in Sri Lanka.

Rajnikant was scathing in his attack on the Sri Lankan government.

"Sri Lanka is spilling the blood of innocent women, children and the aged. It can never progress as the curses of the weak will destroy its very existence. The regime that could not put down the brave Tamils for over 25 years ought to know that dead Tamils' bodies are being sown and not buried. Immediate stoppage of the murders of the innocent Tamils ... is the need of the hour," Rajnikant said in an emotional speech.

Kamal Haasan said: "It is the entire sane world's responsibility to end the mass slaughter of innocent Tamils (in Sri Lanka). Freedom fighters of every nation are always referred to as terrorists till they succeed in their cause.

"When the very existence of an entire race turns into an unanswerable question, usually extremism and violence are its by unavoidable repartees," Haasan said, apparently alluding to the banned Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

While most speakers kept local political issues out of their speeches, there were different views of the expression of support to the Tamils of the island nation.

Actor-turned-politician Vijaykant told reporters separately at the protest venue that the state government was using the burning issue to divert people's attention from pressing issues such as shortfall in electricity and rising prices.

"The human chain protest and MPs' threats to resign from parliament sponsored by the ruling DMK were mere sideshows to divert attention from shortfall in electricity and price rise.

"While these programmes produced zero results locally or in our neighbouring island, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa used the opportunity to send a brother (Senior Advisor Basil Rajapaksa) to India for dialogue and another to shop for arms from Pakistan," Vijaykant said.

AIADMK legislator and actor S.Ve. Shekhar condemned violence from both the warring sides in Sri Lanka - the armed forces and the LTTE.

TAMIL FILM STARS PROTEST KILLINGS IN SRI LANKA

"Just as we fault the Sri Lankan government, we must also condemn **LTTE** leader Prabhakaran for the violence. Both should eschew violent confrontation and sort out the matter through peaceful negotiations," Shekhar said.

Pro-**LTTE** political leaders Thol Thirumavalavan and Tamil National Movement leader P. Nedumaran arrived at the venue towards the end of the protest with three Tamil MPs from Sri Lanka in tow.

Over Rs.4.5 million was collected from over 500 participants for relief works for the affected people in Sri Lanka.

But for the sole exception of veteran actress Manorama, the meeting was dominated by actors including 'superstars' Rajnikant, Kamal Haasan, Vijaykanth and Sathya Raj. All participants were dressed in black.

The hunger strike was organised by the South Indian Artistes' Association in its premises in a quiet southern part of the city.

General public were discouraged from entering the venue by policemen and private security guards. For the benefit of fans, huge television screens were placed outside the venue and the proceedings were projected live.

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Load-Date: November 1, 2008

Civilian casualties: Setting the record straight

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

October 26, 2008 Sunday 2:28 PM EST

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Length: 1383 words

Byline: Report from the Sri Lanka Sunday Observer brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 26 -- The Sri Lanka Air Force hit an **LTTE** camp in the jungles of Mullaitivu in August 2006. It maintains that those killed were cadres undergoing military training, and testimony of injured girls who subsequently found their way to areas under Government control backs up photographic and intelligence data supplied by the Sri Lanka Air Force. However, the **LTTE** claimed that the young **women** were attending a residential first aid course. Proof of this hasn't been established, and the reputation of the organisation for the recruitment of girls as suicide bombers as well as fighting cadres must surely be taken into account.

One of the most common fabrications being spread about by those working against the Sri Lanka is that a large number of civilians are being killed in air strikes. Nobody likes conflict, and it's easy to conjure up images of death and destruction being rained down from the air - we've all seen plenty of war films. It isn't just fiction, of course. Air strikes have a thoroughly ugly past, and people tend to believe these stories without feeling the need to ask for supporting evidence. But they simply aren't true.

Just this week, a British Member of Parliament called for an urgent debate on the conflict in Sri Lanka because of his concern about what he described as Government bombing of areas in the North and East of the country.' Barry Gardiner, representing a constituency that is home to a considerable number of Tamil expatriates, demonstrated how uninformed he is - the East hasn't seen violence on anything other than a very local scale for over a year now. And he was almost equally wrong about the North.

The **LTTE** will have fed Barry Gardiner this disinformation in the hope that he would agitate for pressure to be exerted on the Government to capitulate to the separatist demands of the organisation.

It is but one example of the kind. Foreign observers are regularly to be heard pontificating on this topic, spurred on by local propagandists.

The Peace Secretariat has been collecting data on all accusations of civilian deaths and injuries made in Tamil newspapers and websites, including from a number of publications that are known to be intimately associated with the **LTTE**. While this opens up the possibility of abuse by keenly encouraging the generation of false claims, it also gives a clear indication of the maximum possible extent of any issues there might be with air operations.

The findings are highly instructive. In the last two and a half years, the Sri Lanka Air Force has carried out hundreds of strikes against **LTTE** targets. But Tamil media sources have reported the demise of no more than 106 civilians, while only another 281 civilians are professed to have sustained injuries. This covers almost the entire period in which the Government has been responding to **LTTE** actions - from June 2006 to October 2008.

Civilian casualties: Setting the record straight

Suicide cadres

It should be noted that all but 45 of these 106 alleged deaths occurred in a single incident at the beginning of the confrontations.

The Sri Lanka Air Force hit an LTTE camp in the jungles of Mullaitivu in August 2006. It maintains that those killed were cadres undergoing military training, and testimony of injured girls who subsequently found their way to areas under Government control backs up photographic and intelligence data supplied by the Sri Lanka Air Force.

However, the LTTE claimed that the young women were attending a residential first aid course. Proof of this hasn't been established, and the reputation of the organisation for the recruitment of girls as suicide bombers as well as fighting cadres must surely be taken into account.

The Sri Lanka Air Force can therefore be said to do a good job. Their efforts to safeguard the civilian population compare favourably with those of other countries, including military forces much better equipped than ours.

Human Rights Watch has carried out analyses of the air strikes of the United States Air Force in both Afghanistan and Iraq. They show a far more worrying record.

In Afghanistan, two studies have been conducted. The first looked at the six months from October 2001 to March 2002. Human Rights Watch found evidence of an absolute minimum of 152 civilian deaths, which it put down to the fairly widespread use of cluster munitions. These release a large number of smaller bombs, a proportion of which don't explode on impact and therefore become landmines. The United States Air Force dropped a total of 1,228 cluster munitions containing around 248,056 bombs in the period studied, and Human Rights Watch says that a conservative estimate of the number that wouldn't have exploded on impact is around 5%, which would leave more than 12,400 landmines. Human Rights Watch noted that unexploded bombs from cluster munitions dropped by the United States Air Force and its allies in the first Gulf War eventually killed a total of 1,600 civilians.

Unverified

The second report on Afghanistan looked at the two and a quarter years from May 2006 to July 2008. Human Rights Watch says that the United States Air Force killed at least 556 civilians in this period. It blamed this very high number of deaths on the tendency of the United States Army to call in air strikes on unverified targets in support of ground troops to avoid casualties on their own side. In Iraq, Human Rights Watch didn't attempt to quantify the number of civilians who were killed in air strikes. However, the British medical journal The Lancet published an article suggesting that a total of 601,027 Iraqis died because of the conflict in the three and a quarter years from March 2003 to June 2006, of which 13% or over 78,000 people in air strikes. Human Rights Watch did say that the majority of the civilian deaths in air strikes occurred as the United States Air Force targeted Iraqi leaders, unwisely relying on intercepts of satellite phones that could only narrow down a location to the nearest 100 metres. All 50 of the acknowledged hits on Iraqi leaders failed, and Human Rights Watch claimed that most Iraqis they questioned were convinced that the targets weren't even present at the time of the attacks.

Restraint

We dwell on these experiences because they demonstrate the restraint with which the Sri Lankan Government is prosecuting its air operations. Tactics that have led to significant numbers of civilian deaths in other theatres of war have not been employed here. It should be remembered that the methodology used by the Peace Secretariat in collecting these figures is rather more prone to overestimation than that used by Human Rights Watch, especially given the well known propaganda capacity of the LTTE.

Civilian deaths and injuries are a truly appalling prospect, and it is the duty of the Government to ensure that they do not occur under any circumstances.

This effort by the Peace Secretariat to quantify the instances in which such things may have taken place supplements the routine work done by the Sri Lanka Air Force to monitor the results of its strikes and take action to ensure the safety of our people.

Civilian casualties: Setting the record straight

This has also born fruit. Since fighting intensified in the North, only five allegations of civilian deaths in air strikes have been made in the three months from July 2008.

Interestingly, Sri Lankan NGOs who are known for their hostility to the Government admit that there have been very few civilian deaths in this phase of the conflict. Kumar Rupesinghe, head of the Anti-War Movement, was quoted in an interview in The Island this week admiring the introduction of what he called precision bombing to the Sri Lanka Air Force. Planes have been flying very low, so they have been able to study the maps and be very precise about their targets, he said. If the Anti-War Movement chief ideologue admits that the Government is succeeding in its attempts to safeguard civilians, others must surely be ready to accept it.

The Government welcomes accurate and relevant criticisms of its policies and is very happy to engage with those who can assist it to achieve its objectives of looking after its people. Such healthy dialogue is however at risk of being overshadowed by the current plague of fabrications that are attaching themselves to our record.

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Load-Date: October 26, 2008

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UPI NewsTrack TopNews

UPI

January 5, 2008 Saturday 6:13 PM EST

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Length: 594 words

Dateline: WASHINGTON, Jan. 5

Body

Sri Lankan violence kills 26 **Tamil Tigers**

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Jan. 5 (UPI) -- Sri Lankan government forces engaged in battles with **Tamil Tigers** Saturday and reported killing at least 26 of the rebels and wounding several more.

The Defense Ministry said that after members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam attacked security forces in the country's Mannar District, the ensuing counter-attack by federal forces killed 10 militants, the Press Trust of India reported.

Meanwhile, government troops attacked a pair of Tamil Tiger bunkers in the same district Saturday and killed eight rebels.

A military response to a rebel artillery attack, also in Mannar, left two more rebels dead and another eight wounded.

Two other attacks Saturday on Tamil Tiger bunkers in the region killed six additional rebels, the Press Trust of India said.

The recent violence left eight military troops injured.

Battles between the Sri Lankan government have escalated since the end of a 2002 ceasefire.

Death toll from Filipino floods at seven

BUTUAN CITY, Philippines, Jan. 5 (UPI) -- A series of flash floods on the Filipino island of Mindanao have left seven people dead, a report said Saturday.

The Office of Civil Defense said it found the bodies of four males and three **females** in the northeastern and northern portions of the island, all suspected victims of the recent flash floods, The Sunday Manila Times reported.

A 2-year-old girl, a grandchild of one of the victims, has been missing since the deadly floods struck the island this week.

Red Cross officials also have reported an 86-year-old man missing, while hundreds of families across the island are struggling in the wake of the devastating floods.

The region had seen increased rainfall since December, leading to scores of area farms becoming submerged, the Manila Times said.

Government officials are assessing the extent of the damage caused by the rainfall and flash floods, while a disaster team attempts to assist those ravaged by the storm.

Nepalese school bus accident kills five

KATHMANDU, Nepal, Jan. 5 (UPI) -- Five people were killed Saturday and another 40 injured when a school bus veered off a road and crashed in Nepal.

Among the five people killed in the fatal crash in the district of Nuwakot was a 12-year-old student. Most of those injured also were children traveling back home from a school trip, the Kantipur news service said.

Hospital sources said some of the injured students were in critical condition, leading to concerns the death toll may rise.

The bus reportedly was on its way back to Kathmandu when it veered off the road for undetermined reasons. Some sources said the bus had been attempting to navigate a sharp turn when it skidded off the road and crashed.

The news service said those injured were rescued from the vehicle by local police.

British Columbia rocked by earthquakes

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Jan. 5 (UPI) -- British Columbia was rocked Saturday by three strong earthquakes that struck nearly 143 miles off the coast of the Canadian province.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. said the first earthquake to hit the region registered a 5.6 magnitude on the Richter scale, while the two ensuing quakes both registered a magnitude of 6.5.

The three earthquakes all took place at a depth of more than six miles in the same spot off the Canadian coast.

While the earthquakes were felt by residents in several British Columbia locations, there were no reports of damage.

The CBC said the Alaska and West Coast Tsunami Warning Center was not expecting a tsunami to be created by the powerful temblors.

Load-Date: January 6, 2008

Promising development in Lanka in 2007 - Minister

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 19, 2008 Monday 2:39 PM EST

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Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 19 -- Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama said most macro economic indicators have shown promising development in 2007.

"The economy grew by seven per cent after achieving 7.7 per cent growth in 2006. The average rate of unemployment reached its lowest ever recorded level of 6.0 per cent, while the per capita income rose further to \$1US.617. For us trade has proved to be as important as aid.

The developed economies must continue to assist us as the European Union provides us the GSP + facility," he said. The Minister said this year marks the ADB's 41st anniversary.

"Over the past four decades, the Asian region achieved remarkable development, with acceleration of economic growth reduction of unemployment and poverty and with several countries reaching high standards of living. There is no doubt that ADB has made a considerable contribution to this achievement," he said.

Sri Lanka is pleased that the negotiations of ADF X have been successfully concluded. "While we should welcome a significantly higher amount of resources under ADF X, it is of great importance that we make a special effort to obtain the maximum benefits out of these enhanced resources.

ADF X would provide a chance to ADB to make a significant impact towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. I do hope that we can improve the living standards of the people in the region, particularly of the poor with a more equitable distribution of the benefits of growth.

Recent events have underscored the need to link infrastructure development with rapid agricultural growth. Agriculture is the mainstay of the poor in the region," Dr. Amunugama said.

ADB has been a continuous supporter of Sri Lanka's development efforts for more than four decades. In 2007, ADB committed loans amounting to \$ 445 million for the development of the Port, Education and SME sector. I must thank ADB for providing grant assistance under JFPR facility for improvement of the quality of life of rural poor through a livelihood development program linked to improvement of rural access roads," he said.

"Sri Lanka is now in the third year of the Government's 10 year development programme, with the objective of achieving faster and all-inclusive growth. I am pleased to mention that we have been making steady progress towards this objective, despite unprecedented challenges, i.e. the escalation of oil and food prices and terrorist threats," the Minister said.

Promising development in Lanka in 2007 - Minister

"As a newly emerging middle income country, we have recognised the need to tap other sources of funding to obtain resources needed for our accelerated infrastructure development drive. We were able to successfully issue a debut international bond issue of UD\$ 500 million in 2007, a landmark deal in a difficult year. We are also strengthening our relationships with regional trading partners, which is in line with ADB's strategy of promoting regional integration.

We have no doubt that ADB would continue to play its prominent role as a key development partner in Sri Lanka throughout the present development decade and beyond."

"The most recent statistical survey results of our Census and Statistics Department have revealed encouraging developments in reducing poverty in the country. The results show a considerable decline in poverty. Head Count ratio to 15.2 per cent in 2006 from 29 per cent in 1995".

Troops regain Palampiddy Colombo, May 19 -- Troops on Saturday afternoon regained Palampiddy, a major **LTTE** stronghold in Mannar.

The Army faced severe resistance by the terrorists as they reached Palampiddy, about 8 km north of Madhu, which the Forces captured recently.

Palampiddy is strategically important as it connects Vidattaltivu in northwest, Madhu in south, Mullikumam in southeast and Nedunkal in northeast.

"This will cripple administrative work and supplies to the terrorists," military sources said.

Troops have so far recovered 13 **LTTE** dead bodies, 11 T-56 weapons, one MPMG (Multi Purpose Machine Gun) and four communication sets from the area.

Troops after consolidating their positions in and around Palampiddy are now conducting search and clear operations.

Sri Lanka Air Force MI-24 helicopter gunships launched a close air support mission for advancing troops on the Mannar front yesterday morning targeting a gathering of **LTTE** cadres in the Andankulama area. Air Force spokesperson Wing Commander Andrew Wjesooriya told that the targeted location was the same one targeted in Saturday's mission.

He said that the air sorties were carried out around 11.50 am as the Army reported a fresh enemy gathering at the tactical operation centre located 3km northwards from the Army's present defence line.

The exact damage to the terrorists has to be ascertained, he added. Meanwhile, troops engaged in multi-pronged offensive operation in Wannu theatre inflicted considerable damages to the enemy in clashes occurred in Vavuniya and Welioya fronts yesterday, May 16. On Vavuniya front, troops attacked a group of **LTTE** terrorists after observing their movements. Four **LTTE** cadres were killed in Navathkulam.

Meanwhile, troops engaged in a clearing operation in general area Periyamadu uncovered seven bodies of slain **LTTE** cadres who were killed in fighting erupted on Thursday.

Six **female** bodies and one male body were among them. In addition, five T-56 weapons, one Multi Purpose Machine Gun (MPMG) and one T-81 weapon were also among the items found.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Promising development in Lanka in 2007 - Minister

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Sri Lanka AT the UN Security Council

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 902 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 3 -- The war in the Wanni is reaching a fairly decisive stage and the LTTE has never in the two decade long history of the civil conflict, been closer to total defeat, if we define defeat to be a loss of all territory and its command and control structures. The Sri Lankan government and its military want a total victory or surrender in much the same way that nearly twenty years ago, the 2nd armed JVP uprising was totally crushed. Subsequently a new generation of leaders from that group took it totally into the democratic political mainstream.

However the significant difference between the JVP uprising and the LTTE conflict is that the LTTE controlled territory and civil populations, for an extended period of time, something the JVP was never able to do. This fact has made the LTTE conflict to require the use of conventional warfare weapons and tactics, including heavy artillery and tactical air strikes. Doing so in population centers places at risk unarmed civilians who get caught in the cross fire. International Humanitarian Law (IHL) mandates that parties to a conflict, whether a sovereign state or an armed group, militarily engage with due regard for the safety of civilians. Generally in the long history of Sri Lanka's conflict, civilians in the East and especially in the North, led by community leaders and local government officials have been adapt at fleeing the scenes of fighting, of course in the process becoming displaced and losing all their property. However in this, the ongoing battles for Puthkuddirippu (PTK), there are civilians' trapped or rather held hostage by the LTTE, unable to get out and they are at serious risk. The serious risk, of very high civilian casualties in the final battles for the Wanni, has drawn the attention of the world once again to Sri Lanka's long running conflict. This has been aided in no small measure by the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora scattered in the West and perhaps more importantly the large Tamil population of Tamil Nadu. More importantly because Tamil Nadu is politically significant in India and India is politically significant in the world and to the United States as an economic partner. Sri Lanka for the first time in the history of its over two decades long conflict got mentioned in the UN Security Council (UNSC), that apex body of multilateral global diplomacy, which ultimately even sanctions direct interventions. Now the UNSC involvement was as at the lowest level that it could possibly occur, an informal briefing to the Members of the Council by John Holms, UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, on the situation in the Wanni, following his recent visit to Sri Lanka. That both John Holms and the Sri Lankan government was able to put behind them the incident in which he was called a "terrorist" on a prior occasion by a Cabinet Minister, has been correctly made a thing of the past. However the fact is that Sri Lanka's conflict has made it on to the radar screen or drawn the attention of UN Security Council and we will now be fighting our war and securing our peace, in the global spotlight. The current round of fighting has seen strenuous efforts by the Sri Lankan State to reduce the international gaze on Sri Lanka and these efforts have focused on managing media access to the conflict zone and reducing the role of INGOs' in the North and East. But the global interest is there due to the issues at stake. That interest will not wane. We do ourselves a disservice by acting as if we have something to hide. Arguably should the world have seen some reports on the Sri Lankan situation in the global media, they may not have wanted an individual briefing by a UN undersecretary at the level of Member States in the UN Security

Sri Lanka AT the UN Security Council

Council. By preventing lower level international involvement, at the level of the media and the NGOs we may well have succeeded in pushing the issue up to the apex structures of the global community of nations, of which Sri Lanka is a proud and sovereign member. But with that status of an independent, democratic, sovereign State Party, comes the responsibility to adhere to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the rules of war. The Sri Lankan military has been well trained in IHL and correctly make the point that "collateral damage" the euphemism used for civilian and non military casualties and losses in conflict, has been considerably less in Sri Lanka than in many other theatres of conflict. However it is not only in the conflict alone that IHL applies, but also in the treatment of civilians and the displaced. This means that the IDP situation in Vavuniya is also a serious concern as demonstrated by John Holms' visit to that town. The issues of IDP welfare, the care and treatment of the injured, family reunification, the protection of **women**, and the education of the displaced children are all issues which should be dealt with in the utmost humane manner and with the good faith best efforts that the Sri Lankan State can muster. Then we do justice to ourselves. There are genuine security concerns of **LTE** infiltration along with the IDPs' but that screening and the resultant documentation should be done as quickly as possible so that these the most vulnerable victims of the war can proceed to rebuild their shattered lives to even a semblance of near normalcy. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUES CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEET ON SRI LANKA

US Fed News

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Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs issued the following Consular Information Sheet:

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Sri Lanka is a presidential parliamentary democracy with a developing economy. Civil war and terrorism have seriously disrupted the country since 1983. Incidents of violence against military personnel and civilians have increased sharply in recent months. On January 16, 2008, the Government formally withdrew from the Ceasefire Agreement they signed with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***) in 2002. Despite the armed insurgency, Sri Lanka's beaches, hill country, and archeological sites continue to attract thousands of visitors each year from around the world. The Asian Tsunami on December 26, 2004 caused severe damage and loss of life to several coastal areas of eastern, southern, and southwestern Sri Lanka. Most affected resorts have completely recovered. The capital city of Colombo, the Cultural Triangle (Kandy, Anuradhapura, and Polonnaruwa), and many southern beach towns have good tourist facilities. Read the Department of State Background Notes on Sri Lanka for additional information.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: A passport and onward/return ticket and proof of sufficient funds are required. A no-cost visitor visa, valid for 30 days, will be granted to tourists at the time of entry into Sri Lanka. Business travelers are required to have a visa prior to arrival. Individuals traveling to Sri Lanka for purposes other than tourism (i.e. volunteering or working) must obtain an entry visa from the nearest Sri Lankan Embassy or Consulate before their arrival in Sri Lanka. Visitors staying more than 30 days for any purpose must pay residency visa fees. Travelers need yellow fever and cholera immunizations if they are arriving from an infected area. Sri Lankan law requires all foreign guests in private households to register in person at the nearest local police station. Individuals who stay in private households without registering may be temporarily detained for questioning. This requirement does not apply to individuals staying in hotels or guesthouses.

Specific inquiries should be addressed to the Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 2148 Wyoming Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008, telephone (202) 483-4025 through 26, fax numbers (202) 232-7181, e-mail address:consular@slembassyusa.org, the Sri Lankan Consulate General in Los Angeles at 3250 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1405, Los Angeles, CA 90010, telephone (213) 387-0210, or the U.N. Mission in New York City, telephone (212) 986-7040. There are several honorary Sri Lankan consuls general and consuls in the United States. They can be located at the Sri Lankan Embassy web site. Visit the Embassy of Sri Lanka web site at <http://www.slembassyusa.org> for the most current visa information. Information about dual nationality or the prevention of international child abduction can be found on our web site. For further information about customs regulations, please read our Customs Information sheet.

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SAFETY AND SECURITY: The Department of State urges American citizens to carefully evaluate the risks of travel to Sri Lanka and specifically warns Americans against travel to northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka. Since fighting resumed in mid-2006, approximately 5,000 persons have been killed. Since 1997, the State Department has included the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on its list of foreign terrorist organizations. Terrorist activities such as suicide bombings and targeted assassinations in the capital city of Colombo and other areas of the country remain a serious threat. The LTTE and other groups have targeted Sri Lankan security forces, government officials, and civilians. With military operations against the LTTE in northern Sri Lanka escalating, the U.S. Embassy expects that retaliation by the LTTE in the form of assassinations and bombings in the Colombo area and other parts of the country will continue and likely increase.

Throughout its history, the LTTE have engaged in numerous terrorist acts, including suicide bombings at political rallies, government buildings, and major economic targets. Civilians, in addition to military personnel and government officials, have been targeted. On February 3, 2008, 14 civilians were killed and approximately 100 were injured when a suicide attacker detonated an explosive device inside Colombo's main railway station. The same day, seven were injured when a grenade was detonated in the Dehiwala Zoo. On February 2, 2008, a bomb on a bus going from Kandy to Anuradhapura exploded in Dambulla, killing 20 civilians and injuring over 50. On January 16, 2008, a terrorist attack against civilians traveling on a bus in Uva Province killed at least 24 people, including many women and children, and more than 60 people were injured. On January 8, 2008 a fragmentation mine (claymore) explosion fatally wounded a government minister in the vicinity of Ja-Ela, on the main road between Colombo and Sri Lanka's International Airport. The blast claimed two lives and injured more than 10 security personnel and civilians. On January 1, 2008, a Tamil opposition Member of Parliament was shot dead while worshipping in a Hindu temple in Colombo. In November 2007, a bomb exploded in a clothing store at Nugegoda Junction, a busy suburb of Colombo, killing at least 17 and injuring more than 30 civilians. Although there is no indication that American citizens were targeted in these attacks, and none were injured, there is a heightened risk of American citizens being victims of violence by being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The conflict has impacted economic facilities as well. Earlier in the year, Sri Lanka's International Airport briefly curtailed operations following an attack by LTTE fixed-wing aircraft on March 26, 2007 against the adjacent Katunayake Air Force Base. Subsequently, on April 29, 2007, LTTE aircraft attacked two oil facilities in the Colombo area. In response, Sri Lanka's International Airport was closed from 10:30 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. On July 1, 2007, the airport resumed 24-hour operations. LTTE activity has also taken place in the vicinity of Colombo's harbor and port. In February 2007, Sri Lankan forces reported sinking LTTE boats as they attempted to enter Colombo.

The Department of State strongly advises American tourists to avoid military bases and vehicles and VIP security convoys. In December 2006, the LTTE attacked the motorcade of Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa in downtown Colombo. In April 2006, a female suicide bomber attacked the Commander of the Sri Lankan Army at army headquarters in Colombo, killing several members of his staff. Americans are also strongly advised to avoid political rallies and other mass gatherings, and to limit their exposure to government buildings if possible.

In light of attacks against civilian buses and trains, American citizens are strongly cautioned against traveling by bus or train in Sri Lanka. U.S. Government personnel are currently prohibited from using these modes of transportation.

Non-Sri Lankan citizens of Tamil heritage have occasionally been detained during security operations. U.S. citizens of any ethnic heritage are encouraged to keep their passports with them at all times. In the event of a terrorist attack, Americans should monitor local radio and television, seek cover away from windows, and return to their homes or hotels when it is safe to do so. In the event of LTTE air attacks, Americans are advised to remain in their homes or hotels away from windows during air attacks to avoid falling shrapnel or bullets. If traveling, individuals should find a safe location in a building as soon as possible. The Government of Sri Lanka has periodically imposed curfews in Colombo; Americans should strictly observe curfew regulations and monitor local radio and television. As security forces increase their vigilance, travelers in Colombo are often the subject of searches by the police. U.S. citizens should expect frequent delays in travel due to the deteriorating security situation in Sri Lanka. American citizens should comply with instructions from the security forces. Americans are

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strongly advised against taking photographs of Sri Lankan military bases, foreign missions in Sri Lanka and government buildings, which could be a violation of the law under current security restrictions in the country.

Tourists should be aware that the LTTE has the capability to operate in several national parks in the North and East of Sri Lanka. In October 2007, the LTTE attacked a Sri Lankan army camp in Yala National Wildlife Sanctuary, located in southeastern Sri Lanka, killing six soldiers and wounding three others. The incident took place in a tourist area of the wildlife park, but foreigners were not the object of the attack and none were injured. However, the incident highlights the prevailing risk to non-combatants of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

American citizens are warned against travel to northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka. Americans are strongly advised not to travel north or east of a line from Puttalam on the west coast through Anaradhapura in the central north to Polonnuruwa, Bibile, and Pottuvil on the east coast. While the government has effectively controlled the eastern part of the country since July 2007, security there is not yet assured. Some LTTE members and larger numbers of armed paramilitary members are active in the area, leading to instability and incidents of violence. Americans are particularly warned against travel to LTTE-controlled areas in the north, where ongoing conflict between government and LTTE forces poses severe hazards. Roads are substandard and areas recently affected by the conflict may contain both marked and unmarked mine fields, making travel there very dangerous. Police, medical and other emergency help is severely limited or unavailable. Communications within the eastern areas are also limited, with limited cell phone accessibility and very limited landline telephone access. The U.S. Embassy may not be able to provide consular services in a timely manner to American citizens who travel to the North and East. Official travel by U.S. Government personnel in the North and East is restricted, and unofficial travel is prohibited. Americans should consider their personal security foremost before considering traveling or working in northern or eastern Sri Lanka.

For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs' web site at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts, including the Worldwide Caution, can be found. Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada, or for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll-line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State's pamphlet A Safe Trip Abroad.

CRIME: While Sri Lanka has a high crime rate, relatively few incidents have been directed against the American community residing in Colombo. Most of the violent crimes occur within the local community and involve people who know each other, although violent crime directed at foreigners is not unheard of. Routine petty crime, especially theft of personal property and pick pocketing, is not uncommon if the traveler does not take appropriate safeguards. Street hustlers or "touts" are common around hotels, shopping centers and tourist sites. Incidents of credit card fraud are increasing, and travelers should consider paying in cash, whenever possible, and should carefully review billing statements to ensure that purchases displayed on the statements are accurate. Brawls in nightclubs and bars are not uncommon and sometimes involve foreigners.

INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, in addition to reporting to local police, please contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for assistance. The Embassy/Consulate staff can, for example, assist you to find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and explain how funds could be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed.

See our information on Victims of Crime: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1748.html.

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MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Medical facilities outside Colombo are limited. The U.S. Embassy maintains a list of private physicians who may be consulted. Medical supplies are uneven; travelers should carry any special medications with them. There are six large hospitals in the Colombo area, including three with emergency trauma service- Asiri Hospital, Apollo Hospital, and the government-run General Hospital. Serious medical problems may require evacuation to the United States or to the nearest country where adequate medical facilities or treatment is available, usually Thailand or Singapore. Neither Thailand nor Singapore requires American citizens to have an entry visa.

Several mosquito-borne diseases, including chikungunya, dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis and malaria, are present in Sri Lanka. Adequate mosquito protection is strongly advised.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the CDC's web site at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad consult the World Health Organization's (WHO) web site at <http://www.who.int/en>. Further health information for travelers is available at <http://www.who.int/ith/en>.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: The Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and whether it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. Please see our information on medical insurance overseas: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1470.html.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning Sri Lanka is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance. Vehicular traffic moves on the left (British style). Traffic in Colombo is very congested. Narrow two-lane highways, overloaded trucks, dangerously-driven buses and a variety of conveyances on the road, ranging from ox carts and bicycles to new four-wheel-drive jeeps, make driving a challenge and dangerous. Unexpected road blocks and one-way streets are common and may not be clearly marked. Many visitors hire cars and drivers for long trips through the country. Individuals choosing to hire three-wheeled vehicles should negotiate prices beforehand to avoid confrontations. Please refer to our Road Safety page for more information. Visit the web site of Sri Lanka's national tourist office and national authority responsible for road safety at <http://www.lanka.net>.

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: As there is no direct commercial air service between the United States and Sri Lanka, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed Sri Lanka's Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards. For more information, travelers may visit the FAA's web site at http://www.faa.gov/safety/programs_initiatives/oversight/iasa.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Sri Lanka recognizes dual nationality in some cases. For further information, please contact the Sri Lankan Embassy in Washington DC, the Consulate General in Los Angeles, or the U.N. Mission in New York City. Please see our Customs Information: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1468.html.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Sri Lanka's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Sri Lanka are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime, prosecutable in the United States. Please see our information on Criminal Penalties: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1467.html.

STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUES CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEET ON SRI LANKA

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: For information see our Office of Children's Issues web pages on inter-country adoption and international parental child abduction.

REGISTRATION/EMBASSY LOCATION: Americans living or traveling in Sri Lanka are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy through the State Department's travel registration web site so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security within Sri Lanka.

The U.S. Embassy is located at 210 Galle Road, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka. The Embassy's telephone number during normal business hours Monday through Friday is (94) (11) 249 8500. The after-hours emergency telephone number is (94) (11) 249 8888. The Consular Section fax number is (94) (11)-249 8590. The Embassy's Internet address is <http://colombo.usembassy.gov/>. The Consular Section has a specific email address dedicated to American Citizens Services at ColomboACS@state.gov. The general email address for the consular section is consularcolombo@state.gov. The Embassy in Colombo also covers the Republic of Maldives.

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Load-Date: February 16, 2008

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Why Bangkok attracts all kinds of criminals; Analysts say Thai capital is popular for its graft and ease of access

The Straits Times (Singapore)

March 10, 2008 Monday

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Section: ASIA - SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Length: 682 words

Byline: Nirmal Ghosh, Thailand Correspondent

Body

BANGKOK - THE arrest last Thursday of the 'Merchant of Death' Viktor Bout in Bangkok has again underlined the popularity of Thailand as a meeting place for people of his ilk.

He had arrived at the Thai capital to meet arms buyers he thought represented the Colombian rebel group FARC.

In this case things were not all they seemed. The FARC buyers were actually US DEA operatives, and he was arrested at the end of a long and elaborate sting operation.

But the fact remains that Bangkok was the chosen venue for the meeting, and the man wanted by dozens of governments across the world deemed it safe to travel there.

Since the days of 'bikini killer' Charles Sobhraj - convicted for murdering two women in Thailand in 1976, and now in his 60s serving time in a Kathmandu jail - Thailand has been a popular place for rebels and criminals of various hues, from gangsters to mercenaries, from psychopaths to revolutionaries.

In Bangkok, partisans can pose as backpackers, and wealthy underworld lords can get their rest and recreation secure in the knowledge that there are avenues of escape if things get too hot.

Bangkok is a logistics centre and air hub, there is widespread corruption, there are many ways to get out of the country, and it is a centre for counterfeit currency and fake passports, say analysts familiar with security issues and intelligence circles.

'You won't find people like this meeting in Singapore. In Hong Kong they will be up against the powerful local Chinese. In India though it is a big country, it is difficult to keep anything secret, people notice and talk,' said one analyst who asked not to be named.

'Thailand is a laissez faire country with many land and sea borders. For a price you can do a deal. So long as you don't touch the locals or harm the country, it's a haven.'

Many security analysts surmise that is the reason professional international terrorists have not struck in Bangkok. If they ever did, that would put an end to the easy times.

The list of organisations and individuals who therefore frequent Bangkok is long.

Why Bangkok attracts all kinds of criminals Analysts say Thai capital is popular for its graft and ease of access

One case in particular offers a possible clue to how corruption helps.

In 2000, the Indian gangster Chhota Rajan, who had split with his erstwhile partner, the don of Mumbai's underworld Dawood Ibrahim, now believed to be in Pakistan or Dubai, was wounded by hired gunmen - in Bangkok.

From the fourth floor of the private Samitivej hospital, Rajan escaped by climbing out of his window using knotted bed sheets.

The following investigation did little to clear the air.

Allegations flew that he had drugged his police guards, had bribed a police officer with 25 million baht (\$1S.1 million) to set up the escape, and a team of mountaineers had helped him with ropes and pulleys.

Bribery allegations came to nothing, but nine police officers did get fired.

Also in 2000, the Thai authorities discovered that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were building a mini-submarine in a yard in Phuket.

The footprints of the LTTE, involved in one of the world's most brutal civil wars against the Sri Lankan government for decades, are said to be common in Thailand, whose Andaman coast is not far from the Tiger's naval base at Mullaitivu.

In 2003, the Thai authorities arrested an LTTE operative and deported him to Sri Lanka.

In September last year, it was even believed by many including the Sri Lankan government, that the LTTE's chief arms procurer known as Kumaran Padmanadan, or KP, had been arrested in Thailand.

That turned out not to have been the case. Sources say KP, who goes by multiple identities and passports, controls a multimillion dollar arms budget and is also wanted in India, was perhaps tipped off and managed to evade arrest.

That he was in Thailand seems plausible; he is said to have a Thai wife and Thai citizenship.

In a comment written after a visit to Thailand, Indian security affairs analyst Ashok Mehta, a retired general, wrote: 'The Thai authorities are reluctant to admit the presence of the LTTE on their soil, even less offend the Tigers and invite reprisals in a tourist-flourishing economy.'

nirmal@sph.com.sg

Load-Date: March 9, 2008

Suicide blast kills 12 Lanka cops

Hindustan Times

June 16, 2008 Monday 4:25 PM EST

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Length: 349 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, June 16 -- A suspected **LTTE** suicide bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up in front of a heavily guarded police complex in the strategically located Vavuniya town about 250km north of Colombo on Monday morning, killing 12 police personnel and injuring more than 20.

Among those killed were three **women** police constables. Four civilians including a school-going girl were also injured in the blast. The blast occurred at about 7.30 in the morning in front of the police complex, which houses the offices of the deputy inspector general and senior superintendent of police of the Vavuniya district.

"The blast occurred near the entrance to the police compound. Several policemen were coming out of the complex at that time and were on their way to report for their daily duties. Many were getting in as well. While the complex is heavily guarded, it also opens on to the main road, which cuts through Vavuniya town making it a very busy street," military spokesperson Udaya Nanayakkara told HT. He added that the bomber was aiming at maximum casualties.

Once the suicide bomber reached the entrance, he braked and triggered the explosion literally in the middle of a crowd of police personnel; most did not have a chance to escape the impact. The Media Centre for National Security (MCNS) said that the injured were taken to the general hospitals in Vavuniya and adjoining Anuradhapura. Nine police personnel died on the spot while three more died on way to the nearest hospital.

Vavuniya district and town are considered to be of strategic importance as they connect the north - where the **LTTE** and the country's armed forces are locked in battle - and the southern parts of Sri Lanka. The way to many of the main battle fronts, like Mannar, cuts through Vavuniya.

This is the second time in about 30 days that a suspected **LTTE** suicide bomber has targeted the police. In the middle of May, in a similar attack, a motorcycle-borne cadre had rammed himself into a parked bus packed with policemen, killing several personnel.

The Hindustan Times is provided through HT Syndication, New Delhi.

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Load-Date: June 16, 2008

Suicide blast kills 12 Lanka cops

End of Document

Northern Sri Lankan Hospital Shelled, Nine Killed

RTT News (United States)

February 2, 2009 Monday

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Length: 371 words

Body

(RTTNews) - A hospital in Sri Lanka's northern Vanni region partly controlled by Tamil Tiger rebels was struck by three artillery shells Sunday killing more than nine persons and injuring 20 others, media reports said.

A spokeswoman from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Monday Puthukkudiyiruppu Hospital in the Mullaitivu district, with over 500 in-patients, some of them still waiting to be transferred to the government-controlled area for more better treatment, was directly hit two times between 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. (0930 GMT to 1030 GMT), and a third shelling occurred at about 10 p.m. (1630 GMT) hitting a ward of women and children.

"Nine persons were killed and 20 others injured as the kitchen, the church and the children's ward of the hospital were hit by the shelling," she said as government troops and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were engaged in fierce battles in the area.

She said the ICRC had no idea where the shelling came from and called on both warring parties to respect international humanitarian law and ensure safe evacuation of the patients to government controlled areas.

"We're shocked that the hospital was hit ... Wounded and sick people, medical personnel and medical facilities are all protected by international humanitarian law. Under no circumstance may they be directly attacked," Paul Castella, head of the Colombo delegation of the ICRC, was quoted in a statement as saying.

ICRC staff are present in the hospital and, together with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS), continue to support the Ministry of Health staff caring for the injured and sick there, said the statement.

The LTTE is now confined to a small jungle area in Mullaitivu as 95 percent of its territories in the north and east have been captured by the troops since July 2006.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of majority Sinhalese-dominated governments, the LTTE has been fighting for an independent Tamil homeland in the north and east for more than two decades. More than 70,000 persons were killed so far in one of Asia's longest civil wars.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010

Northern Sri Lankan Hospital Shelled, Nine Killed

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IN BRIEF

The Australian

September 3, 2008 Wednesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 226 words

Body

Mortgage relief

LONDON: British Prime Minister Gordon Brown unveiled plans yesterday to spend pound stg. 1 billion (\$2.11billion) reinvigorating the country's ailing housing market, which is suffering its worst crash since the early 1990s. The measures will target first-time buyers and families at risk of having their homes repossessed. Under the scheme, first-time buyers with an annual household income of less than pound stg. 60,000 will be entitled to a free five-year loan worth 30 per cent of the home's value. In some cases, the Government has promised to buy homes from mortgage companies and rent them back to struggling families at affordable prices.

Tigers tamed

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan government forces have captured the key town and **Tamil Tigers** bastion of Mallavi in the rebel-held north of the island, the Defence Ministry said yesterday.

Peak-hour bombs

BAGHDAD: Two separate roadside bombs targeting police patrols in Baghdad killed four people and wounded 17, including **women** and children, during morning rush-hour yesterday, police said.

Lips sealed

LONDON: Mick Jagger's lips have secured a permanent place in London's Victoria & Albert Museum after the institution snapped up the Rolling Stones' famous tongue and lips logo at a US auction for \$108,000. The image, created by John Pasche in 1970, was partly inspired by the shape of Jagger's mouth.

Load-Date: September 2, 2008

Exhibition postponed in Sri Lanka after blasts

Xinhua General News Service

February 4, 2008 Monday 1:17 AM EST

Copyright 2008 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Science & Technology

Length: 225 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

An exhibition organized by the Sri Lankan government to mark the island's 60th anniversary of independence has been postponed for three days following the two bomb explosions in the capital on Sunday, officials said.

The "Deyata Kirula" (crowning glory of the nation) exhibition was originally planned to open on Monday, the independence day anniversary marking the 60th year of the end of British colonial rule.

"The exhibition will now start on Feb. 7 and will be conducted until 10th," Anusha Palpita, the director of Government Information Department said.

The decision was taken after a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) **female** suicide bomber blew herself up at the Fort Railway Station, the country's main railway station Sunday afternoon.

At least 11 people were killed while nearly 100 injured in the blast.

Earlier in the day a small bomb exploded in the national zoo in Colombo, injuring four people.

The two blasts came ahead of Monday's independence day celebrations to be attended by President Mahinda Rajapakse.

An elaborate parade following Rajapakse's address would highlight Sri Lanka's troops currently battling the rebel **LTTE** in the island's Northern Province.

Udaya Nanayakkara, the military spokesman said that stringent security measures have been taken to prevent any incidents.

Load-Date: February 5, 2008

Two explosions in Sri Lanka, 23 dead

UPI

January 16, 2008 Wednesday 11:04 AM EST

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Length: 230 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Jan. 16

Body

Sri Lanka's growing violence spread to the southern region Wednesday where one of two explosions reportedly killed 23 people on a bus.

Both attacks occurred near Buttala, southeast of the capital Colombo, and came as the government formally withdrew from a cease-fire with Tamil Tiger separatists.

CNN quoted authorities as saying the first attack hit a bus carrying factory workers, killing 23 passengers, 13 of them women. Dozens more were injured. A senior police official said a Claymore mine went off near the bus. He claimed the rebels later opened fire and tossed grenades at the bus, the report said.

In the second attack, another mine targeted an armored military vehicle, injuring three soldiers, the report said.

The cease-fire agreement was brokered by Norway in 2002 but, in the past two years, both sides have been accused of disregarding it, resulting in a major escalation of violence.

The CNN report said Sri Lanka's aid donors Norway, Japan, the United States and the European Union jointly urged its government to seek a negotiated settlement soon. The Tamil Tigers have said they would abide by the cease-fire terms with Norway as peace facilitator.

The recent violence spree has been concentrated mostly in the Tamil-stronghold in the north. In the latest incident in that region, the Press Trust of India reported a clash Tuesday left 40 rebels and two soldiers dead.

Load-Date: January 17, 2008

Bomb blast in Sri Lanka's capital kills 4, wounds 20, military says

The Associated Press

January 2, 2008 Wednesday 5:33 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 230 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

A roadside bomb exploded near a bus carrying wounded soldiers in the heart of Sri Lanka's capital Wednesday, killing four people and wounding 20 others, the military said.

The blast killed one soldier and three civilian passers-by, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara. Dr. Anil Jasinghe at Colombo National Hospital confirmed there were four fatalities.

Nanayakkara said Tamil Tiger rebels were suspected of detonating the bomb, which had been planted opposite a small hotel and was targeting a bus that was heading to the hospital with soldiers who had been wounded in battles with the insurgents.

Phone calls to rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan's office went unanswered.

The rebels who are fighting for an independent homeland for Sri Lanka's ethnic minority Tamils are blamed for numerous bomb attacks against political, military and civilian targets but the group has routinely denied any involvement.

In November, a rebel **female** suicide bomber killed herself and another man after she failed to get near a government minister, her apparent target. On the same evening, a powerful bomb went off near a busy clothing store, killing nearly 20 civilians.

Tamil Tigers have waged their separatist war since 1983 after Tamils suffered decades of discrimination by the state controlled by the majority Sinhalese.

More than 70,000 people have died in nearly 25 years of violence.

Load-Date: January 3, 2008

Dehiwala train blast kills eight

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 27, 2008 Tuesday 2:43 PM EST

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Length: 361 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 27 -- At least eight passengers, including four women, were killed when a LTTE parcel bomb exploded in a crowded office train near Dehiwala around 4.50 last afternoon.

More than 70 persons were injured in the explosion which occurred in the fifth compartment of the 1625 hrs Panadura-bound office train (No.763) from Maradana, Police spokesman SSP R. Gunasekara said. A pregnant woman was among the dead.

"The explosion occurred just as the train was leaving the Dehiwala station towards Panadura," eyewitnesses said. Nearly 60 passengers have boarded the 12-compartment semi-express train at Dehiwala.

The injured were rushed to the nearby Kalubowila (Colombo South) Teaching Hospital. Around 15 critically injured passengers underwent emergency surgery.

The affected compartment and nearby compartments were wrecked. The parcel bomb with a timer mechanism is believed to have been placed on an overhead luggage rack in the rush hour train.

Services on the Southern rail line came to a standstill as rescue and clearing work got underway. Train services were restored late last night.

Army and Police teams undertook a special search operation immediately after the blast and bolstered security in the area. The Magistrate and Judicial Medical Officer visited the scene. Railway General Manager, railway security officials and Government Analyst's Dept personnel also inspected the blast site.

A similar explosion in July 1996 also in Dehiwala killed a number of people. On February 3, 2008, a LTTE suicide terrorist blew herself up at the Colombo Fort station killing 15, mostly schoolchildren.

It was only on Sunday that alert civilians in Kirillawala and Moratuwa areas found two powerful bombs with timing devices hidden in two separate buses. The timely detection of those two bombs by the bus conductor and another passenger saved many lives. They have advised bus crew not to allow any passenger to place parcels on the luggage racks.

Defence authorities reiterated the need for increased public vigilance in the light of increased attempts by the LTTE create carnage in the South.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dehiwala train blast kills eight

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

End of Document

Suicide bomber was a 'missing person' - Government

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 11, 2008 Monday 2:20 PM EST

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Length: 1745 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 11 -- "The most treacherous part of terror tactics is the use of various bogus rights groups to bring pressure on the government to relax counter terror measures. The aim of such groups is to protect the under cover terror agents until they go for the next massacre."

Terrorism is indeed the greatest peril to the modern human civilization. In a way, it is quite unthinkable how terrorism like a festering wound spreads deeper and deeper in the human society despite the all claims of technological advances, knowledge creation, globalisation and etc that are being made world over. It seems like the wound of terrorism cum extremism suppurate faster and faster, as those so called human rights- activists, champions, worriers, experts, advocates, etc issue more and more warnings, express concerns, and make all other ranting campaigns against nations fighting against terrorism. Sri Lanka is the best place where one can gain knowledge on how the terrorism operates beyond overt aggression; how more subtler forms operations carried out under the veil of most sacrosanct ideals of democracy.

Defence intelligence officials of Sri Lanka have recently unravel full details of an **LTTE** suicide cadre who had took his life along with lives of 19 people and wounded over 100 others in a bomb blast. According to the officials, this was the first time in the history of Sri Lanka's war on terror; the officials could trace the full details of an **LTTE** suicide bomber. Interestingly, the investigations conducted by the intelligence sleuths came in line with the investigations carried out by a separate department that probes into the alleged "abductions" and "disappearances" of persons. Now, the two investigations have almost come into a common end throwing new light to the recent spate of alleged "abductions", "disappearances", and "white van incidents" that are being used by Anti Sri Lankan forces to tarnish the country's good image.

The Defence.lk team has got the opportunity to file story on the recent development of the case -" Lotus Road Bomb Blast" which is being investigated by a special team of defence officials. The following has been complied balancing requirement in educating the public and maintaining the operational security of the ongoing intelligence operations.

On 16 May, 2008, just 2 days before the Buddhists' most venerated Vesak Poya day, an **LTTE** suicide bomber carried out a bloodbath in front of the Buddhist temple down the Lotus Road, in the heart of the Colombo city. The suicide bomber rammed a motorcycle at a bus carrying police personnel of the riot squad in broad daylight killing 8 policemen, 9 policewomen and wounding over 100 civilians. The riot squad happened to be at the location as the opposition had organized a violent rally against the holding of provincial council election in the Eastern Province.

Suicide bomber was a 'missing person' - Government

Initially the bomber was identified as Ibrahim Lebbe Mubarak , a Muslim national and a resident of Kinniya in Trincomalee. Police found a national identity card bearing number 820244796V and a driving licence numbered A 007571438 under the said name, which is typically a Muslim one. Since, no Muslim national was involved in suicide terrorism in Sri Lanka so far, police correctly realized possibility that the above documents might be false. Public assistance was sought to identify the terrorists with his photo published in the media. Meanwhile, a police commenced investigations on the number plate of the bomber's motorbike bearing number MZ 3875 and on the authenticity of the ID and the Driving license found among the remains of the terrorist.

Without much effort police found that the ID, the diving licence as well as the name were false. The owner of the motorbike was identified as Jeyrathan a resident of Pathnambar, Trincomalee. A bloody drama was beginning to unfold.

As the intelligence cycle went on, it was revealed that a lodge owner at Wellawatte ("Sooriyan Rest", No: 18 Station Road- Wellawatte), Colombo had given accommodation to the terrorist. Like many other terrorists who had carried out genocides against Sri Lankan citizens previously, this one too had enjoyed a stay about a month at the said lodge planning for his kill. Also, it was found the lodge owner had registered the terrorist with the different Identity card number but with the same photo. However, the lodge owner had purposely withheld the information he had about the terrorist until the police finally put him behind bars.

Later, police uncovered the true name of the terrorist as Velayudan Sudharshan alias Sudan, a resident at No 749, Pokuruni, Thambalagamuwa, Trincomalee. Police took two females who were residing at the said address at time of this disclosure. The suspects were subsequently identified as Velayudan Rasalechchami and Velayudan Nirojane, the mother and the sister of Sudan respectively.

The most unfortunate part of the story began to unfold when it was found that the LTTE had been using the mother of the same person that it had turned into a suicide bomber to gain propaganda mileage.

Police of Thambalagamuwa was conducting investigation of a disappearance of a Tamil youth having the same name of Sudan who had gone on missing since 21 April 2008. It was very same Mr. Rasalechchami who had lodged the complaint at the police on 22 April that her son who had gone Colombo to prepare a passport had not returned. The alleged "disappearance" was already used for the propaganda work of the bogus civil monitoring committees and media stations sympathizing with the LTTE terrorists to show that Sri Lankan security forces are engaged in human rights violations.

When the police showed the photo of the suicide cadre, both Rasalechchami and Nirojane identified him as their lost relative. What shocked the police was that the mother's behaviour. Unknowingly, that intelligence sleuths had gathered all the details of her son who had reduced to a suicide loser by the LTTE, she had chosen to lie about her son's life in the LTTE for a reason best known to her.

According to Rasalechchami, Sudan had gone to India in May 2007 as the war broke out in the East. Then he had returned to the Island on 19 April 2008. However, the mother said that Sudan after returning the country had first gone Jeythan's place and returned home only on April 20 with Jeyathan's motorbike. Also, she revealed that Sudan had a long-standing relationship with Jeyathan. On April 21, 2008, Sudan had left home with the motorbike and on the very next day Rasalechchami had lodged a complaint at police station Thambalagamuwa that her son had been disappeared.

However, according to the defence intelligence findings, Sudan was a child soldier who had been conscripted to the outfit at the age of 16 in the year 2001. He was born in 1985 at the government hospital Kinniya, Trincomalee and studied up to grade 10 at the Koviladi Tamil School. He had lost his father during early childhood and it is apparent that LTTE had given financial assistance to his mother and sister following his agreement to commit suicide for the outfit. Like thousands of other Tamil youth born in the Eastern Province, before it was liberated by the security forces, Sudan seemed to have given up his life for the Wannu terror chief for the promise of better economic conditions for his two family members.

Suicide bomber was a 'missing person' - Government

After joining the **LTTE** he had been brainwashed to a suicide bomber at Thirivaaiaru suicide bomber training centre in Kilinochchi under an **LTTE** leader called Sooriyan Master. Later, Sudan had been participated in terror activities in Sampur, Gomarankadawala, Kumburupiddi and Peraru areas until 2007.

According to the intelligence reports Sudan had been previously arrested at a roadblock in the Gomarankadawala area whilst riding on the same motorbike he later used for the attack, with another person. This was in April 2007 when the terrorists were massacring innocent villagers in the Gomarankadawala area. Later, the police had released him, as they could not find substantial evidence against him.

In mid 2007, Sudan had been called back to Wanni to undergo further training as a suicide bomber. There he had undergone a special training on carrying out suicide attacks using motorbikes at a suicide bomber training facility at Puthukuduyiruppu. According to the reports the suicide bomber who had assassinated Lieutenant General Parami Kulatunga in 2007 had also undergone training with Sudan. Following his training, Sudan had stayed in the Wanni until his return to Trincomalee in April 2008.

After having stayed in Colombo as an "innocent temporary lodger" for about one month, Sudan carried out the carnage he had been trained for on May 16, 2008. During his stay in Colombo, he had lived as a Muslim national and also prepared all the necessary documents required for his cover. Furthermore, bogus rights groups and media institutions, run with terror blood cash, used Sudan's "disappearance" to mount international pressure on the government to further relax counter terror measures adapted by the law enforcement authorities.

The lesson in this story for all peace-loving citizens in this country is nothing other than to realize the reality over fantasy. Unlike a soldier in a uniform, a terrorist has all the liberty to act as an innocent civilian and to plan secretly for the next civilian massacre while enjoying all the protection from the law itself. Thus, the greatest challenge in countering terrorism is to identify the terrorists. They have all the ability to camouflage themselves in the civil society and to get cover from the same civil liberties and laws to avoid them being cracked down.

The most treacherous part of the terror tactics is the use of various bogus rights groups to bring pressure on the government to relax counter terror measures. The aim of such groups is to protect the undercover terror agents until they go for the next massacre. The key players of such bogus groups are usually not the members of terrorist outfit but those lured by money to do the dirty work of these terrorists. Therefore, the reality that all must understand is that the terrorism goes far beyond open aggression. The survival of terrorism relies mainly on umbrella organizations that protect terrorists than on the real military might of the terror outfits. We hope Sudan's story would be a good eye opener for all who want to see Sri Lanka as a peaceful country.

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Load-Date: August 12, 2008

US seeks democracy and HR in Lanka

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 31, 2008 Saturday 2:54 PM EST

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Length: 420 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 31 -- In the aftermath of Sri Lanka losing its seat in the United Nations Human Rights Council, the United States has prioritised Sri Lanka as being among the countries where the US is seeking to promote democracy and human rights.

The 2008 Country Report on Advancing Freedom and Democracy released by the US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour practices also includes Bangladesh, Maldives and Pakistan.

The report said the US government hoped to focus on working with partners to promote human rights and democracy in Sri Lanka; to broker a lasting peace agreement between the government and the ***LTTE*** while mitigating the effects of the conflict and promoting conditions under which reconciliation could take place.

It said the US would press the government to develop a constitutional power-sharing proposal that would give greater rights to its minority populations; strengthen governance to ensure accountability and transparency; press the government to curb and render justice for human rights abuses; promote media and religious freedoms; fair labour practices; the rights of ***women*** and children; and speaking publicly on these issues to raise awareness and encourage progress. Pursuant to the Advancing Democratic Values Act of 2007, the State Department had prepared the report on US efforts to promote democracy and human rights in non-democratic countries and countries undergoing democratic transitions worldwide.

The objective is to expand the circle of democratic, well governed states that enshrine liberty under the rule of law, respect the rights and provide for the needs of their people and act responsibly in the international system.

"Overall respect for human rights declined countrywide, but especially in the conflict-affected areas. Several reports documented participation by the army, police, and pro government paramilitary groups in armed attacks against civilians, torture, kidnapping, hostage taking, extortion and extrajudicial killings. The ***LTTE***, which maintained control of large sections of the north, continued to attack civilians and engage in torture and arbitrary arrest and detention; denied fair, public trials; arbitrarily interfered with privacy; denied freedom of speech, media, assembly, and association; and practiced forced recruitment, including of children. The ***LTTE*** carried out politically motivated killings, suicide attacks, and bombings of civilian buses in the south," the report said.

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US seeks democracy and HR in Lanka

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

End of Document

Daring rescue of civilians launched

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 622 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 10 -- The ICRC yesterday launched what was termed by some as a "daring sea rescue" of injured civilians trapped in Mullaitivu while the military separately attempted to rescue some of the civilians in the safe zone by land.

However the military said the LTTE attempted to thwart the operation by opening fire towards the fleeing civilians killing at least 19 and injuring more than 60. The critically injured were airlifted to hospitals in Anuradhapura and Vavuniya. "Seventeen bodies of civilians killed due to LTTE fire were recovered and transferred to cleared areas yesterday morning by fellow civilians who reached cleared areas in Udayarkattukulm from Puthukuduiruppu South," military Spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said. He said the bodies of 17 people had been brought to the area held by Task Force II troops last morning by civilians who reached cleared areas seeking protection from the Security Forces. "Nineteen in the exodus fell dead before the eyes of their next of kin due to indiscriminate LTTE firing while 69 others were seriously injured. Two children and five females were among those killed," Brig. Nanayakkara said. He said the Army troops who took immediate measures to attend to the injured had dispatched them to hospitals for urgent medical treatment on board Air Force helicopters. Eleven children, 27 females and 31 males were among those who arrived in the cleared areas with gunshot injuries since yesterday morning. Sources said 1057 civilians had crossed over to the army-held areas by noon yesterday. Meanwhile the ICRC had launched a rescue operation to evacuate some 400 sick and wounded civilians from LTTE held Puthukkudiyiruppu by sea route. ICRC spokesperson Sarasi Wijeratne told the Daily Mirror that a specially chartered vessel had left Jaffna towards Mullaitivu yesterday evening to rescue the civilians. She said some 400 sick and wounded civilians were being sheltered at makeshift camps in Putumattalan. "We have chartered a ferry flying the Red Cross flag and it is on the way to Mullaitivu, where it will evacuate the stranded sick and wounded civilians," the spokesperson said. However, ground military officials said with the news that the ICRC was to ferry wounded civilians, a large number of civilians in Puthukkudiyiruppu area started to move to the Mullaitivu seas to escape from the area. When asked if any action would be taken to evacuate those civilians, the ICRC spokesperson said as far as she knew only the wounded and sick civilians were being evacuated for the moment. The ICRC said yesterday that 240 sick and wounded persons had been evacuated from the Pudukuduiruppu hospital in the uncleared areas. They were to be transferred to Trincomalee by ship last night. The remaining patients are expected to be removed today. Meanwhile, Eastern Provincial Council Health Minister M.L.A.M. Hizbullah told Daily Mirror that they had made arrangements to receive around 400 patients from Pudukuduiruppu. Mr. Hizbullah said that four wards of the Trincomalee hospital had been kept vacant to accommodate these patients. "We discharged some patients and transferred others to other wards to make room for those from Pudukuduiruppu. Some of the patients from Pudukuduiruppu will be sent to the Thambalagamuwa hospital in Trincomalee as well," he said. The Provincial Minister said that the Kinniya base hospital too had been readied to be used if necessary. "We have put new beds, mosquito nets and other essentials in the four wards reserved for the Pudukuduiruppu patients at the Trincomalee hospital. The security forces, the

Daring rescue of civilians launched

ICRC and government officials are assisting us in this," he said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 5, 2009

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Country situation bleak as predicted

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 12, 2008 Monday 1:35 PM EST

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Length: 1426 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 12 -- January 24 - Police found sixteen decomposing bodies buried at Kiriketuwewa near the Kebithigollewa - Horowupotana main road. A spokesman for the Kebithigollewa police said all the victims were wearing civilian clothes, and some had their hands tied behind their backs.

January 27 - At least 17 people were injured when a private passenger bus fell down a 30 feet-deep precipice at Welimada.

January 28 - The associate editor of the state-owned Tamil daily Thinakaran was stabbed by an unidentified gang which had stormed his house in Maligawatte.

January 29 - A blast within the **LTTE** controlled area of Madhu killed 9 children and injured several more.

January 30 - Fierce battles erupted in the Jaffna peninsula as the military launched a major onslaught against Tiger forward defence lines in the Muhamalai and Nagar Kovil areas, pushing the rebels to the second line of defence.

January 31 - At least three civilians were killed and thirteen injured when a suicide jacket exploded prematurely while being transported by a suspected **LTTE** cadre on a push bicycle at Thirunaveli in Jaffna.

Mishaps in February

February 3 - A bomb exploded inside the Dehiwala Zoo, injuring seven civilians. That same day, a suicide bomber, who is believed to have come to Colombo from Medawachchiya in a train, struck terror at the Fort Railway Station after blowing herself up when vigilant security personnel had stopped her on suspicion. The powerful blast killed at least 12 people and injured about 103 on the eve of the diamond jubilee Independence Day celebrations. Amongst those killed were seven students of a baseball team from D.S. Senanayaka College. Their coach was also killed.

February 4 - Independence Day celebrations were marred by another claymore attack on a civilian bus in Welioya killing 15 people and injuring 17.

The bus plying the Anuradhapura-Janakapura route carrying about 35 commuters was caught in the explosion at the Kobbekaduwa Junction in Welioya near the Army 223 Brigade Headquarters.

February 5 - The schools in the Colombo Municipal area will be closed from today till February 8, because of the volatile security situation in the country.

Country situation bleak as predicted

February 6 - Emergency was passed in Parliament today with 103-19 votes. Schools in Welioya and Padaviya were also closed indefinitely owing to security concerns.

February 9 - SLFP dissident MP Sripathi Sooriyarachchi was killed in an accident in Thambuththegama, Anuradhapura.

February 10 - The train service between Colombo and Badulla including night mail was cancelled following a bomb scare reported in Thalawakele.

February 12 - At least six soldiers were killed and ten others injured after the LTTE fired artillery towards the troops who were repairing the Thalladi Church which adjoins an Army Base.

February 17 - Mannar police recovered a large stock of explosives including several powerful claymore mines, grenades and a suicide kit from an LTTE safe house in Periyagama area on a tip off.

February 20 - Three soldiers were killed by suspected LTTE cadres at Dambakotte along the Buttala-Kataragama road.

February 22 - Police recovered the bodies of two students aged 11 & 13 from an abandoned well in Pottuvil. The victims were said to be students of Pottuvil Central Collage.

February 23 - A bomb exploded inside a Moratuwa - Colombo bus in Mount Lavinia. The driver, conductor and seven others sustained injuries.

February 27 - A bomb scare interrupted the Aluthgama bound train from Colombo in Moratuwa causing panic among hundreds of passengers who immediately vacated the train. Some passengers suffered minor injuries while rushing out of the train.

Mishaps in March

March 2 - At least 10 people were killed and 8 injured when a claymore mine exploded in Vavuniya.

March 5 - A female employee of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation was slashed on her back with a razor blade by an unidentified man in Peliyagoda, while traveling in a bus after work.

March 10 - One person was killed following an explosion in Wellawatte. The explosive device was reportedly hidden in a flower basket.

March 11 - Some areas in the Trincomalee and Anuradhapura districts were inundated following torrential rain, but no one has been severely affected so far. The water level of the Rajanganaya, Kalawewa and Nachchaduwa tanks had risen due to the heavy rain

March 14 - The Gampola House of journalist M. Parameswari was attacked by a group of thugs.

March 16 - Former Speaker, Foreign Minister, Opposition Leader and the son of two Prime Ministers, Anura Priyadarshi Solomon Dias Bandaranaike passed away at the age of 59. That same day an unknown gang broke into the house of journalists Sashi Kumar and Sunethra Athugapala in Kelaniya and ransacked the place before making their getaway.

March 18 - Three youth were killed and four others injured when they were struck by lightning in Walpita.

March 19 - Science fiction writer Sir Arthur C. Clarke passes away.

March 21 - Two soldiers were killed while 11 others sustained serious injuries when a suspected LTTE claymore mine exploded targeting an army bus in Mannar.

Country situation bleak as predicted

March 24 - Search operations were underway to locate two persons reported missing after they went to bathe in a river in Kithulgala. Two bodies were recovered from the river earlier.

March 26 - Three persons were killed and three others injured when a group of Sinhala fishermen from Negombo, who were fleeing from LTTE custody, were caught in cross fire while crossing the LTTE defences at Omanthai in Vavuniya.

March 27 - JVP Galle District Parliamentarian Chandrasena Wijesinghe was injured following a road accident in Galle, while he was returning from Ampara.

March 31 - At least 60 families were evacuated from Walapane following landslide threats. The Disaster Management Centre said two acres of land and two houses had been damaged in the area.

Mishaps in April

April 1 - At least three soldiers attached to the Katukeliya Army Camp in Polonnaruwa were killed and a further 63 injured when lightning struck them.

April 5 - The village of Katupathwewa, close to Anuradhapura was gripped by fear and panic after the killings of two of the villagers days ago.

April 6 - Minister Jeyaraj Fernandopulle and several others were killed following a blast in Welliweriya. The blast occurred when he was about to flag off a marathon run as part of a Sinhala New Year celebration event.

April 7 - The fate of three civilians, who went for Ganja cultivation in the Kotiyagala forest in Siyambalanduwa, remained unknown, after they were fired upon by an unknown gang.

That same day a family of four were slain at their residence in Puttalam while a 16 year old girl was also abducted from the same house. Puttalam police suspect a homeguard in the area may have been involved in the incident.

April 15 - At least 15 passengers were injured when a Colombo bound bus skidded and ran into a stream at Panaluwa, Meegoda.

A bomb blast in Kebithigollewa, Anuradhapura in the morning injured two policemen.

April 18 - Lightning struck the Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) Avissawella telephone exchange resulting in an interruption to services to customers in Avissawella, Ruwanwella, Kosgama, Kithulgala and Yatiyantota.

April 19 - A Christian priest, Rev Fr. Karunaratnam, who heads the North East Human Rights Organisation, was killed in a claymore blast in Ambalkulam in the Wanni.

April 22 - Two people were injured following a grenade explosion in Pepiliyana, Borelasgamuwa. Police said that according to eyewitnesses unidentified men riding a motorbike lobbed the grenade and fled.

April 23 - Fierce fighting breaks out in Muhamalai with over 100 soldiers killed and several more injured.

April 24 - A fire broke out at a biscuit manufacturing factory in Homagama.

April 25 - A powerful parcel bomb hidden in the overhead rack of a crowded bus at the Piliyandala main bus stand ripped through the bus killing at least 24 passengers and wounding more than 40.

April 28 - There was an all island power failure except Rantabe, Randenigala and Badulla areas. That same day Ratnapura was facing a flood threat due to the rising water levels in the Kalu Ganga. Six people were reportedly stranded in Ratnapura, Siripada Road. Six died in Kaluthara from landslides.

All schools were also closed in Ratnapura.

Country situation bleak as predicted

April 29 - Minister Mervyn Silva suffered injuries following an accident in Aralaganwila, Dehiattakandiya and was airlifted to Colombo for treatment. Kelaniya Pradeesheeya Sabha Chairman Seevali Kelanitilake had died on the spot in the incident.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

End of Document

Eleven killed in Sri Lanka bomb ahead of key local polls

Agence France Presse -- English

May 9, 2008 Friday 3:58 PM GMT

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Length: 388 words

Byline: Stefan Smith

Dateline: TRINCOMALEE, Sri Lanka, May 9 2008

Body

Suspected Tamil Tiger rebels set off a powerful bomb killing 11 people and wounding 29 in Sri Lanka's east late Friday, a day ahead of a crucial local poll in the area, the military said.

The blast took place inside the crowded "New City Caf  " in Ampara town, 350 kilometers (220 miles) from Colombo, the defence ministry said, blaming the attack on separatist rebels.

Minutes before the blast, a convoy carrying a key government minister had passed the area, eyewitnesses said but police said the target of the attack was unclear.

The injured were rushed to the nearby Ampara hospital, police at the scene said, adding the nine men and two women were among the dead.

The attack came despite heavy security on Sri Lanka's east coast as residents of Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Ampara prepared to cast their ballots on Saturday to elect officials to run the eastern provincial council.

The local polls, the first in the region for 20 years, come after government troops wrestled the island's east from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) last July.

The election is seen as a litmus test for President Mahinda Rajapakse's hawkish government as it escalates the war against the rebels to regain vast swathes of land under guerrilla control in the north.

"This is another cowardly attempt of the LTTE to disrupt normalcy in the area as the government (is) scheduled... to establish democracy in the eastern province," the ministry said after the bombing.

Tens of thousands have died since the Tigers launched a campaign for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east.

Rajapakse is hoping the elections will deliver a show of public support despite concerns about the human and economic costs of the latest round of fighting.

Eleven killed in Sri Lanka bomb ahead of key local polls

Since then, Colombo says it has been trying to win the "hearts and minds" of the east's "liberated" Tamils -- a strategy it wants to take to the rebel-held north.

Although the eastern province is described as being under full government control, **LTTE** cells still operate.

The government pulled out of a tattered truce with the rebels in January, leading to a spike in a war that has left tens of thousands dead since 1972.

Colombo has poured a record 1.5 billion dollars into the war effort this year, hitting people's pockets at a time of high inflation and rising food prices.

mg-sas/dan

Load-Date: May 10, 2008

End of Document

4th Ld Explosion kills 10, injures 20 including minister in southern Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

March 10, 2009 Tuesday 10:55 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 209 words

Dateline: COLOMBO March 10

Body

Ten people were killed while 20 people including a government minister were injured Tuesday morning in a suicide explosion blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels in southern Sri Lanka, defense officials said.

Officials from the Defense Ministry said an **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eealm) suicide bomber attacked the Jumma mosque at Godapitiya, in Akurassa, in the Matara district around 11 a.m. local time (0530 GMT).

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said 10 civilians were killed while 20 others including Post and Telecommunication Minister Mahinda Wijesekara were injured in the explosion in Matara, about 160 km south of the capital Colombo.

Nanayakkara said Wijesekara suffered head injuries and was being treated in a hospital in Matara.

A special team of doctors have been airlifted to Matara at the request of Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, the spokesman said.

He said the **LTTE** suicide bomber was also killed in the explosion, but it is not clear whether the bomber was a male or **female**.

The suicide bomber targeted the Islam devotees attending the national Milad-Un-Nabi celebration, held at the mosque which was attended by several ministers and a large number of civilians, the military said.

Load-Date: March 11, 2009

UN concerned about staff, civilians caught in Sri Lanka conflict =

Deutsche Presse-Agentur
February 16, 2009 Monday 2:41 PM EST

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 407 words

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts UN concerned about staff, civilians caught in Sri Lanka conflict =
Colombo (dpa) The United Nations Monday expressed concern about the welfare of civilians and its staff members caught in fighting in northern Sri Lanka between government troops and Tamil rebels.

The UN said that, though a designated safe zone - a 12 kilometre stretch on the coastal line in the north east - had provided some respite to tens of thousands of civilians caught up in the conflict, reports received on Sunday indicate that fighting was reported inside the zone.

The UN office in Colombo said the fighting had led to the deaths and injury of more civilians, but did not specify the number killed or injured.

The organization said it "calls the Lankan forces and the LTTE (Tamil rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) to refrain from fighting in areas of civilian concentration".

It blamed the rebels for continuing to "actively prevent" people from leaving the war zone by shooting and injuring those trying to reach government-controlled areas.

Those trapped included 15 UN staff members and 75 of their dependents, consisting of 40 children and 35 women. It did not say if any foreign staff members were included in that tally.

The UN said that one staff member had been forcibly recruited into the LTTE on Sunday and that it was making an urgent appeal for his release. It also called for the LTTE to stop forcibly recruiting civilians.

"Tens of thousands of civilians remain in the 'Vanni Pocket,' (the areas of fighting in north eastern Sri Lanka) including a large number of children. They are experiencing serious shortages of food, medicine, and clean water, and, as a result, increasing numbers are becoming ill.

UN concerned about staff, civilians caught in Sri Lanka conflict =

"Efforts to bring in more food and medicines have not yet been successful and it is imperative that these needs be met," the UN statement said.

Some 34,000 civilians have already left the rebel-held areas and are being accommodated in government welfare centres.

At least 100,000 civilians remained trapped in the rebel-controlled area, which is limited to some 150 square kilometers. Government troops are continuing operations to recapture the area.

The military says they have entered the final phase of a 25-year battle aimed at subduing the rebels. Vast parts of rebel-held areas have been recaptured by troops in a series of offensives launched since August 2006.

Feb 1609 1441 GMT

Load-Date: February 17, 2009

End of Document

ROUNDUP: 35 killed in fighting in northern Sri Lanka after polls

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

March 11, 2008 Tuesday 1:22 PM EST

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 614 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts ROUNDUP: 35 killed in fighting in northern Sri Lanka after polls epa photo 401280708 from Monday available Colombo

At least five soldiers and 30 Tamil rebels were killed in fighting in northern Sri Lanka as a breakaway group of the rebels won the first local elections in the eastern part of the country, officials said Tuesday.

Heavy fighting was reported around Elanthivan, Puliyankulam, 320

kilometres north of the capital, where 26 rebels, most of them **female** cadres, were killed when the troops launched an operation in the area on Monday, officials said.

Four soldiers were killed in the same confrontation, while in a separate incident one more soldier was killed, military officials said.

Four more rebels were also killed in a separate incident in the same area.

In the east, the government-backed Tamil Makkal Vidudal Puligal, or Tamil People's Liberation Tigers (TMVP), won 72 of 101 seats on nine local councils, officials said after Monday's voting, the first since the TMVP helped the government drive separatist Tamil guerrillas from the area last year.

The elections were the first local poll in 14 years in the eastern province, though national elections were held in 2004 in the same region.

The primary battle was for the municipal council in Batticaloa, 240 kilometres east of Colombo, where the TMVP, contesting the elections there under the banner of the ruling United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), secured 11 of its 19 seats after obtaining 53.77 per cent of the 26,331 valid votes, officials said.

Turnout was low, as 29,153 people cast ballots when 54,945 were registered to vote in a region that has continued to see violence and intimidation since the departure of the rebels.

ROUNDUP: 35 killed in fighting in northern Sri Lanka after polls

For all nine council elections, an estimated 55 per cent of the 270,471 registered voters turned out to vote.

The government came under criticism for holding the vote, with human rights groups and some political parties saying violence and voter intimidation made a fair election impossible.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa hailed the voting and thanked those "who helped make a success of the government's policy of restoring to the people of the east their democratic rights."

"I believe that the representatives of the people chosen in this peaceful election are the harbingers of success in the historic march to strengthen and widen democracy in our country," the president said.

The TMVP has not laid down its arms, saying it needs them for its own security because it remains under threat from rebels from the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which at times has infiltrated the area to carry out attacks.

The TMVP, which was accused of being involved in abductions and extorting money ahead of the elections, vowed to work closely with the government and provide political leadership for the development of the once war-ravaged eastern province, but it is also suffering through its own internal strife.

The LTTE's former eastern province leader, V Muralitharan, alias Karuna, formed the TMVP in 2004 after breaking away from the rebel group.

The government obtained the support of the Karuna group during its yearlong offensive that drove the LTTE out of the east.

Karuna, however, was arrested in London while travelling under a forged passport and jailed.

Since then, differences have split the TMVP as the leadership has been taken over by a member known as Pilliyan.

Meanwhile, the military was continuing operations in the north in what the government has described as a similar objective to restore

democracy by recapturing areas held by the LTTE, which is seeking to establish an autonomous state for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority.

Mar 1108 1322 GMT

Notes

epa photo 401280708 from Monday available

Load-Date: March 12, 2008

ROUNDUP: 35 killed in fighting in northern Sri Lanka after polls

End of Document

ROUNDUP: Clashes kill 35 as rebel splinter group wins Sri Lanka vote

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

March 11, 2008 Tuesday 10:50 AM EST

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 590 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts ROUNDUP: Clashes kill 35 as rebel splinter group wins Sri Lanka vote
Adds clashes in north Colombo

At least five soldiers and 30 Tamil rebels were killed in fighting in northern Sri Lanka as a breakaway rebel group won the first local elections to be held in the eastern part of the country in 14 years, officials said Tuesday.

Heavy fighting was reported around Elanthivan, Puliyankulam, 320

kilometres north of Colombo, where 26 rebels, most of them female, were killed Monday when troops launched an operation in the area, officials said.

Four soldiers were killed in the same confrontation while in a separate incident, one additional soldier was killed, and in another confrontation in the same area, four more rebels were killed, military officials said.

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Turnout, however, was low as 29,153 people cast ballots when 54,945 were registered to vote in a region that has continued to see violence and intimidation since the departure of the rebels.

For all nine council elections, an estimated 55 per cent of the 270,471 registered voters turned out to vote.

The government came under criticism for holding the vote with human rights groups and some political parties saying violence and

ROUNDUP: Clashes kill 35 as rebel splinter group wins Sri Lanka vote

voter intimidation made a fair election impossible, but President Mahinda Rajapaksa hailed the voting and thanked those "who helped make a success of the government's policy of restoring to the people of the east their democratic rights."

"I believe that the representatives of the people chosen in this peaceful election are the harbingers of success in the historic march to strengthen and widen democracy in our country," the president said.

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The TMVP, which was accused of being involved in abductions and extorting money ahead of the elections, vowed to work closely with the government and provide political leadership for development of the once war-ravaged eastern province, but it is also suffering through its own internal strife.

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Meanwhile, the military was continuing operations in the north in what the government has described as a similar objective to restore

democracy by recapturing areas held by the LTTE, which is seeking to establish an autonomous state for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority.

Mar 1108 1050 GMT

Notes

Adds clashes in north

Load-Date: March 12, 2008

End of Document

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1000 GMT, Feb. 9

Xinhua General News Service

February 9, 2009 Monday 11:10 AM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 250 words

Body

JAKARTA -- The Indonesian government is set to purchase a Russian-made submarine, a legislator said Monday.

Ihza did not give the exact time for purchasing the submarine, but he said that due to the global economic downturn, the purchase would be made in stages.

SEOUL -- Imported car sales fell sharply in January this year by 29.1 percent from the same period a year ago amid economic slump, the Korea Automobile Importers and Distributors Association said on Monday.

According to the association, 3,760 new imported cars were registered last month, about 1,500 units, or 29.1 percent lower than the 5,304 units sold during the same month last year.

TOKYO -- The approval rating for Prime Minister Taro Aso's Cabinet has suffered a further 1.1 percentage-point decrease to 18.1 percent, Kyodo News reported Monday.

The disapproval rating, however, edged up 0.7 percentage point to 70.9 percent, showed the telephone survey conducted by Kyodo News on Saturday and Sunday.

COLOMBO -- At least 28 people were killed and 45 others reported injured when a **female** suicide bomber from the **Tamil Tigers** blew herself at an refugee rescue center in northern Sri Lanka Monday morning, the military said.

The blast happened on Monday at around 11.30 a.m. local time (0600 GMT) at the North of Visuamadu in Mullaittivu. A few military personnel are also said to be among the casualties reported, officials from the Ministry of Defense said.

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

Headlines in major Indian newspapers

IRNA

January 31, 2008 Thursday 3:09 AM EST

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ARABIA 2000

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Length: 210 words

Body

New Delhi, Jan 31, IRNA

India-Press-Headlines

The following headlines appeared in major Indian newspapers on Thursday:

***THE ASIAN AGE

- Gates visit to build US logistics pact pressure
- FDI eased in aviation, oil, commodity exchanges
- Indian IT companies among world's top 100
- India to add \$100 billion to forex reserve in 2008
- Iran Prez talks of Israel demise
- Tehran criticises Bush for remarks

***THE HINDU

- I'am not sure the words were said Hansen
- 17,060 farm suicides in one year
- Petroleum Ministry for 16 per cent hike in natural gas prices - LTTE's appeal to UN chief
- 50 injured in Nepal serial blasts

***THE TIMES OF INDIA

Headlines in major Indian newspapers

- 'Bangla dumping dead poultry in no-man's land'
- Foreign investment rules eased
- Hyundai plans low-cost car in India by 2011
- 'Asia will continue to grow, but slower than 2007'

***THE INDIAN EXPRESS

- Aviation to credit: UPA opens many FDI windows
- Breakdown hits Net Services, 50 per cent cut in bandwidth - Tagged in flu zone, bird flew from Mongolia to Karnataka - UN envoy to Myanmar in India on two-day visit
- Maoists abduct nine tribals in Bijapur

***THE STATESMAN

- Nuclear power within a year: Ahmadinejad
- Women forced to join LTTE
- 50 ppm sulphur diesel not possible before 2010
- Recapitalisation of RRBs cleared

2160**1422

Load-Date: February 1, 2008

Sri Lanka moves in on rebel HQ, vows to take Tiger supremo

Agence France Presse -- English

January 4, 2009 Sunday 1:03 PM GMT

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Length: 573 words

Byline: Lakruwan Wanniarachchi

Dateline: KILINOCHCHI, Sri Lanka, Jan 4 2009

Body

Sri Lanka's army said Sunday it was moving in on the jungle stronghold of the Tamil Tiger rebels, in a final assault aimed at ending the longest-running ethnic war in Asia.

Flush with confidence after retaking their main city two days ago, the army vowed to capture rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran as troops pushed deeper into northern territory long under the complete control of the guerrillas.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse said in a New Year's address that 2009 would be the year of "heroic victory" over the Tigers, who have been waging war since 1972 to establish an independent homeland for ethnic Tamils.

Troops captured Kilinochchi, the de facto capital of the rebel state within a state on Friday, and the general leading the assault said his forces were now advancing on Mullaittivu, their last major centre of control.

"We are taking the offensive to the Mullaittivu jungles where Prabhakaran is hiding," Major General Jagath Dias told reporters flown into Kilinochchi for a short and carefully supervised visit to show the city was in army hands.

"We will hunt him down."

Journalists found a desolate town in which most of the buildings had been badly damaged or reduced to rubble by months of bombardment.

The only remaining residents appeared to be a group of 22 Tamil women, children and older men sheltering at the town's defunct hospital, an AFP reporter said.

"We were ordered by the Tigers to leave but our family did not want to go," a 17-year-old girl named Komalasingham Thurasiha said.

"We fled to the jungles and stayed there for a few days before returning today."

Gunfire and artillery barrages could be heard nearby during the press visit, but military officers said it was safe to travel within the town as all Tiger snipers had been driven away.

Sri Lanka moves in on rebel HQ, vows to take Tiger supremo

For nearly two years, Sri Lanka has banned independent reporters from rebel-held areas, including Kilinochchi.

The rebels, formally known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), had controlled the town for a decade, but on Sunday they lost another settlement when Oddusuddan -- en route to Mullaitivu -- fell.

The **LTTE** have a record for hitting back, and hours after losing Kilinochchi a Tamil suicide bomber in the capital Colombo killed two people and wounded 36.

Six months after a major strategic loss in 1995, the rebels overran an army base and killed 1,200 soldiers.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed since the conflict began but Rajapakse's government pulled out of an on-again, off-again ceasefire last year and launched a new campaign to crush the Tigers once and for all.

"For the last time, I am telling the **LTTE** to lay down arms and surrender," he said in an address to the nation after Kilinochchi was captured.

Prabhakaran said in his own annual address in November that the rebels, among the first proponents of suicide bombings and considered one of the world's most fearless and effective guerrilla groups, would fight on.

"No sane voice is being raised either to abandon war or to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict," he said.

Human rights groups have criticised the Tigers for forcing children to fight as soldiers, and the **LTTE** has been labelled a terrorist group by the United States, the European Union and neighbouring India.

Still, the rebels were able to get the international community to back them in a ceasefire deal that always struggled to take hold and finally collapsed last year, when the government pulled out.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

One arrested in Dehiwala railway blast

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 5, 2008 Thursday 3:27 PM EST

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Length: 380 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 5 -- Police yesterday arrested one suspect in connection with the parcel bomb which exploded injuring 18 including three women.

The parcel bomb targeting a Colombo bound office train from Panadura was set off last morning in Wasela Mawatha between Dehiwela and Wellawatte.

Police Media Spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekera said a major disaster was averted when the LTTE cadre's attempt to place the bomb along the railway track in between Dehiwela and Wellawatte around 7.20 a.m. was failed by people in the area.

"Two vigilant civilians passing by observed a man carrying a suspicious parcel and attempting to place it at the railway track.

When they shouted, the man threw the bomb and the remote control device to the railway track and fled," he added.

A packed train from Panadura bound to Colombo was passing by when the bomb exploded. "Most of the injured were men who were on the foot-board of the train," SSP Gunasekera said.

He said the number of injured were less as the bomb was thrown to the railway track and not the train. The injured were admitted to the Kalubowila Hospital.

The railway track and the train were damaged in the blast. Railway services resumed after several minutes of the explosion.

Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said three Police teams have been deployed to conduct investigations.

Deputy Head of the Government Analyst W.D.G.S. Gunathilaka told the Daily News that the bomb weighing 2.5kg was a high explosive charger packed in a parcel. "The charger bomb was detonated using a remote control device," he added.

"We believe that the LTTE targeted the Colombo bound passenger train from Panadura. Vigilant civilians averted a major calamity," he added.

One arrested in Dehiwala railway blast

Police and Army cordoned off the area and found a remote control device from the scene.

"Sniffer dogs were deployed to track the bomber and Police and Army jointly launched a search operation," SSP Gunasekera said.

Kalubowila Hospital sources said several people wounded following the explosion left the hospital after treatment.

The **LTTE** exploded a parcel bomb inside a Panadura bound office train in Dehiwala Station on May 26, which killed nine civilians including a pregnant woman and injuring 84 others.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 16, 2008

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CID says female suspect consumed cyanide

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 1, 2008 Thursday 2:57 PM EST

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Length: 208 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 1 -- The ***female LTTE*** suspect linked to the assassination of senior govt. Minister Jeyaraj Fernandopulle, who mysteriously died in the custody of Criminal Investigation Department, had reportedly died after consuming cyanide. The post mortem had revealed the 35-year-old victim named Rani had reportedly consumed a capsule of cyanide which ultimately caused her death.

Police Spokesman DIG N K Illangakoon told the Daily Mirror yesterday doctors found cyanide mixed in her blood which caused illness, a fit followed by death.

The CID investigators have found the suspect had secretly managed to possess a capsule of cyanide concealed in her vagina despite having undergone a strict body search at the time of her arrest.

Investigations have revealed that the suspect, a resident of Vavuniya according to her National Identity Card, which is now believed to be a fake, had close contacts with the ***LTTE*** suicide cadre, who blew himself up while targeting Minister Fernandopulle and many others. Detectives found an NIC bearing the name Vellathambi Mohamed Amith (862763479V) of Valachchenai as belonging to the suicide cadre, whose severed head was found at the scene of the explosion.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

POLITICS TN LANKA ACTORS FAST TWO CHENNAI

UNI (United News of India)

November 1, 2008 Saturday 6:16 PM EST

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Length: 406 words

Byline: Report from UNI brought to you by HT Syndication.

Body

Rajnikanth, who turned emotional, said innocent people, especially women and children, were being butchered and warned the Lankan government that such atrocities would not augur well for them. He said no country would prosper if "women and children and innocent people" were made to shed their blood in the land. "Their last breath will remain in the air and the country can never prosper unless it finds an amicable solution for restoring peace". "When the innocent Tamils are killed their bodies were not buried but were sowed as seeds", he warned.

As the Nadigar Sangam laid down stern conditions that speakers should curtail their emotions while expressing their views, the actors, majority of whom were attired in black, refrained from making any direct or indirect reference to the banned LTTE, which has been fighting for a separate Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka. Barring Sathyaraj, who made sarcastic remarks against the Lankan army and the government, others chose not to vent their ire against the Sri Lankan government. The restrictions were imposed by the SIFAA in the backdrop of arrest of Film Directors Seeman and Ameer on charges of sedition for their pro-LTTE remarks during the October 19 rally organised by Tamil Film Producers Council and Directors Association at Rameswaram to condemn the killing of Tamils and press for early return of peace. Refraining from making any political statement, Vijayakanth urged the Lankan government to stop the military offensive. "The air strikes being carried out by the Rajapakse government is an inhuman act and violation of Human Rights", he said, adding, even while dealing with the terrorists in Kashmir, the Indian government never resorted to air attacks. "This showed the humanitarian attitude of the Indian government", he said and added that the Centre and state governments should ensure immediate ceasefire in the strife-torn nation. In his brief address, Kamal Hassan, in an obvious reference to the struggle being launched by the LTTE, said terrorism rises its head only when the basic rights were being denied and the right to live was endangered. He said freedom fighter Vanchinathan was branded a terrorist by the British. But he was later hailed as a Martyr after India's Independence. "After freedom, today's terrorists will be hailed as martyrs", he claimed, adding "Let the history judge this".

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Load-Date: November 1, 2008

POLITICS TN LANKA ACTORS FAST TWO CHENNAI

End of Document

Prabhakaran will get fair trial in India: US envoy

Indo-Asian News Service

February 22, 2008 Friday 12:24 PM EST

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Length: 725 words

Byline: Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 22 -- Tamil Tiger leader V. Prabhakaran would get a fair trial in India if he were captured and sent to the country to be tried for alleged involvement in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, says US Ambassador in Sri Lanka Robert Blake.

"I am sure that he would get a fair trial in India. We would have no concerns about that," Blake said in an interview posted in the website of the American embassy here.

The interviewer had asked if the US would support President Mahinda Rajapaksa if he carried out his plan to send Prabhakaran to India to face trial in the Rajiv Gandhi case.

"Well, he (Prabhakaran) is widely believed to have been responsible for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. So, certainly, I think that would be fine," Blake said.

"The question is: are you going to be able to capture him or not? And I am not sure if that is possible or not," the ambassador added.

Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated at an election rally in Sriperambudur near Chennai in Tamil Nadu on May 21, 1991, by a **female** suicide bomber sent by Prabhakaran's militant outfit Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**).

Though Prabhakaran was a prime accused in the case, he could not be tried and sentenced, because he could not be arrested and produced before the court.

On India's role in Sri Lanka, Blake said it been "crucial" and "salutary".

"They (India) were the ones who really engineered the 13th amendment and some of the things that are still being talked about today. In many ways, they have played a crucial role here. And I think, a very salutary role as well."

It was following the India-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 that the Sri Lankan parliament had brought in the 13th amendment to the constitution to give the Tamil minority and the provinces a modicum of autonomy. But successive Sri Lankan governments had failed to implement the provisions of the amendment fully.

"And whatever role they (India) continue to play, will be positive, from my perspective. And we (the US) will continue to work very closely with our friends in India," the ambassador said.

He categorically ruled out American support for any "sharp, strategic war" against the **LTTE**.

Prabhakaran will get fair trial in India : US envoy

"I don't think that such an outcome is possible. We don't believe that a military solution really is possible. Prabhakaran has survived now since the late seventies. He has shown himself to be very adept and resilient, and I think continues to be so."

"We certainly don't have any great affection for Prabhakaran. But we think that the ultimate answer lies, as I said, in a political solution, and that is why we are encouraging the government to pursue that path," the ambassador said.

He expressed disapproval of calls to ban the LTTE in Sri Lanka, though it is banned in the US.

"I am not sure that the government gains much by banning the LTTE at this stage. I think they (the government) have already made their point. I think that banning the LTTE might be interpreted in the international community as taking a further step away from any kind of political solution," he cautioned.

Blake recalled that Colombo had been against any foreign involvement in the conflict, and was even opposing the setting up of a country office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in the island.

He said that the US supported the establishment of a country office of the UNHCHR in Sri Lanka because of the existence of a "climate of impunity" in the country.

Sri Lanka's own institutions had been "incapable" of dealing with human rights issues "effectively," he added.

But the question of setting up an UNHCHR office here had to be settled by the Sri Lankan government and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbor, the US ambassador pointed out.

"We are not playing any active role in that regard," he said.

Asked bluntly if he thought Sri Lanka was a "failed state", Blake said: "I don't see Sri Lanka as a failed state; quite the contrary. I think that Sri Lanka has got so much going for it.

"And one of the great frustrations of so many of us, who have such affection for your country, is that the elements of a solution are fairly widely known to almost everybody. It is just a matter of getting the political consensus and the political will to implement those elements."

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Load-Date: February 22, 2008

MEDDLERS FORGET own incivility

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 23, 2009 Monday

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Length: 1395 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 23 -- "The conflict between the Sri Lanka Government forces and the Tiger rebels in the north of the country has intensified over the past few weeks and thousands of civilians have been caught in the crossfire. While many have escaped the war torn areas and have sought shelter in refugee camps, others remain trapped in LTTE territory under attack. We have been accused of ignoring the dangers of the conflict these civilians are exposed to during the conflict and in fact have been accused of being responsible for civilian casualties. We do not kill our own people and we have taken every possible step to prevent civilian deaths.

But whether the terrorists have the same attitude towards their own people they are supposed to be representing is the real question in issue here. Many reports confirm that the LTTE is preventing civilians from leaving the war zone and that they are using ordinary men, women and children, displaced by the fighting as human shields. Recently this ministry received reports that the LTTE has indeed killed civilians fleeing from LTTE bondage to the areas liberated by our forces," said the Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Refugee Camps and the Red Cross. He went on to say, "Recently, the President declared a 48 hour ceasefire to enable trapped civilians to escape to safe areas. During this period for safe passage, he hoped that the LTTE would afford the civilians an opportunity to leave the war zone. But the LTTE did not show any interest in heeding His Excellency's call on this humanitarian issue." The secretary also said, "The government has always shown genuine concern regarding the welfare of its citizens in the war zones both in the North and the East. Action programmes initiated by government agencies in conjunction with humanitarian relief agencies have proved our concern for the civilians. The armed forces have also been most considerate in the welfare of these hapless civilians."

Misguided missiles Peter Sebastian of the Institute of Democratic Affairs based in the UK said, "Despite their statements regarding the war, the Sri Lankan Government has been bombarded by many agencies focusing on its 'inability', 'failure' to deliver and 'insensitivity' to the war displaced in the north of the country. And the majority of these occasions of finger pointing emanate from sources within the folds of other governments. We, ourselves, understand that the civilian deaths are heavy in the conflict areas between the Sri Lankan Government forces and the Tiger rebels. It appears that the government is ignoring the presence of civilians trapped in the areas being attacked by the forces using heavy artillery, bombs and rockets. It is the duty of a Sovereign State to safeguard the lives of their citizens in war situations according to article 228 F section 34 under the Civilian Protection section as it appears in the memorandum of understanding which has been signed by most countries in July...." A spokesman for the 'True Freedom for All' said, "We appeal to the government of Sri Lanka to call an unconditional ceasefire to prevent further casualties among civilians caught in the fighting, as many have perished already. We see that after a ceasefire a negotiated settlement is the only answer to the conflict. As an international organization engaged in humanitarian work, we are most concerned about the recent developments in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka which is continuing to claim civilian lives." Ground realities Tommo, the pussycat and Ooty the owl were scowling while listening to speakers featured on a video conference on their employer's TV. "Tommo, how do you like that? Not a

MEDDLERS FORGET own incivility

word against those murderous LTTE fellows. I am tired of listening to this type of one sided nonsense. But all the same, is it true that our forces are hammering at the Tiger fellows forgetting that their fire may be hitting civilians? If it is so, that is dashed unfair. What are the civilians to do to protect themselves?" "Meooww! Apart from those who managed to get away, it is common knowledge that the terrorists are holding civilians at gun-point to serve them as human shields. Human shields are an unbeatable ploy. It has checked the armed boys' progress." "The government called a ceasefire to give time for the ordinary governors to make a break to safety, but the wild pussies were deaf to it, Tommo." "That was no surprise. But who are these fellows who say that the government is playing foul by civilians affected by the war? They were the same guys who poked in with peace talks and ceasefire appeals and other noises. At the same time these are also the very fellows who were involved in the most foul and heartless treatment of human beings the world has ever known in the past." "You mean like the Huns and the Mongolians" The unqualified referees "Meoowrrno. Not that far back. During World War II, Hitler and the Nazis murdered millions of civilians. And when the Germans dropped bombs over England by the thousands, they never bothered about those things falling on the top of old men, women and kids. The British bombed German factories. They did not care whether they fell on the factory workers, grannies, babes in arms or on uniformed Germans. They were happy as long as their bombs killed Krauts. When the Japs bombed Pearl Harbour and some ports in northern Australia, do you think they carefully avoided the civilians? When the Americans dropped atom bombs on two Japanese cities, did they bother about the ordinary civilians who disappeared as dust in a jiffy? And when they clobbered Vietnam from the air for years did they think of the thousands of ordinary civilians below?" "Hoot, perhaps not," whispered Ooty. "Meoowwr! Of course they bloody well knew, but they did not care a hoot. Their only concern was in winning the war. The Americans won the war over Japan not by killing off half the Japanese army, but by wiping out two cities full of ordinary blokes. In those battles the thinking was, 'If civilians get killed in the process, it is because we wanted them dead.' In the present day, they are still upholding those 'civilized values.' You can add the Ruskies, Chinks and Jews who are as guilty to the list." "Hoot! Then what right do such jokers have to ask our governors to conduct the war as gentlemen; call a ceasefire, have peace talks, consider the plight of displaced civilians, house them, feed them and have seminars to reach a political settlement? Even today, these self appointed advisors have their own ideas of settling matters through different styles of slaughter." "It's one set of rules for them, the rich and the powerful and another set of rules for the poor and the weak. Though they have not caused so much damage as yet, the Injuns, breathing hard, are a close second." "Thuhoot! But all these characters chanting to the government and the world at large about the risks run by civilians in the war here, surely can flex their biceps and direct the terrorists to release the civilian hostages, can't they?" Couldn't, wouldn't, and didn't "Those foreign fellows are great talkers. But when it comes to doing something meaningful they dry up like gum. Anyway who the hell knows what is happening behind the scenes? What our governors should do is to ask these characters from wherever they emerge, to please tell them how to solve the problem of rescuing civilians being prodded by Tiger bayonets." "Meowwwmygodno! (No, my God, no!) That's the biggest mistake the government can do. They'll want talks again. And they will be miles worse off than Thimpu and other 'talks' all over the world. Those sham ballyhoos with foreign facilitators, moderators or whatever they called themselves, couldn't, wouldn't, and didn't deliver the goods. They only bugged up the works in planned steps." "So, what now...?" Another carrying power of attorney "A set of repeat intruders are trying colonial tactics. The latest is an attempted invasion of Union Jacks promoted by a clown to bat, bowl and field for the LTTE. But they can't expect receiving parties with garlands, magul beras and helicopters this time. Why the lokkas are barking and snapping at them already. In fact they should tell all these shifty characters dry up, pack up, and go eat bananas." Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Tamil Nadu boils over Sri Lanka

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 24, 2008 Friday 1:44 PM EST

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Length: 582 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 24 -- Tamil Nadu was at boiling point yesterday over the Sri Lankan issue, with MDMK chief Vaiko Gopalswamy arrested for making highly inflammatory speeches in support of the LTTE, the office of the Sri Lankan Deputy High Commission in Chennai being stoned and trains blocked by protestors calling for an end to the military operations in northern Sri Lanka.

This is the second time that Vaiko has been arrested for supporting the banned group. The earlier occasion was during the previous AIADMK government, when he was held under the anti terrorism POTA law.

Vaiko had said, at a public meeting in Chennai on Tuesday, that a separate Tamil Eelam led by LTTE chief Prabhakaran would come into being soon in Sri Lanka.

"The LTTE and the Sri Lankan Tamils cannot be separated. Though we are against violence, we should distinguish between violence and right", he said.

"Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who assured me no military aid would be supplied to Sri Lanka, has gone back on his word," he alleged.

Vaiko said, "if the need arises, I will be the first to take up arms in support of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

I will gather youths from all over the country for this purpose".

The MDMK praesidium chairman, Mr. M Kannappan, had told the meeting that the time would come to call for a separate Tamil Nadu. At the meeting, a two-hour film on the Sri Lankan army's alleged atrocities against the Tamils was screened.

The Tamil Nadu government's decision to arrest Vaiko was to make it clear that the ruling DMK State government's support, led by M. Karunanidhi, was only for the suffering Sri Lankan Tamils and not for the LTTE.

Meanwhile, a group of students pelted stones at the Sri Lankan Deputy High Commission in Chennai last afternoon, breaking the window panes at its entrance, police said.

Heavy reinforcements were rushed to the mission, situated about a kilometre away from the residences of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi and Opposition Leader J. Jayalalithaa, police added.

Sri Lankan Deputy High Commissioner P. Amza was away in Colombo at the time, Indian diplomatic sources said.

Tamil Nadu boils over Sri Lanka

"The miscreants suddenly broke glass window panes at the gate and entered the main building shouting slogans. Even as we rushed for cover, the police arrived and prevented further damage. Though nobody was hurt, the experience has left us shaken," an employee at the mission told IANS.

Six police vehicles were later positioned at the mission, situated in a quiet street in the southern part of the city.

Meanwhile, activists of Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) or the Dalit Panthers' Party blocked trains in Chennai yesterday, protesting the alleged killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Activists of VCK, an ally of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), raised slogans and said that they wanted to extend their support to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi and other leaders against the alleged atrocities committed against Tamils in Sri Lanka.

"The protest was held against the Central Government, to take action on the Sri Lankan issue. So we blocked trains today. If our demands are not met by October 28, our protests will be intensified," said Thol Thirumavalavan, president of VCK.

The activists, including 30 women, raised slogans against Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and wanted the Indian Government to protect the Tamils, police said.

They were not given permission to stage demonstrations, according to police.

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Load-Date: October 24, 2008

Sri Lanka allegedly shelled 'safe zone,' killed 67

Associated Press International

January 22, 2009 Thursday 2:06 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 667 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

The Sri Lankan military shelled a village and a makeshift hospital inside a government-declared "safe zone" for civilians in the north Thursday, killing at least 30 people and injuring scores of others, local health officials said.

The military denied hitting the hospital and said it was taking precautions to protect civilians. Health officials said at least 67 civilians were killed in shelling since Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the military announced the capture of a building the rebels had used as their main operations center in their fight against the advancing army.

With the government's offensive against the **Tamil Tigers** escalating, international aid groups are increasingly concerned about the safety of the hundreds of thousands of civilians reportedly living inside the shrinking pocket of rebel-held territory in the northeast.

Human rights groups have accused the rebels of forcing civilians to stay in the area to act as human shields a charge the rebels deny.

In an effort to coax civilians to leave, the government dropped leaflets throughout the region Wednesday announcing the establishment of a "safe zone" on the edge of rebel-held territory that it would not attack. Civilians there would then be transferred across the front lines, the military said.

But an hour after the leaflets were dropped, two shells hit a makeshift hospital located in a school in Vallipunam, a village inside the "safe zone," said Kandasamy Tharmakulasingham, a local health official. No one was injured in that attack, he told The Associated Press.

On Thursday morning, the hospital and the nearby village were hit again in an attack so devastating that health officials had difficulty counting the bodies because many of them were dismembered, he said.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharaja, the district's top health official, said the bodies of at least 30 people killed in the attack five of them hospital patients were brought to the morgue. Another 117 people 66 of them **women** and children were injured, he told the AP.

"There are a lot of bodies elsewhere, but they have not collected those bodies," he said, adding that the shelling was ongoing.

Sri Lanka allegedly shelled 'safe zone,' killed 67

The shells came from the government-controlled area near the town of Oddusuddan, he said.

At least 37 other civilians were killed in shelling on Tuesday and Wednesday, bringing the three day death toll to 67, he said. That figure only included the bodies brought to the morgue, he said. Many others were so badly torn apart, relatives buried them immediately, he said.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara denied the military hit a hospital or a civilian village. "We have demarcated the safety zone, and we didn't fire into that area," he said.

Independent accounts of the fighting are not available because journalists are barred from the war zone.

Meanwhile, government troops captured what appeared to be the rebels' main operations center, where they found detailed maps of troop deployments throughout the region, Nanayakkara said. The rebels appeared to have set up a new center elsewhere before the army moved in, he said.

In recent months, the army has pushed the rebels out of much of the territory they once controlled in the north, capturing the group's administrative capital of Kilinochchi and forcing the group into a broad retreat.

Police in Malaysia said they were on the lookout for the rebels' leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, following speculation he might run to Southeast Asia, national police chief Musa Hassan was quoted as telling the New Straits Times newspaper. Musa could not immediately provide comment on Thursday. A federal police spokesman said he could not confirm the report.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 to establish an independent state for minority Tamils, who have suffered decades of marginalization at the hands of successive governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Associated Press writer Sean Yoong in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, contributed to this report.

Load-Date: January 23, 2009

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9 dead, over 100 injured in suicide attack in Sri Lanka capital

Japan Economic Newswire

February 3, 2008 Sunday 10:51 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 221 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Feb. 3

Body

At least nine people were killed and more than 100 injured Sunday in a suicide bomb attack on a main railway station in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo, police and hospital officials said.

The explosion occurred at around 2 p.m. on a platform of the Colombo Fort railway station, one of the two busiest in the city, which was relatively empty Sunday afternoon.

Police said a **female** suicide bomber, believed to have been deployed by the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, blew herself up in the attack which is a trademark of the **LTTE**.

"Over 100 wounded people are being treated at the Colombo National Hospital's emergency unit," the hospital's director, Hector Weerasinghe, told reporters.

"Nine bodies are in the mortuary," he said. "Ten of the injured are in critical condition."

"There was panic and mayhem as ambulances took the injured to hospital," an eyewitness said.

The explosion occurred as troops have been deployed in the capital ahead of an Independence Day parade on Monday.

In the morning, there was an explosion at the National Zoological Gardens in a southern suburb of Colombo. A bomb hidden in a flower bed went off near the aviary, injuring seven people.

A government spokesman said the **LTTE** was determined to sabotage the 60th Independence anniversary celebrations but that the authorities will not be deterred.

Load-Date: February 4, 2008

Rebels attack army base in northern Sri Lanka

Associated Press Online

September 9, 2008 Tuesday 5:34 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 646 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Tamil Tiger rebels launched an air raid and a ground assault led by a team of suicide commandos on a military complex in northern Sri Lanka early Tuesday. The military said 25 people, including a civilian, were killed in the attack.

The brazen operation targeting the base in Vavuniya was the first major rebel attack in government-held areas since the military began capturing large swaths of rebel-held territory in the north in recent weeks.

The military offensive has forced the rebel fighters to retreat deep into the jungles and led to speculation that the rebels might be nearing defeat after 25 years of civil war.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said the attack killed 12 soldiers, one police officer and one civilian, Nanayakkara said. Troops killed 11 of the guerillas who had invaded the base, he said.

However, a rebel statement said that at least 20 government soldiers and 10 rebel suicide fighters known as Black Tigers were killed in the fighting.

Independent verification of the fighting is difficult to obtain because most journalists are banned from the war zone. Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy losses and underreport their own.

The rebels have been fighting for an independent state in the north and east since 1983, following decades of marginalization of ethnic Tamils by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

The government has vowed to crush the rebels seize their de facto state in the north by the end of the year. The new round of fighting has forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee deeper into rebel-held territory.

On Tuesday, Sri Lanka's military said that it had shot down one of the rebels' small planes following the attack.

However, rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan said in an e-mail statement that rebel aircraft, backed by artillery and ground fighters, destroyed a radar station, weaponry stores, a communications tower and facility, and anti-aircraft guns at the military base before safely returning home.

The rebels also released a photograph of the 10 smiling suicide fighters five women and five men in gray striped uniforms posing with their leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Rebels attack army base in northern Sri Lanka

The attack on the complex in Vavuniya, a city bordering rebel-held areas, began about 2:50 a.m. when the **Tamil Tigers** launched an artillery barrage, Nanayakkara said. The complex houses headquarters for police, army and air force troops engaged in the battle against the rebels.

Soon after the first artillery shells exploded, a rebel ground assault team invaded the army base. About 3:30 a.m., two light aircraft from the **Tamil Tigers**' rudimentary air force joined in the attack, dropping two bombs on the army camp, he said.

The military drove off the planes with anti-aircraft fire and fighter jets followed them back to rebel-held territory, Nanayakkara said. One of the jets shot down one of the planes with a missile over the rebel stronghold of Mullaituvu, he said.

The artillery barrage which totaled 70 shells did not end until nearly 6 a.m., he said.

Hours later, air force fighter jets pounded a Tamil Tiger base deep in the rebel stronghold of Kilinochchi, said air force spokesman Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara. He said the attack caused heavy damage to the base, which is believed to hold arms and ammunition.

As the fighting raged on, the United Nations announced it would begin withdrawing its staff from rebel-held areas this week after a government decision banning foreign aid workers from the area.

The U.N. said in a statement Tuesday that it had not yet set a timetable for the full withdrawal of its staff, but would continue trying to "address the humanitarian needs" of civilians in the area.

Many aid workers say their efforts at feeding and housing some of the 160,000 displaced civilians in rebel areas was crucial to staving off a humanitarian crisis.

Load-Date: September 10, 2008

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Trapped between cornered Tigers and hostile army

The Irish Times

September 10, 2008 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 660 words

Body

SRI LANKA:The war between the Tamil Tigers and Sri Lanka's army has left many displaced, writes **Tadhg de Barra**

"MANY REFUGEES pass my sister's home. They have no food nor shelter." Sr Jazili described the scene in the "Vanni", the Tamil Tiger-controlled autonomous region in northern Sri Lanka. The nun has just returned from visiting her sister there.

"There is no food or medicine, none of these things. There is no clean water to drink."

Witnesses report hordes of refugees fleeing north every night. The United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) acknowledge the displacement of "tens of thousands" of refugees inside the Vanni.

Since the breakdown of the 2006 ceasefire, the Sinhalese dominated SLA (Sri Lankan Army) has advanced into the Tamil Tiger controlled regions in the north and east. They are almost within shelling distance of the Tiger capital, Kilinochchi, inside the Vanni. The Tigers are cornered.

Civilians, displaced by the fighting, are fleeing deeper into the Vanni rather than crossing into SLA hands. Asked why, Sr Jazili said: "They are afraid to go south now, they know of these people." These people, the SLA, have a documented history of human rights abuse: extra-judicial assassinations, "white van" disappearances, serial rape, NGO and journalist killings have been commonplace in Sri Lanka for the last three years.

Jaffna, the Tamil city which has been under SLA control since 1996, is a ruin, a Dresden in the jungle, where two or three people are "disappeared" every night by paramilitaries who pass unimpeded amongst SLA checkpoints.

The ICRC has so many applicants seeking protection that it has taken to hiding them in the town's prison, where they are considered safer amongst criminals than on the street amongst the SLA and police.

The STF (Special Task Force) unit of the SLA is suspected of gunning down 17 aid workers of French NGO, Action Contra La Faim, in Muttur in 2006. This same unit was moved out of Accarapatu, in the east, last April after the Muslim community reported an epidemic of rape. Between 20 and 40 Muslim women are thought to have been assaulted.

The northeast and northwest, recently "liberated" by the SLA, resemble the West Bank of Palestine - multiple checkpoints along each road, a complicated pass system, reinforced bases, new settlements and Tamil-free zones - all manned by Sinhalese soldiers who speak a different language and pray to a different god.

Trapped between cornered Tigers and hostile army

The Sri Lankan government claims the Tigers intend using the refugees as "human shields" in the defence of Kilinochchi. Amnesty International has also voiced such concerns.

The Tigers' record on conscription of adults and children is well documented - they once had a one child per family "tax". A complicated "pass" system has been used in the past by the Tigers to manipulate populations within the Vanni.

And certainly, the **Tamil Tigers** have armed civilians. They have released photographs of armed civilians fighting, deliberately blurring the distinction between civilian and combatant, prior to this battle for Kilinochchi. The fighting potential of the Tigers may remain quite robust. This could result in a prolonged and bloody battle for Kilinochchi. The UN is now demanding that some provisions be made to assure the safety to refugees around the Kilinochchi. The ICRC, UN and journalists have significant difficulty in accessing the frontlines or the Vanni. Sr Jazili said: "My sister's children must go to school for their A-level study but are afraid of the bombing, and because their school is filled with refugees. They cannot study because there is no food or clean water to drink. Yesterday, the master in the school was killed in an air raid. Where can these children be taught?"

Tamils place great faith in education. It used to be one of the few ways to escape. The front may soon reach Kilinochchi. The good sister remains more concerned with her nieces' education than with the war on their doorstep.

Load-Date: September 10, 2008

End of Document

Suicide bomber kills 28 in Sri Lanka war zone; Suspected Tamil Tiger blows herself up while being frisked by soldiers at refugee camp checkpoint

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

Final C Edition

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Section: CANADA & WORLD; Pg. B8

Length: 623 words

Byline: Emily Wax, Washington Post

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

A suspected **female** Tamil Tiger suicide bomber blew herself up Monday while being frisked by soldiers processing civilians fleeing from Sri Lanka's northern war zone, killing at least 28 people and wounding 60, the military said.

The blast took place at a crowded refugee camp in Vishvamadu, a town in the north of the Indian Ocean island which was recently captured by the military, part of its ongoing offensive to corner the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and end a 25-year war, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara. An estimated 20 soldiers were killed along with at least eight **women** and children, he said.

"A large number of civilians are coming in seeking protection from the army," said Nanayakkara. "When we were checking this **female** -- by a woman soldier -- she exploded herself. It shows their desperation at this stage in the war."

The suicide attack also showed the complicated nature of the conflict along with increased concerns about the ever-shrinking space for civilians during the war's final battles. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that 250,000 people are trapped amid the fighting, although the government says that number is far lower. The rebels could not be reached for comment since communication to the north is severed. Journalists are not permitted to the front lines of the war, so reports are difficult to verify.

"What we do know is that this northern population has been displaced several times and they are now cornered in a very small area. This now means these people have no space to go to," said Sophie Romanens, a Red Cross spokeswoman in Colombo. Four hundred sick and wounded civilians who were moved from a shelled hospital last week still need to be moved to a functioning hospital, she said. They are huddled in a community centre in Puttumatalan, about three miles from the hospital.

"Many patients are outside," Romanens said. "They've had to hang IV drips from the trees. We are repeatedly asking both sides to grant safe passage so medical assistance can take place."

Civilians have fled the war zone in recent days, with 4,700 leaving Sunday, bringing the total number to have escaped to 20,000 this year, Nanayakkara said.

Suicide bomber kills 28 in Sri Lanka war zone; Suspected Tamil Tiger blows herself up while being frisked by soldiers at refugee camp checkpoint

President Mahinda Rajapakse has refused U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's calls for a "temporary no-fire period" to allow more civilians to evacuate the combat zone.

Rajapakse warned rebels at a festive rally this weekend to surrender or face death.

He called his effort " a humanitarian one," saying the government will protect civilians and that more lives will be saved if the war ends quickly.

"They must let the civilians go and then unconditionally give themselves up," the president told cheering supporters in the northwestern district of Kurunegala, who handed him lotus flowers.

"I must warn them we will not halt our operations against terrorism until we reach our final objective."

The **Tamil Tigers** have waged war since 1983 for a separate state for the nation's ethnic Tamil Hindu and Christian minorities, who claim decades of economic and racial discrimination at the hands of the governments controlled by the Buddhist Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the fighting, which has left the palm-fringed island a maze of checkpoints in the south and a north and eastern countryside of charred huts and refugee camps.

The **Tamil Tigers** have a squad of elite forces known as the Black Tigers who are used for suicide missions. The Tigers are credited with pioneering the suicide jacket, a bomb-laden vest. The United States has labeled the Tigers a terrorist organization because of their use of hundreds of suicide blasts, increasingly in busy urban areas like railway stations and playgrounds.

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

New GA for Vavuniya

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 2, 2008 Thursday 3:38 PM EST

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Length: 201 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 2 -- Days after the transfer of the Vavuniya Government Agent a new **female** administrative officer was appointed to the post with effect from yesterday.

Informed sources said that the Public Administration Ministry has appointed Ms. S. M. Charles as the new Vavuniya Government Agent, who assumed duties yesterday at the Vavuniya GA's office.

Sources said that this is the first time, a **female** administrative officer was appointed to the post in Vavuniya.

Last month, Vavuniya Government Agent S. Shanmugam was suddenly transferred out of Vavuniya. Mannar Government Agent Nicholas Pillai was appointed to oversee the duties at the Vavuniya GA's office in addition to his present post.

Sources earlier said the exact reason for transferring Mr. Shanmugam was not known , but it was believed that a statement he made on the situation of displaced people from the Wanni, at a meeting presided by a top government official, may have been the cause.

Temporary centres are being set up in Vavuniya to accommodate civilians fleeing the **LTTE**-held Wanni region, where there is intensified fighting between the security forces and the **LTTE**.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: October 2, 2008

Trapped between cornered Tigers and hostile army

The Irish Times

September 10, 2008 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 660 words

Body

SRI LANKA:The war between the Tamil Tigers and Sri Lanka's army has left many displaced, writes **Tadhg de Barra**

"MANY REFUGEES pass my sister's home. They have no food nor shelter." Sr Jazili described the scene in the "Vanni", the Tamil Tiger-controlled autonomous region in northern Sri Lanka. The nun has just returned from visiting her sister there.

"There is no food or medicine, none of these things. There is no clean water to drink."

Witnesses report hordes of refugees fleeing north every night. The United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) acknowledge the displacement of "tens of thousands" of refugees inside the Vanni.

Since the breakdown of the 2006 ceasefire, the Sinhalese dominated SLA (Sri Lankan Army) has advanced into the Tamil Tiger controlled regions in the north and east. They are almost within shelling distance of the Tiger capital, Kilinochchi, inside the Vanni. The Tigers are cornered.

Civilians, displaced by the fighting, are fleeing deeper into the Vanni rather than crossing into SLA hands. Asked why, Sr Jazili said: "They are afraid to go south now, they know of these people." These people, the SLA, have a documented history of human rights abuse: extra-judicial assassinations, "white van" disappearances, serial rape, NGO and journalist killings have been commonplace in Sri Lanka for the last three years.

Jaffna, the Tamil city which has been under SLA control since 1996, is a ruin, a Dresden in the jungle, where two or three people are "disappeared" every night by paramilitaries who pass unimpeded amongst SLA checkpoints.

The ICRC has so many applicants seeking protection that it has taken to hiding them in the town's prison, where they are considered safer amongst criminals than on the street amongst the SLA and police.

The STF (Special Task Force) unit of the SLA is suspected of gunning down 17 aid workers of French NGO, Action Contra La Faim, in Muttur in 2006. This same unit was moved out of Accarapatu, in the east, last April after the Muslim community reported an epidemic of rape. Between 20 and 40 Muslim women are thought to have been assaulted.

The northeast and northwest, recently "liberated" by the SLA, resemble the West Bank of Palestine - multiple checkpoints along each road, a complicated pass system, reinforced bases, new settlements and Tamil-free zones - all manned by Sinhalese soldiers who speak a different language and pray to a different god.

Trapped between cornered Tigers and hostile army

The Sri Lankan government claims the Tigers intend using the refugees as "human shields" in the defence of Kilinochchi. Amnesty International has also voiced such concerns.

The Tigers' record on conscription of adults and children is well documented - they once had a one child per family "tax". A complicated "pass" system has been used in the past by the Tigers to manipulate populations within the Vanni.

And certainly, the **Tamil Tigers** have armed civilians. They have released photographs of armed civilians fighting, deliberately blurring the distinction between civilian and combatant, prior to this battle for Kilinochchi. The fighting potential of the Tigers may remain quite robust. This could result in a prolonged and bloody battle for Kilinochchi. The UN is now demanding that some provisions be made to assure the safety to refugees around the Kilinochchi. The ICRC, UN and journalists have significant difficulty in accessing the frontlines or the Vanni. Sr Jazili said: "My sister's children must go to school for their A-level study but are afraid of the bombing, and because their school is filled with refugees. They cannot study because there is no food or clean water to drink. Yesterday, the master in the school was killed in an air raid. Where can these children be taught?"

Tamils place great faith in education. It used to be one of the few ways to escape. The front may soon reach Kilinochchi. The good sister remains more concerned with her nieces' education than with the war on their doorstep.

Load-Date: September 10, 2008

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Sri Lanka allegedly shelled 'safe zone,' killed 67

Associated Press Online

January 22, 2009 Thursday 2:06 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 667 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

The Sri Lankan military shelled a village and a makeshift hospital inside a government-declared "safe zone" for civilians in the north Thursday, killing at least 30 people and injuring scores of others, local health officials said.

The military denied hitting the hospital and said it was taking precautions to protect civilians. Health officials said at least 67 civilians were killed in shelling since Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the military announced the capture of a building the rebels had used as their main operations center in their fight against the advancing army.

With the government's offensive against the **Tamil Tigers** escalating, international aid groups are increasingly concerned about the safety of the hundreds of thousands of civilians reportedly living inside the shrinking pocket of rebel-held territory in the northeast.

Human rights groups have accused the rebels of forcing civilians to stay in the area to act as human shields a charge the rebels deny.

In an effort to coax civilians to leave, the government dropped leaflets throughout the region Wednesday announcing the establishment of a "safe zone" on the edge of rebel-held territory that it would not attack. Civilians there would then be transferred across the front lines, the military said.

But an hour after the leaflets were dropped, two shells hit a makeshift hospital located in a school in Vallipunam, a village inside the "safe zone," said Kandasamy Tharmakulasingham, a local health official. No one was injured in that attack, he told The Associated Press.

On Thursday morning, the hospital and the nearby village were hit again in an attack so devastating that health officials had difficulty counting the bodies because many of them were dismembered, he said.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharaja, the district's top health official, said the bodies of at least 30 people killed in the attack five of them hospital patients were brought to the morgue. Another 117 people 66 of them **women** and children were injured, he told the AP.

"There are a lot of bodies elsewhere, but they have not collected those bodies," he said, adding that the shelling was ongoing.

Sri Lanka allegedly shelled 'safe zone,' killed 67

The shells came from the government-controlled area near the town of Oddusuddan, he said.

At least 37 other civilians were killed in shelling on Tuesday and Wednesday, bringing the three day death toll to 67, he said. That figure only included the bodies brought to the morgue, he said. Many others were so badly torn apart, relatives buried them immediately, he said.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara denied the military hit a hospital or a civilian village. "We have demarcated the safety zone, and we didn't fire into that area," he said.

Independent accounts of the fighting are not available because journalists are barred from the war zone.

Meanwhile, government troops captured what appeared to be the rebels' main operations center, where they found detailed maps of troop deployments throughout the region, Nanayakkara said. The rebels appeared to have set up a new center elsewhere before the army moved in, he said.

In recent months, the army has pushed the rebels out of much of the territory they once controlled in the north, capturing the group's administrative capital of Kilinochchi and forcing the group into a broad retreat.

Police in Malaysia said they were on the lookout for the rebels' leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, following speculation he might run to Southeast Asia, national police chief Musa Hassan was quoted as telling the New Straits Times newspaper. Musa could not immediately provide comment on Thursday. A federal police spokesman said he could not confirm the report.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 to establish an independent state for minority Tamils, who have suffered decades of marginalization at the hands of successive governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Associated Press writer Sean Yoong in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, contributed to this report.

Load-Date: January 23, 2009

End of Document

Rebels attack army base in northern Sri Lanka

The Associated Press

September 9, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 646 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

Tamil Tiger rebels launched an air raid and a ground assault led by a team of suicide commandos on a military complex in northern Sri Lanka early Tuesday. The military said 25 people, including a civilian, were killed in the attack.

The brazen operation targeting the base in Vavuniya was the first major rebel attack in government-held areas since the military began capturing large swaths of rebel-held territory in the north in recent weeks.

The military offensive has forced the rebel fighters to retreat deep into the jungles and led to speculation that the rebels might be nearing defeat after 25 years of civil war.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said the attack killed 12 soldiers, one police officer and one civilian, Nanayakkara said. Troops killed 11 of the guerillas who had invaded the base, he said.

However, a rebel statement said that at least 20 government soldiers and 10 rebel suicide fighters known as Black Tigers were killed in the fighting.

Independent verification of the fighting is difficult to obtain because most journalists are banned from the war zone. Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy losses and underreport their own.

The rebels have been fighting for an independent state in the north and east since 1983, following decades of marginalization of ethnic Tamils by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

The government has vowed to crush the rebels seize their de facto state in the north by the end of the year. The new round of fighting has forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee deeper into rebel-held territory.

On Tuesday, Sri Lanka's military said that it had shot down one of the rebels' small planes following the attack.

However, rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan said in an e-mail statement that rebel aircraft, backed by artillery and ground fighters, destroyed a radar station, weaponry stores, a communications tower and facility, and anti-aircraft guns at the military base before safely returning home.

The rebels also released a photograph of the 10 smiling suicide fighters five women and five men in gray striped uniforms posing with their leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Rebels attack army base in northern Sri Lanka

The attack on the complex in Vavuniya, a city bordering rebel-held areas, began about 2:50 a.m. when the **Tamil Tigers** launched an artillery barrage, Nanayakkara said. The complex houses headquarters for police, army and air force troops engaged in the battle against the rebels.

Soon after the first artillery shells exploded, a rebel ground assault team invaded the army base. About 3:30 a.m., two light aircraft from the **Tamil Tigers**' rudimentary air force joined in the attack, dropping two bombs on the army camp, he said.

The military drove off the planes with anti-aircraft fire and fighter jets followed them back to rebel-held territory, Nanayakkara said. One of the jets shot down one of the planes with a missile over the rebel stronghold of Mullaituvu, he said.

The artillery barrage which totaled 70 shells did not end until nearly 6 a.m., he said.

Hours later, air force fighter jets pounded a Tamil Tiger base deep in the rebel stronghold of Kilinochchi, said air force spokesman Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara. He said the attack caused heavy damage to the base, which is believed to hold arms and ammunition.

As the fighting raged on, the United Nations announced it would begin withdrawing its staff from rebel-held areas this week after a government decision banning foreign aid workers from the area.

The U.N. said in a statement Tuesday that it had not yet set a timetable for the full withdrawal of its staff, but would continue trying to "address the humanitarian needs" of civilians in the area.

Many aid workers say their efforts at feeding and housing some of the 160,000 displaced civilians in rebel areas was crucial to staving off a humanitarian crisis.

Load-Date: September 10, 2008

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Trapped between cornered Tigers and hostile army

The Irish Times

September 10, 2008 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 660 words

Body

SRI LANKA:The war between the Tamil Tigers and Sri Lanka's army has left many displaced, writes **Tadhg de Barra**

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The ICRC, UN and journalists have significant difficulty in accessing the frontlines or the Vanni. Sr Jazili said: "My sister's children must go to school for their A-level study but are afraid of the bombing, and because their school is filled with refugees. They cannot study because there is no food or clean water to drink. Yesterday, the master in the school was killed in an air raid. Where can these children be taught?"

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Load-Date: September 10, 2008

End of Document

UN DEPLORES SUICIDE ATTACK IN NORTHERN SRI LANKA

States News Service

February 9, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 States News Service

Length: 242 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

The United Nations has condemned today's suicide attack at a registration centre for civilians fleeing the fighting in northern Sri Lanka, which killed and wounded many civilians, including children.

The attack comes amid a growing humanitarian crisis in the northern part of the South-East Asian nation, where some 250,000 civilians are trapped by fighting between Government forces and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Today's incident reportedly involved a female Tamil Tiger rebel who blew herself up at a registration centre in the Vishwamadu area of Mullaitivu district.

"The UN reiterates that civilians must be distinguished from combatants, and protected from the fighting," the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in Sri Lanka said in a statement.

"It calls once again on the LTTE to separate its forces from civilians under its control."

The statement noted that those killed had already been forced from their homes by fighting, and had endured terrible hardships.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other senior UN officials have repeatedly called on both the rebels and the Government to do all in their power to ensure safe passage for those fleeing the conflict zone, and to ensure the protection of civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Load-Date: February 9, 2009

Sri Lanka: Rebels attack army base in north

Associated Press International

September 9, 2008 Tuesday 4:56 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 689 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Tamil Tiger rebels launched an air raid and a ground assault led by a team of suicide commandos on a military complex in northern Sri Lanka early Tuesday. Thirteen troops, one civilian and 11 of the assailants died in the attack, the military said.

The military said it shot down one of the rebels' small planes following the attack.

However, rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan said in an e-mail statement that rebel aircraft, backed by artillery and ground fighters, destroyed a radar station, weaponry stores, a communications tower and facility, and anti-aircraft guns at the military base before safely returning home.

At least 20 government soldiers and 10 rebel suicide fighters known as Black Tigers were killed in the fighting, the rebel statement said.

The rebels also released a photograph of the 10 smiling suicide fighters five women and five men in gray striped uniforms posing with their leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

The brazen operation targeting the base in Vavuniya was the first major rebel attack in government-held areas since the military began capturing large swaths of rebel-held territory in the north in recent weeks. The military offensive has forced the rebel fighters to retreat deep into the jungles and led to speculation that the rebels might be nearing defeat after 25 years of civil war.

The attack on the complex in Vavuniya, a city bordering rebel-held areas, began about 2:50 a.m. when the Tamil Tigers launched an artillery barrage, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara. The complex houses headquarters for police, army and air force troops engaged in the battle against the rebels.

Soon after the first artillery shells exploded, a rebel ground assault team invaded the army base. About 3:30 a.m., two light aircraft from the Tamil Tigers' rudimentary air force joined in the attack, dropping two bombs on the army camp, he said.

The military drove off the planes with anti-aircraft fire and fighter jets followed them back to rebel-held territory, Nanayakkara said. One of the jets shot down one of the planes with a missile over the rebel stronghold of Mullaitivu, he said.

Sri Lanka : Rebels attack army base in north

The artillery barrage which totaled 70 shells did not end until nearly 6 a.m., he said.

The attack killed 12 soldiers, one police officer and one civilian, Nanayakkara said. Troops killed 11 of the guerillas who had invaded the base, he said.

Hours later, air force fighter jets pounded a Tamil Tiger base deep in the rebel stronghold of Kilinochchi, said air force spokesman Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara.

He said the attack caused heavy damage to the base, which is believed to hold arms and ammunition.

Independent verification of the fighting is difficult to obtain because most journalists are banned from the war zone. Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy losses and underreport their own.

The combined assault on the Vavuniya base was reminiscent of an attack last year on an air base in the northern city of Anuradhapura that destroyed eight aircraft and killed 14 troops and 20 rebels.

As the fighting raged on, the United Nations announced it would begin withdrawing its staff from rebel-held areas this week after a government decision banning foreign aid workers from the area.

The U.N. said in a statement Tuesday that it had not yet set a timetable for the full withdrawal of its staff, but would continue trying to "address the humanitarian needs" of civilians in the area.

Many aid workers say their efforts at feeding and housing some of the 160,000 displaced civilians in rebel areas was crucial to staving off a humanitarian crisis.

Meanwhile, infantry battles across the north killed 15 rebels Monday, the military said in a statement.

The rebels have been fighting for an independent state in the north and east since 1983, following decades of marginalization of ethnic Tamils by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

The government has vowed to crush the rebels seize their de facto state in the north by the end of the year.

The new round of fighting has forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee deeper into rebel-held territory.

Load-Date: September 10, 2008

Sri Lankan Government Must Act Now to Protect 300,000 Displaced

Targeted News Service

November 19, 2008 Wednesday 3:55 AM EST

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Length: 1077 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

Amnesty International issued the following news release:

The humanitarian crisis in the Wanni region of northern Sri Lanka is worsening as the government fails to provide shelter and protect over 300,000 displaced civilians.

Tens of thousands of families are now enduring the monsoon season with limited food, shelter, water or sanitation. They fled their homes to escape the fighting between the Sri Lankan military and the opposing Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**).

These civilians are trapped in the **LTTE**-controlled Wanni region. The Tigers continue to forcibly recruit one person per family with recent steep recruitment of younger people. The **LTTE** have hindered people from moving to safer places by imposing a strict pass system.

In some instances they have forced family members to stay behind to ensure the return of the rest of the family. The **LTTE** also controls the movement of displaced people within the Wanni. These measures seem designed in part to use civilians as a buffer against government forces.

Denied outside aid and humanitarian assistance

In September, the Sri Lankan government ordered the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental aid workers to leave the region. The government then assumed total responsibility for ensuring the needs of the civilian population affected by the hostilities are met.

As yet, despite assurances that it has the situation under control, there is evidence to suggest that the Government of Sri Lanka lacks the capacity to provide the required humanitarian relief to displaced people and the civilian population in the Wanni.

In particular, the government agencies and their staff will face difficulties in responding to the needs of the displaced without the assistance of the humanitarian agencies. The Indian government has recognised the gravity of the situation by choosing to send 2,000 tonnes of relief material to Sri Lanka. The deliveries are to be managed through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The Sri Lankan government has refused to allow independent international monitors into the Wanni to oversee and ensure that convoys with food, medical and other essential supplies enter into the area, as well as to oversee the distribution of such supplies.

Sri Lankan Government Must Act Now to Protect 300,000 Displaced

Severe food shortages

According to the World Food Programme WFP standard food list, approximately 773 tonnes of food is required per week to feed the 230,000 currently registered under the WFP scheme in the Wanni. The last three convoys only carried 650 tonnes, 750 tonnes and 462 tonnes of food each. So, immediate and long term food security remains an issue.

It is estimated that approximately 35 percent of the Wanni's rice and vegetable producing areas are no longer accessible. Displaced people report that they are already pawning or selling jewellery to buy basic food items. Lactating mothers and infants are especially vulnerable as they are not receiving adequate supplementary food to meet their specific needs.

Tens of thousands without shelter

By the time aid agencies had left on 16 September, they had built 2,100 temporary shelters. Government agents for the Kilinochchi and Mulaithivu districts have estimated that at least 20,000 families are in need of shelter. The Government of Sri Lanka's recent suggestion that cadjan (palm leaf) is appropriate shelter does not live up to the minimum standards required for the shelter needs of the displaced. Many families are living in the open under makeshift shelters.

Many displaced people have gathered in areas that were once paddy land and prone to flooding. Shelter agencies had previously assessed some of this land as potential sites for displaced people and found them unsuitable.

Recent images from the Wanni show that people have torn up rice sacks to hang over bits of wood in a desperate attempt to make their own shelters. Without proper shelter people are having problems keeping food and other essentials dry and are more vulnerable to snakes.

"People's access to livelihoods has shrunk. There's no boat fishing and many people are displaced from paddy lands...many of their fields are now conflict zones and full of unexploded ordnance," said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Director.

Lack of sanitation, safe drinking water and medicine

The heavy monsoon rains last until mid February. The average monthly rainfall at the moment is 300mm. While the rains have slowed down the fighting, they have wreaked havoc on the displaced population. There is an increased risk of disease outbreak with limited access to medicines. The healthcare system in the Wanni desperately needs staff and supplies as hospitals have closed or been forced to move with the relocation of displaced populations. If malaria cases develop patients will find it hard to access relevant treatment.

Local authorities have estimated 5,230 temporary toilets are needed. Ninety five percent of the displaced do not have proper latrine facilities, leave aside having separate toilet and sanitation facilities to meet the practical gender needs of women, according to local NGO workers who were engaged in constructing temporary toilets.

Due to a blockade of cement, toilets cannot be built in the standard method and the Wanni health authorities have approved a toilet with the basin set on wooden floor and drums sunk into the ground as pits. Unless immediate action is taken Wanni health authorities fear it may be too late to save the displaced population from outbreak of epidemics.

Acute shortage of safe drinking water has already precipitated a crisis resulting in the development of various water-borne ailments including diarrhoea. Health officials said the safe water and sanitation in the region has become a major problem causing infections.

Amnesty International is calling upon the Sri Lankan government to give assurances of unimpeded humanitarian access to provide for the immediate material needs of the displaced and assure their safety. The government must ensure the safety and support of humanitarian workers and their families, especially those who remain in the Wanni.

Sri Lankan Government Must Act Now to Protect 300,000 Displaced

"The Sri Lankan government and the LTTE must allow international monitors to assess the needs of the thousands of people trapped in the Wanni and to ensure proper distribution of food and other resources. Furthermore, international staff played an indispensable role in protecting local humanitarian aid workers from the LTTE's abuses," said Sam Zarifi.

TNS gv51gv-081120-2034868 18MASHGema

Load-Date: November 20, 2008

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The crawl to terminate Sea Tigers

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

March 15, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Length: 1743 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 15 -- Being just one and half km away from the Tiger's Forward Defence Lines (FDLs), throughout his military operations from Nagarkovil to Muhamalai to Chalai, the 'ops room' cum 'temporary home' of the 55 Division Chief Brigadier Prasanna Silva, was busy than usual.

Facing more than a dozen **LTTE** counter attacks successfully on February 27 and March 1 alone, Brig. Silva, minutes before joining his troops to hunt four suicide Tigers infiltrated into Chalai, explained the military thrust to destroy the **LTTE**'s last Sea Tiger domination from Chundikulam to Chalai. He said that the troops gained full control of Chalai after five days of intense fighting and killing **LTTE** leaders including deputy Sea Tiger leader Vinayagam. According to Brig. Silva, unlike in other terrains, fighting along the sea belt was not easy as the troops had to walk on sandy open surface and also facing many suicide attacks. Recalling the attempt by the Sea Tigers led by Soosai, who was six km away from the troops on March 1, Brig. Silva said that no soldier used a single round of fire as they were instructed to maintain zero casualties. "We have a slow march because of the civilians", he said while answering urgent calls from the battle front and co-ordinating the troops to comb the jungle for Tigers. House sparrows, which nestled in GOCs building continuously chirped as they tried to make us feel safe in the land, where fierce fighting had erupted just 24-hours ago. We were to step into the beach front where 10 explosive laden Tiger boats tried to re-capture the lagoon between Chalai and the edge of Puthumathalan. "Better talk to the soldiers who thwarted all these suicide attacks", Brig. Silva said instructing Lt. Col. Deepal Pussella, Commanding Officer (CO) of the 7VIR to take us to the destination. Equal We left the 55 Division headquarters - the 'Samajawadhi Kandaura' (Socialist camp) where all - from the soldiers to Brig. Silva, were sheltered in equal houses with equal facilities. A barrage of artillery had exploded few km away from us. While the troops of 55 Division kept on advancing towards Puthumathalan - the state declared safe zone, we stared our journey from Chalai. The vehicle first crept into a jungle hide-out where the soldiers were busy repairing all sort of military vehicles. It was their mobile garage. Not long after, we were in the mobile hospital headed by Capt. Dr. Mohamed Niflar who said the 'docs' and the medical staff of the 55 Division were always stationed closer to the FDLs and a place where the casualties could be airlifted. "That gives the soldiers courage", he said. His staff, including Capt. Dr. Chinthana Kumara, will treat any battle front injury - AP mines to gun shot injuries. The mobile hospital, which is stocked with necessary drugs, has the facilities for artificial breathing and blood transfusion. "After treatment they will be sent to Palali or Anuradhapura. Over 95 percent of the soldiers we treated here survived", that is the happiness these Army 'docs' enjoy at the end of each medical battle. Next was crossing the Chundikulam lagoon. The instant 'boat bridge' built by 6th and 8th Field Engineers, using over 35 fishing fibre boats stretched to over 80 metres connecting Chundikulam North and South facilitating the troops to pass food, medicine weapons and soldiers to the other side; indeed really unique. Sweltering sun No one could tolerate the sweltering sun which burns you on the sand as the soldiers defend the northern coastal belt. There are only stunted coconut trees to shade you for a moment. Capt. Lakshman Balasooriya of the Mechanized infantry stationed at Chundikulam, said that the China made tankers which could

The crawl to terminate Sea Tigers

run over 45 km an hour, were used to break 15-feet tall sand bunds of the Tigers as the infantry troops encountered difficulty to fight in the open terrain and break through the bunds. They destroyed many such obstacles to reach Chalai. Prawn curry The bunkers were dotted along the beach front. Mouth watering aroma of a prawn curry intermingled with the awful smell emanating from dead carcasses of dogs and cattle. Lt. Col. Pussalla stopped near a hut for a while. "Putha isso uyalada"? (Son, did you cook prawns?) the 7VIR CO crept into the open kitchen where they had cooked rice and a fish curry. "Naaaaaa Sir" (No Sir). The shy soldier innocently replied. "Some times they cook well and I used to eat with them", he whispered. No wonder the down to earth behaviour of high officials gave courage to the ground soldiers for several leap forwards to destroy the LTTE. "Be mindful... there is a possibility of a female Black Tiger jumping on to your vehicle", reverberated in my mind as we stepped onto the sandy beach of Chalai where ruminants of the battle - patches of blood, torn Sea Tiger uniforms and live bullets - were strewn all over the beach. Oh... the sudden thundering explosion blew the legs of a cow before our eyes. The animal lost two legs as he was roaming on the minefield. "If you want to get back to Colombo with your legs intact follow the instructions", was the warning coming from the CO. Over 20 carcasses of cattle and dogs were strewn on the beach. Two cows were still alive and believe. The innocent creatures were tearing, but the soldiers were unable to reach them as it was a deadly minefield. "We are helpless as we cannot treat them or feed them", said a soldier who threw a bucket of water on the cow to relieve the animal of its pain. Major Sumal Hemaratne, who led the capturing of Chalai South upto Puthumathalan North and again repulsed a suicide attack to re-capture the stretch said that Tigers used their naval and ground cadres in the attack lasting from mid-night to dawn. "There were over 13 combined counter attacks but the troops were able to destroy 10 boats and found over 50 dead bodies", he said adding that the significant factor was that the ground troops were able to repulse the Sea Tiger attacks without Naval support. Soldiers led by Corp. Pushpakumara, who went in to the Tiger FDLs and fought fierce battles with the cadres who ran for life. The troops have captured weapons - T-56s, RPGs, MPMG guns, mortar guns, anti-air guns and suicide kits. They also recovered a motor bike which is believed to be used by Lawrence. Though these soldiers know their lives are at risk more than previous attacks as there are lots of suicide cadres are employed for the LTTE's end battle, the soldiers are fearless. "We are ready to die to see an end of the LTTE. Now the LTTE cannot stop us. The leaders forcefully sent the cadres to the FDLs. Otherwise they are running", they said. "Are you hungry", asked Lt. Col. Pussella taking us to his residence - the 'eco-spot' which was hidden inside a fine forest cover. It was a buffet like lunch amidst the thundering sounds of artillery fire and continuous round of firing. Believe... this ever smiling CO has a hobby too. He carries his fish tank where ever he goes in the battle front. "They give me relaxation", he smiled. Back at the North of Puthumathalan, 552 Brigade Commander Col. Kapila Udulupola, who led the troops to capture the area, got the news. "A female cadre had blew herself and other are surrounded". He sighed a relief so as us. "The Tigers who exploited the seas from Chundikulam to Chalai for over 20 years, never thought, even in their wildest dreams, that the Army would destroy their domination here. They abused this stretch of the coast to attack the Army and Navy, testing their home made ships and submarines, training Sea Tigers and most importantly smuggling arms here. Though they claimed Chalai was their Naval hub, the Sea Tigers operated from Puthukuduyirippu", Col. Udulupola said explaining how the 551 Brigade completely chased the Tigers in Chalai North with him taking over to destroy the LTTE in Chalai South. Now the troops of 552 were advancing to liberate Puthumathalan. Stationed just four km away from the edge of the safe zone in Puthumathalan and one and half km to the border of Puthukuduyirippu, Col. Udulupola said the 55 Division troops overcame all the difficulties in their forward march of over 60 km from Nagarkovil to Puthumathalan North. "The moral of the soldiers is higher than earlier as they know that they are fighting the last battle to wipeout the LTTEers", he said. The Tigers wanting gain the past glory tried in an desperate suicidal attempt led by Sossai and Vidusha to break through the newly built temporary bridge connecting Chalai South and Puthumathalan North. "While Sea Tiger boats tried to entre the bay mouth of the lagoon, teams led by Lawrence tried to attack the troops to cut off the supply route. They came like a wave, he said. It was 6 p.m. when we left the coast. Boat squadron consisting of six boats full of infantry soldiers started night patrolling along the stretch. Lance Corp. Samarakoon, a sniper, with his colleague was returning from the Tiger FDL in Puthumathalan concluding a 24-hour continuous hunt for Tigers. The four-man team and eight-man teams disappeared in the jungle to start their night shift to push back the Tiger FDL further while armoured tanks moving parallelly towards the same direction. We stopped at the 'eco-spot' for a while to say good bye to the 55 Div. GOC. "Troops managed to kill three other LTTE cadres", announced Brig. Silva accompanied with the Deputy GOC Brig. Nissanka Ranawana and the 551 Brigade Commander Col. Mahinda Weerasoorya announced the good news. The team was in the jungles from 5.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. busy hunting. for the hit and run infiltrators. Finally the three suicide bombers were killed at Kadeikadei. The stock -jungle

The crawl to terminate Sea Tigers

fatigues, weapons, medicines and tinned foods - they brought with them, were sufficient for over two months. While Soosai, Lawrence, Swarnam, Gopith and other Tiger leaders accusing each other for the failed attempt which killed many dozens of their cadres, the 55 division troops were preparing for their military thrust towards the safe zone to liberate thousands of civilians forcibly caged by the **LTTE** to delay the soldiers entering into the tiny patch of land where the ruthless Tigers now encircle. "We hope more civilians will come to us when we reach the safe zone", echoed Brig. Silva who was not only hopeful, but ordered the troops not to use a single bullet that would harm the fleeing civilians. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

End of Document

Another 281 civilians rescued from terror clutches with navy assistance - Mullaivivu

Colombo Times

March 1, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 254 words

Body

Colombo, Mar. 1 -- Sri Lanka Navy has facilitated rescuing of 281 civilians held captive by the **LTTE** terrorists in Mullaivivu.

Navy sources said that, the 6th batch of civilians including patients requiring immediate medical attention was transported to Trincomalee by the "MV Greed Ocean" yesterday (Feb 28). The Navy provided the safe passage for the vessel carrying civilians from Mullaivivu and received the passengers at Trincomalee harbour.

Navy medical teams provided immediate medical treatment to the needy patients upon disembarkation and rushed them to the government hospital Trincomalee for further treatment.

MV Green Ocean has been chartered by the government of Sri Lanka in order to rescue civilians held as human shield by the **LTTE** terrorists in Mullaivivu. The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) sails the ship under its flag. The Government Hospital of Trincomalee has been sufficiently staffed and provided with adequate stocks of medicine by the Health Ministry of Sri Lanka in order to meet the requirement.

According to the Navy source, the last batch of civilians included 95 men, 128 **women** and 58 children. Out of them 65 men and 72 **females** were patients.

From 10th February 2009, Sri Lanka navy has assisted rescuing of 1907 civilians including large number of patients by MV Green Ocean. This was in addition to the large number of civilians rescued by Sri Lanka navy sea units deployed in the Northeastern coastal waters.

Published by HT Syndication with permission from The Colombo Times.

Load-Date: May 21, 2009

99 suspects arrested after Akuressa blast

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 17, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 214 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 17 -- The police arrested 99 persons on Sunday night, both male and **female**, on suspicion in connection with the recent **LTTE** suicide bomb blast in Akuressa which claimed 15 lives.

Police Media Spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekara told Daily Mirror yesterday that a joint search operation was conducted in the areas of Morawaka, Pitabeddara, Deniyaya, Urubokka and Akuressa throughout Sunday night. Of those arrested 91 were male while eight **female** suspects too were taken in for questioning. One Sinhala national was among those arrested while the rest were all Tamils, the police said. Some of those arrested failed to produce any form of paper work to prove their identity and give reasons for their presence in the foresaid areas where the blast took place. Meanwhile pictures of the severed head of the man believed to be of the **LTTE** suicide cadre who blew himself at the Meelad-Un-Nabi celebrations has been publicized through media by the police for identification purposes. 15 persons lost their lives and 42 sustained injuries including several senior government ministers and local politicians while they were attending Meelad celebrations. Akuressa police is conducting further investigations. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: March 19, 2009

RISING CIVILIAN DEATH TOLL IN SRI LANKAN CONFLICT

States News Service

February 2, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 States News Service

Length: 247 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: LONDON

Body

The following information was released by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO):

Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the conflict in Sri Lanka as the death toll continues to rise and conditions for the civilian population deteriorate. He said:

'The rising civilian death toll in the conflict in Sri Lanka is a source of enormous distress for all those who want to see a peaceful future for the country. Only this weekend many civilians, including **women** and children, died when a hospital inside the conflict areas in north-east Sri Lanka was shelled. My thoughts are with their families and the families of all those who have died in this terrible war.

I very much regret the **LTTE**'s failure to respond positively over the weekend to the Sri Lankan Government's offer of safe passage for civilians to move away from the fighting. The need for a humanitarian ceasefire that is fully respected by both sides is already urgent. I repeat my call to both the Government and the **LTTE** to respond appropriately to the deteriorating humanitarian situation, in particular by allowing the wounded to receive the medical treatment they so urgently need; civilians to leave the conflict area; and access for humanitarian agencies.

As I have urged before, if peace is to be sustainable, there needs to be a new drive for political engagement by the Sri Lankan Government with all communities in Sri Lanka to address their legitimate concerns.'

Load-Date: February 2, 2009

Needed, a diplomatic offensive

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 18, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 828 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 18 -- As during the height of the war against the LTTE, attempts to blacken the image of the country and its Armed Forces by various international bodies are continuing apace.

Time was when our governments had to wage war on two fronts, one on home soil and the other to clear its name against various allegations to do with human rights, by western interests hell bent on scuttling the war effort. A bleak picture vis-a-vis human rights was painted internationally with a view to halt economic aid and military assistance to the country all with the intention of bailing out the LTTE when in a tight spot. The failure by our overseas missions to counter such propaganda effectively also did not help. It was left to President Mahinda Rajapaksa to summon our diplomats and read the riot act.

But it appears that insidious moves are still at play to paint the administration in a poor light by the same actors once again perhaps to salvage the Tigers from their current predicament. If it was unsubstantiated claims such as the killing of non combatants, bombing of civilian targets etc. before, now it the maltreatment of these very civilians who are fleeing the grip of the LTTE and seeking safety with the armed forces - who according to the Western media were the villains, bringing hell on the civilians. The London Times on Friday carried a piece on the unfolding developments headlined: 'Barbed wire villages raise fears of refugee concentration camps'. Written by its South Asia Correspondent the opening paragraph of the article states: "Sri Lanka was yesterday accused of planning concentration camps to hold 200,000 ethnic Tamil refugees from its northern conflict zone for up to three years." The whole purpose of the article was show that the fleeing villagers were being held as prisoners within barbed wire fencing. The author of the article was also careful to quote elements hostile to the Sri Lankan Government. One of them British Labour MP Robert Evans was quoted as having said, "These are not Welfare camps, they are prisoner of war cum concentration camps." Human Rights Watch called them detention Centres. Amnesty goes one better and accuse the army of taking these civilians hostage. What people like Evans, a known Tiger sympathizer and who is beholden to the substantial Tamil community of his borough to get elected, should know is that Sri Lankan Security Forces would have completed the war by now if only it did not have to contend with the civilian population kept as a human shield by the LTTE. What makes him think that the Army will spare these innocent civilians now only make them inmates of a concentration camp when they have escaped the danger and sought refuge with the soldiers. What kind of logic is that? And the civilians come on their own volition without being herded forcibly into Gas chambers. Ironically the Times in a subsequent editorial goes onto dwell Britain's record vis-a-vis concentration camps. It says: "The concentration camps set up by Lord Kitchener to intern Boer women and children were officially intended to shelter civilians while the British forces conducted a scorched earth policy to deprive Boer combatants of food and shelter. In fact, they were places of brutality hardship and death. More than 26,000 people died in some 50 makeshift camps across South Africa." As stated by SCOP chief Prof Rajiva Wijesinha in an apt response to the article, far from engaging in the British or German practise of starvation and death the Sri Lankan Government is feeding and sheltering these people, providing health facilities and seeing to their education and all

Needed, a diplomatic offensive

aspect of their welfare. It appears that this unrelenting campaign against the Government is not going end with the Western Media sharpening their daggers even in the face of the utmost care and precautions taken to follow a zero casualty policy in this final phase of the war. The sheer distortion of the humanitarian situation in the Vanni by BBC and even Al-jazeera bears out this fact. In the coming days this campaign is bound to intensify with a view to try and halt the final military offensive to flush out the terrorists. This would be the ideal time for the Government carry out an extensive diplomatic offensive to bring the true situation of the civilians held hostage by the **LTTE** to the world's attention and the Government's humanitarian mission to rescue these hapless beings from three decades of tyranny. No doubt the President is aware of the crucial stage in which the nation is now poised. True, the war has reached that stage where there can be only one outcome. However there are sinister forces who will want to spoil the sweet victory that is within our grasp by painting a distorted picture to the unfolding human drama. No room should be left to turn the tide against the gains achieved through the blood sacrifice of our heroic soldiers. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

45 WOUNDED IN PARCEL BOMB BLAST IN COLOMBO

UNI (United News of India)

August 30, 2008 Saturday 9:55 PM EST

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Length: 214 words

Byline: Report from UNI brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug 30 (UNI) Forty five civilians were injured when suspected Tamil Tiger guerillas exploded a parcel bomb at Olcott Mawatha in Pettah, a busy commercial area in Colombo today, defence sources here said. The Defence Ministry said the bomb kept inside a parcel near the wristwatch selling outlet at Olcott Mawatha exploded around 1215 hrs (local time). "Few of the victims who suffered severe injuries were already taken for immediate surgeries. Four women and two children were also among the injured," the Defence Ministry quoted the hospital sources as saying. Earlier, security forces uncovered accessories of suicide jackets, including detonators, switches and few other items from a Catholic Church premises in Olcott Mawatha in Pettah on August 22. Meanwhile, a statement from the President's office on the blast urged the public "to remain vigilant in the face of the LTTEs attempts to disrupt public life and cause death and destruction, as it faces severe setbacks due to military operations in the North." According to military sources, there was every indication that the explosion was caused by the LTTE terrorist, as part of its campaign of terror to win its separatist demands," the statement said.

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Load-Date: August 30, 2008

World - Amnesty accuses Sri Lankan fighters of risking civilian lives

Morning Star

August 16, 2008 Saturday

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Length: 271 words

Body

Amnesty International accused Sri Lanka and separatist guerillas on Friday of jeopardising thousands of civilian lives in pursuit of military objectives and called on the belligerents to let thousands of displaced families move to safe areas where they can receive aid.

Amnesty reported that government aerial bombardment and artillery shelling since May has forced more than 70,000 people to flee their homes.

The human rights group estimates that a third of these families are living without shelter.

Some families have been forced to move several times and many cannot receive food, tarpaulins for temporary shelters or fuel.

This is due to a lack of access to areas controlled by the **Tamil Tigers** separatists and restrictions on goods going through Omanthai, the crossing point between government and Tamil Tiger-controlled territories.

Amnesty Sri Lanka researcher Yolanda Foster said: "These people are running out of places to go and basic necessities.

"The Tigers are keeping them in harm's way and the government is not doing enough to ensure they receive essential assistance."

Amnesty has received reports that government housing for those who escaped Tamil Tiger areas often operates as de facto detention camps.

Lack of cement to build enough toilets and washrooms has forced people to use open bathing facilities and the lack of adequate privacy for **women** and girls has led to a notable increase in reports of sexual violence, according to Amnesty.

Ms Foster said: "Both sides to this long conflict have again shown that they will jeopardise the lives of thousands of ordinary people in the pursuit of military objectives."

Load-Date: August 18, 2008

Eastern election can lead to new discontents

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 6, 2008 Tuesday 3:46 PM EST

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Length: 1400 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 6 -- Those visiting Trincomalee in the east even for a short time would be impressed by the evidence of developmental work taking place that is changing the landscape. The most obvious work that is being done is the reconstruction of the road network. Large tracts of the highway connecting the town to Colombo are partially closed off on one side, as the road is being widened and resurfaced. This gives rise to clouds of red dust and to slow moving traffic. There are also evident signs of new buildings coming up. The construction of a new market in Trincomalee town will be one of its crowning jewels.

Trincomalee would appear to be a success story of the government's strategy of clearing out the east of the LTTE, restoring normalcy and unleashing the forces of development that will improve the lives of the people. There was general agreement that the security situation had improved in the past several months. The strengthened presence of the security forces after the declaration of elections has also contributed to the lessening of incidents of violence.

The improving conditions of security have also contributed to the possibilities of doing a larger quantum of development work. The remainder of the tsunami reconstruction work, for which there was a massive outpouring of international generosity, is taking place at a faster pace, mostly by NGOs. In these circumstances there is likely to be a sense of confidence within government that the forthcoming provincial elections will yield victory to the government and to its ally, the TMVP.

However, the problems that continue to exist in Trincomalee, and which can go against the government, cannot be underestimated. Despite the flurry of developmental activity, Trincomalee remains a very poor town, which does not befit the capital city of a province. Most of the shops are single storey ones, with a battered appearance. Likewise most of the houses have a run down appearance. The major investments presently being made on the roads, public buildings and other infrastructure, including massive electrical power generation projects, will only yield their fruits to the people in the years to come, but not immediately.

But even more significant than the continuing poverty of the region is the absence of peaceful conditions and prospects for peace in the foreseeable future. In the absence of a peace process between the government and LTTE, there is a sense that the improvement in the security situation is a reversible one, and that the dip in violence will be temporary. The intensity of the fighting at Muhamalai in the north, and the shifting of the theatre of military confrontation from Madhu in the west of the LTTE-controlled Wanni region to the government-controlled Weli Oya in the east which adjoins the Trincomalee district suggests how rapidly the theatre of war can shift.

Strategic area

Eastern election can lead to new discontents

With its internationally strategic harbour and also being the connecting district between the Northern Province and the Eastern Province, Trincomalee is a strategic area. As the northernmost district of the Eastern Province, which borders the LTTE-dominated parts of the Northern Province, the possibility of infiltration by the LTTE is high. This may also explain the lesser visibility of the anti-LTTE and pro-eastern TMVP in Trincomalee.

Unlike in the Batticaloa and sections of the Ampara districts of the east which are the strongholds of the Eastern Tamil identity, and where the TMVP presence is marked, in Trincomalee it is the presence of the Sri Lankan military is marked. This suggests that the TMVP will be less well positioned to in Trincomalee to take advantage of their position of being an armed group to intimidate their political rivals.

One of the most controversial features of the forthcoming elections in the east is that the TMVP continues to retain its weapons despite opposition and civil society protests. This means that, by definition, the elections are seriously flawed at the outset, and cannot be considered to be either free or fair. The basic requirement for a free and fair election is that all the contesting parties are unarmed and not in a position to intimidate both their political rivals as well as voters who will be fearful to cross the path of the armed party. On the other hand, it is widely accepted that so long as the LTTE is armed, it will seek to destroy any serious Tamil political rival, who therefore need to keep their arms if only for self defense.s

Reports from the east, particularly from the Tamil dominated parts of the Batticaloa and Ampara districts indicate that the TMVP has been able to subject their political opponents to a high degree of intimidation. Although TMVP candidates canvass for votes without the open use of guns, the power of the guns they keep behind the scene and are prepared to use is also known to the people and to their political competitors. In parts of the east, in Batticaloa and Amparai, the TMVP's posters are pasted all over while those of rival political parties are barely to be seen, and when seen have been blacked out.

By way of contrast, in the Trincomalee district, the public campaigning on the part of all contesting parties, including the TMVP, appears to be at a low level. As a result, the voters in the district are less likely to be intimidated by the TMVP and will have a relative autonomy in choosing for whom they will vote. Nevertheless the fear psychosis among the Tamil voters in the district is so high that they did not wish to say who their preferred party was, unlike the Muslims and Sinhalese voters who are more forthright in their expressions.

Complex decision

The decision about which party to vote for is likely to be especially complex for the Tamil voters in the east. The improved security situation, the military upper hand obtained by the government and the proliferation of development projects would weigh the balance in favour of the government. A recent public opinion poll by the Centre for Policy Alternatives has highlighted the fact that the economic difficulties facing the people are the biggest problem for all ethnic communities. At the same time the survey also showed that the issue of a peaceful settlement is especially important to the Tamil people who are the main victims of the war and the human rights violations that result from it.

The long stalling on the part of the government to come up with a credible power sharing proposal to the ethnic conflict and restart the peace process with the LTTE, coupled with slow military progress in the north, points to the possibility of the war being extended indefinitely. During the course of the escalated conflict for the past two years, they have been subjected to large scale displacement and other human rights violations, including child recruitment, abduction of women and political assassinations. The motivation for the Tamil voters of the east to cast their votes against the government can be strong.

On the other hand, the traditional rivalry between the Tamil and Muslim communities for dominance in the east has also surfaced during the present election campaign. In the absence of a comprehensive population survey of both the Northern and Eastern provinces, there remains a doubt as to the actual population composition of these two provinces. At the last full census that took place in 1981, the Tamils were shown to be the largest community in the Eastern Province, followed by the Muslims. It is now believed that the Muslims are the largest. This means that the post of Chief Minister of the Eastern Province is within their reach.

Eastern election can lead to new discontents

A flawed electoral process that combines intimidation of voters and rival political parties by the armed cadres of the TMVP with the government misuse of state resources as already reported by election monitors could lead to a high level of Muslim discontent. With the government bringing in Iran to the centre stage of the country's foreign policy, the potential for the Muslim population to seek solidarity with their co-religionists internationally in the face of unjust deprivation is now higher than ever. Whoever wins the election and leads the Eastern Province will have a major responsibility to heal the wounds of a politically and ethnically decisive election which is being held under abnormal conditions.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

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12 Police Constables killed in suicide blast

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 17, 2008 Tuesday 3:22 PM EST

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Length: 229 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 17 -- Twelve Police Constables were killed and another 23 including three schoolchildren injured when an **LTTE** suicide cadre riding a motorcycle blew himself opposite the Vavuniya Senior Superintendent of Police complex last morning.

Police media spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekera said the Tiger suicide cadre exploded himself along the Vavuniya-Medawachchiya main road opposite the SSP office complex in Vavuniya yesterday around 7.15 a.m.

"Nine Police Constables and three **Women** Police Constables were killed on the spot and 23 others including three schoolchildren and a civilian were injured," he added.

"When the **LTTE** suicide cadre blew himself, a number of police personnel were stepping out of the SSP premises after they had been deployed for different tasks and to different police posts," SSP Gunasekera told the Daily News.

According to Vavuniya hospital sources, 17 Police Constables and two **Women** Police Constables were among the injured.

The injured police personnel and two schoolchildren were admitted to the Anuradhapura Hospital while a child and a civilian were treated at the Vavuniya Hospital. Vavuniya SSP Bernard Silva was not in his office when the Tiger suicide cadre blew himself.

Police and Security Forces launched a search operation and intensified security in the area.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

Firm resolve to defeat terrorism, evolve political solution

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 19, 2008 Wednesday 12:50 PM EST

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Length: 2038 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 19 -- Our development strategy towards empowering the rural economy of our country, where majority of our people live, has now become relevant to the global economy itself in the context of the emerging world food crisis and environmental challenges to our own survival. We have an additional burden.

We are threatened by the challenge of terrorism and the need to protect the rights of our fellow beings.

Sri Lanka where I was born and bred is a country where our culture is firmly rooted in rural tradition. The Sri Lankan culture has been essentially conditioned by the great religion of Buddhism, but later influenced by Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

Great legacy

It is not surprising then that in a world where rulers constructed massive castles and grand palaces to demonstrate their power and wealth, our kings constructed huge reservoirs - tanks, as we call them to provide water to sustain food production and ensure sustainable livelihood to the people. The great legacy left behind by our ancient rulers, and which is in use even today scattered across three vast provinces of my island home, is the massive irrigation network.

Buddhism taught us that we have no absolute ownership of the forests, the rivers, the oceans and the atmosphere that sustain life; that every generation holds the environment in trust, so that its abuse is prevented; and that our duty was to hand down the environment to future generations without harm.

Even today, over 77 per cent of our people still live in rural areas because of a wide range of attractions in our rural home base. I myself hail from the deep south, from an agrarian village with a beautiful natural environment.

I am extremely proud of that fact. The attraction in our villages is not only the economic resources and greenery, but also the traditional culture, arts, religion and bio-diversity which are incentives to keep our people away from migrating into urban townships.

The horrors of poverty and suffering that have engulfed many booming Asian cities have not affected Sri Lanka.

Democracy

Strengthened by the caring attitude inherited from our ancient rulers, we were able to adapt to modern democracy with great ease. It was in 1931, while still under the British, that Sri Lanka was granted universal franchise.

Firm resolve to defeat terrorism, evolve political solution

You will recall that Britain achieved this status only in 1926. Since then we have continued to develop and strengthen democratic institutions in Sri Lanka. Political pluralism has always been fundamental to our democracy. We have parties of different political views represented in our Parliament.

This diversity uniquely enriches Sri Lanka's political canvass. The Government, although elected by a Sinhala Buddhist majority, represents a coalition of Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim communities and all the religious groups in the country. You will be hard pressed to find a similarly representative Government in any of the other democracies of the world. I am proud of our vibrant parliamentary system, the strong judicial establishment, and the independent press.

Women in Sri Lanka enjoy equal opportunities with men. Over 60 per cent of our medical practitioners are women. Over 80 per cent of our teachers are women.

The nursing profession is dominated by women. The legal profession too is increasingly dominated by women. Women have also entered sections of the work force previously monopolised by men such as, academia, engineering, computing, quantity surveying and architecture.

I recall with great delight that Sri Lanka produced world's first elected woman Prime Minister in 1960. Her husband, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was also a prime minister of Sri Lanka.

Highest literacy

For decades we have invested in education and health. My country enjoys one of the highest literacy standards in the world, while still being categorised as a middle income developing country and more than 97 per cent of our children are enrolled at school.

Our infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate at child birth, is on par with that of many developed countries. The country provides free healthcare to all. Education is free and universal from childhood to university. During the primary and secondary school life of every child the government provides free text books and uniforms.

One of my long-lasting joys is the sight of thousands of children in crispy white uniforms heading for school each morning. This is probably a sight that one cannot witness in many other places of the world. Children are precious to us. I believe they are our future. We have ensured a massive investment in our children.

children's Welfare

My Government firmly believes that no child must be deprived of his or her childhood. We have created a separate ministry to look after the welfare of our children. We do not employ any children in our labour force, and no one below the age of 18 is recruited to our Armed Forces - unlike the LTTE, which engages thousands in its baby brigades.

These children are robbed of their childhood, and brutality is ingrained into their character, making them life-long misfits for society.

Sri Lanka has achieved a very high standard in the United Nations Human Development Index, and we have already, to a large extent, achieved the Millennium Development Goals.

There are no signs of obvious starvation in any part of the country. In fact for over 25 years, since the beginning of the LTTE's violent challenge to our very existence, to our sovereignty, the Government has been sending food, medicine and educational material to the two districts dominated by the LTTE.

Every single teacher, nurse, doctor, hospital and government official in the LTTE controlled areas is appointed and paid by the Government. Very few countries grappling with terrorism have been so accommodating. This itself illustrates the caring nature of our society. These noteworthy achievements have been possible because of a holistic view of human development to which we have always been firmly committed. We believe that development

Firm resolve to defeat terrorism, evolve political solution

becomes meaningful to the vast mass of the people only when its fruits are capable of being enjoyed by all segments of the people.

Our development model as presented in my election manifesto, the Mahinda Chintana, signifies the empowerment of the rural economy.

The centrepiece of this new strategy will be the development of modern infrastructure throughout the country to provide a basis for development of agriculture, industry, construction, tourism, SMEs and transport services that will bring about new opportunities to our people in the rural economy.

Our strategy has enhanced the public investments over 6 per cent of GDP to support Randora - meaning Golden Gate - our infrastructure development initiative to develop new ports, power generation and distribution networks, and integrated townships to the link rural economy to the global economy and create new space for growth.

We have integrated strategies to promote insurance, shipping, aviation, trade, logistic industries and petroleum explorations, and above all, skills and knowledge to position Sri Lanka as an emerging economic hub in South Asia.

Gama Neguma

Empowering people at grass roots level is equally important in this whole development process. Gama Neguma meaning revival of the village, is an initiative to empower communities, adopting bottom up programmes originating from communities and reflecting their needs.

A series of rural development initiatives have been implemented, permitting the community to prioritise their needs and objectives. These initiatives are monitored by community leaders to ensure that a larger volume of resources are productively used for the betterment of the rural community. The main thrust of this programme is to retain people in rural environments, rather than encouraging them to move into urban areas; which has been the pattern in many developing economies.

Achievements

Why should people move into urban areas and live in slums or sub-standard housing, when they can live in very healthy environments in villages, and enjoy clean air, water and pure and good food. It is my belief that rural people are much healthier than those who live in urban cities.

Consolidating our achievements in human resource development, we are now working towards a knowledge economy based on productivity, skills, knowledge and technology. Therefore, education and health is being undertaken at grass roots level through multi-faceted government programmes. In particular, I am very keen to ensure that our children are able to become global citizens through the use of Information Technology.

The essence of our rural empowerment programme is to ensure that rural infrastructure development takes place at a rapid rate. So far neglected rural roads are being paved today with concrete to make them last the monsoon rains that are common in our part of the world. Rural electricity programmes, community water supply schemes, minor irrigation projects, housing and market facilities are included in our rural infrastructure development drive.

In essence our strategy is to level the playing field between the 'urban, organised minority' and the 'rural, unorganised majority', in the national development process. I am encouraged that our development strategy - Mahinda Chintana - Vision Towards a New Sri Lanka, sustained a near 7 per cent economic growth during the last three years, and reached US dollars 1,600 per capita income in 2007. Except in one district, people below the poverty line have declined drastically in 2007.

Challenged

Unfortunately we are being challenged by "the most brutal terrorist group in the world" as the LTTE has been described by the FBI. Suicide killings using even women and children have become their hallmark.

Firm resolve to defeat terrorism, evolve political solution

They killed Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, and Ranasinghe Premadasa, the former President of Sri Lanka.

A senior Minister of my government, a Tamil speaking Catholic, was brutally murdered by a suicide killer, along with a former Olympic athlete among many others participating in a sporting event. They also killed our former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, a scholar of distinction, and legal luminary. The LTTE is the most brutal terror outfit the world has ever seen, and defeating them requires global support.

What Sri Lanka is doing, in my opinion, is fighting this terror outfit single handed to ensure that democracy and respect for human life prevail in the world. If we fail in our war against the LTTE, the world will fail in its fight against terrorism, and democracy will be the victim. This is the plain truth.

There is a considerable challenge to the Security Forces of my country, whose goal is simply to protect the innocents and their simple way of life.

We need to understand that our Security Forces do not go out of their way to harass innocents, or to discriminate against a minority.

It is the terrorist group that decides when to strike: They decide the time, the place and the opportunity. They are in no way constrained by the values and procedures which rightly control the responses of democratic Governments. These realities must be taken into account as the basis of a fair and objective assessment of Sri Lanka's situation.

success

Although many have said that the LTTE is invincible, we have freed our Eastern Province of their terror. Within one year we have restored democracy thereafter nearly two decades.

As our Forces seek to defeat and disarm the LTTE, we are firm in our resolve to have a negotiated solution to the crisis in Sri Lanka.

I do not believe in a military solution. We have attempted talks with the LTTE on several occasions - thrice since my election as the President - but they have not reciprocated. They have always left the talks with lame excuses. We are still ready to talk, once we are certain of their genuine intent for a political solution... and their readiness to give up arms.

The protection and advancement of human rights continues to be a challenge for all of us, not only in Sri Lanka but globally. I only seek to encourage you to think of Sri Lanka as a country that has achieved considerable success in caring for its citizens.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: November 19, 2008

Rajiv Gandhi statue damaged in Chennai

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 25, 2008 Saturday 1:44 PM EST

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Length: 248 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 25 -- Miscreants damaged a statue of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in Chennai yesterday while in a separate incident the office of the Janata Party was attacked in Madurai, official sources said.

The statue of Rajiv Gandhi, in the northern suburbs of the city, was damaged by unidentified people, police said. A Janata Party spokesperson attributed the attack on their office to "anti-Indian elements opposed by our leader Dr Subramanian Swamy". "We have filed a complaint with the police," he told IANS.

Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated by a **female** suicide bomber Dhanu in 1991, and Janata party leader Subramanian Swamy are considered symbols against the banned Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam - who are currently facing losses against the Sri Lankan Army. Secessionist elements in Tamil Nadu are apparently targeting them to kindle sedition.

Meanwhile, over 500 workers of the MDMK were arrested for protesting against Thursday's arrest of their leaders Vaiko and M. Kannappan for allegedly fomenting secessionist violence.

The duo have been remanded to judicial custody and housed in the high security Puzhal prison here.

Congress workers blocked traffic in the northern suburbs here in protest against the damage to the statue of Rajiv Gandhi. Workers of a pro-**LTTE** group yesterday ransacked the office of Janata Party here protesting against 'anti-**LTTE**' stand of party president Subramanian Swamy.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: October 25, 2008

Action in Sri Lanka; Letters to the Editor

The Times (London)
February 13, 2009 Friday
Edition 1

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THE TIMES

Section: LETTERS; Pg. 35

Length: 245 words

Body

Sir, I agree that there should be an immediate, unconditional ceasefire by both sides in Sri Lanka (Bronwen Maddox, World Briefing, Feb 12). However, I also believe that the time has come for the UN Secretary- General, Ban Ki Moon, to demand that a United Nations peacekeeping mission be allowed access to the country to avoid a civilian bloodbath.

Reports from the country say that the remaining doctors and medical staff in the LTTE (Tamil Tiger)- controlled area in the north of Sri Lanka have been ordered to leave. The Sri Lankan Government has urged Tamil civilians to come over to its side, but there is a natural reluctance and fear of such a move. Equally there are stories suggesting that the LTTE will shoot anyone who tries to escape from the remaining area under its control.

The Tamil people have seen so much death and destruction. They are terrified of Sri Lankan troops and their "holding camps", not to mention their different language. There could be as many as 250,000 men, women and children massacred in the next few days, unless the international community acts immediately.

In addition, I am calling on the United Nations and the international community as a whole, to demand that the Sri Lankan Government allow humanitarian aid to these people and full access for the world press and media corps. Time is running out. This help must be delivered as a priority.

ROBERT EVANS, MEP Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with South Asia

Load-Date: February 15, 2009

Civilians butchered in Sri Lanka

Sunday Tribune (Ireland)

February 15, 2009

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Section: NEWS; Pg. N18

Length: 467 words

Byline: Andrew Buncombe

Body

All but hidden from view of the outside world, a bitter and savage civil war being waged in the north of Sri Lanka is creating a humanitarian crisis in which hundreds of thousands of civilians are at risk.

Sri Lankan troops say they are close to crushing the remnants of the once potent Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***). Yet the military operation comes with a high price tag for civilians.

Aid groups and officials say that many dozens of civilians trapped in the war zone are being killed and wounded every day. Determined to press ahead with their operation against a guerilla force that has in the past ruthlessly attacked both military and civilian targets, the Sri Lankan government refuses to effect a ceasefire that would allow the evacuation of wounded people. It has also shut off the area from the outside world.

"Civilians are continuing to be killed in large numbers in the (war zone)," said UN spokesman Gordon Weiss. "We are also hearing reports of people - children - dying because of diarrhoea-related diseases."

The fighting taking place in the Mullaitivu district of Sri Lanka is the conclusion of more than a year of renewed conflict between the ***LTTE*** and government troops following the termination of a shaky ceasefire agreement last January. Sri Lanka's president Mahinda Rajapaksa has been determined to crush the rebels, seemingly with little regard for death and misery wrought on the civilian population - a state of affairs he claims has been exaggerated by aid groups and the media.

This week, however, the world had a rare glimpse of the horrors suffered by the Tamil population, trapped between the government troops and rebels. Hundreds of wounded people were taken by the Red Cross by ferry from a makeshift clinic in the war-zone town of Putamattalan to a hospital in the eastern city of Trincomalee. Many of those who were injured were fired on by ***LTTE*** fighters when they tried to cross the frontline to the government side.

Aid groups have complained of ordinary people being used as human shields, and last week a ***female*** suicide bomber, reportedly dispatched by the Tigers, killed around 30 civilians and troops at a checkpoint. Yesterday, the Sri Lankan military said that one civilian was killed and another 13 wounded after a rebel threw a hand grenade into a bus of Tamil refugees.

The Sri Lankan government has also been widely criticised. Humanitarian officials have said that civilians inside a supposed safe zone were killed by artillery shells fired by both sides. A hospital also repeatedly came under fire and had to be evacuated, meaning there was no longer a properly-equipped facility operating inside the war zone.

Civilians butchered in Sri Lanka

Yesterday, a spokeswoman for the Red Cross said it was still talking with both sides to enter the conflict zone and evacuate more people.

Load-Date: February 17, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lanka slams OHCHR

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 10, 2008 Tuesday 4:09 PM EST

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Length: 439 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 10 -- Sri Lanka yesterday slammed the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) saying the office needed to be better represented in terms of geographical representation as only then would the government have confidence in its operations.

Deputy Solicitor General Shavindra Fernando speaking at a meeting of the United Nation Human Rights Council in Geneva also hit out at the European Union for being critical of the government but failing to criticise the **LTTE** for last week's attacks on civilians.

"Let me first refer to the references made by Slovenia, on behalf of the EU and other EU countries, The Netherlands, France and Britain.

My Ambassador, two days ago, advised the EU with an appropriate biblical quote to point its searchlight inwards before reaching outwards.

However, the words of wisdom in Mathew 7:3 do not seem to have had their desired effect. We regret that none of these countries mentioned above made any reference to the tragedies that happened in my country. Two busses carrying civilians, men, **women** and children, were targeted by the **LTTE**, killing over 23 persons and injuring more than 70. Further, two more bombs, one with more than 40 kilograms of explosives, were detected and defused today preventing further disaster and calamity. This, Mr. President, is the threat civilians have to face day in and day out. The most important human right of all, the right to life, is being violated due to terrorist acts of the **LTTE**," Mr. Fernando said.

He reiterated the Sri Lanka government would not give room for the establishment of a human rights monitoring office in Sri Lanka, a position already made clear at the recent Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the Human Rights Council.

"Although we hold the High Commissioner Louise Arbour in high esteem, the same cannot be said about the OHCHR. This Council as well as the former Human Rights Commission have passed many resolutions requesting that the OHCHR be better represented in terms of geographical representation. Little has been done to give effect to such resolutions. Once the OHCHR is better represented, it may be possible for countries like Sri Lanka to have more confidence in the OHCHR," Mr. Fernando said.

He said that while appreciating the need for speedy access to humanitarian aid, security concerns could not and would not be compromised and thanked Japan for the sympathies extended to the victims of the bus bomb

Sri Lanka slams OHCHR

tragedies and its pledge of technical assistance and human resource training to enhance the capacity of our national institutions.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

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SRI LANKA: NO LESSONS LEARNT FROM 'BLACK JULY' OF 1983

IPS - Inter Press Service

July 23, 2008 Wednesday

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Length: 1283 words

Byline: Feizal Samath

Dateline: COLOMBO, Jul 23 2008

Body

On the eve of the 25th anniversary of the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom in Sri Lanka there are few signs that any positive lessons have been learnt from the gory events that changed this island nation's history and sent a once booming economy into a downward trajectory.

Pakiasothy Saravanamuttu, executive director of the think tank Centre for Policy Alternatives and an often-quoted political analyst, says billions of dollars have since been spent on the quarter century of ethnic strife that followed 'Black July'.

"We are nowhere near a solution than we ever were," he said, adding that the present government does not seem interested in a negotiated settlement.

Most victims from the Tamil minority community are reluctant to speak about the terrible tragedy that befell them on July 24, 1983 and thereafter. "Why talk about the past?" said one elderly Tamil woman when asked to comment.

Widespread riots broke out in Colombo and southern Sri Lanka a day after 13 government soldiers were killed in an ambush by Tamil rebels in the northern city of Tamil-dominated Jaffna. Angry mobs from the majority Sinhalese community retaliated by attacking and killing Tamil residents, raping their women and setting fire to homes and shops. The pogrom followed bouts of anti-Tamil violence in 1958 and 1977.

A Tamil industrialist K. Vignarajah spoke of how his wife, who owned and managed two garment factories that were razed to the ground, was devastated by the events. "Sarada (wife) was shocked and shattered by the events. We lost a house too but thank God nothing happened to us," he said, adding that soon after that the couple and their 10-year-old daughter left for Britain.

"Sri Lanka would have been a paradise and even better than Singapore if not for this conflict," Vignarajah, now an international consultant on garments and a stock market investor, says. "It was the absurdity of chauvinistic politicians who are responsible for this situation. We have many friends amongst the Sinhalese," he added.

Vignarajah's daughter lives and works in Britain, but he, after spending time in the southern Indian city of Chennai, has returned to Sri Lanka.

Around 1981-82, Sri Lanka -- the first South Asia country to liberalise its economy, far ahead of India -- had a booming economy and was heading for the kind of prosperity enjoyed by the 'Asian Tiger' economies when the conflict reversed the trend.

SRI LANKA : NO LESSONS LEARNT FROM 'BLACK JULY' OF 1983

Will Sri Lanka ever recover from this crisis? Noted peace activist Jehan Perera believes the situation has improved compared to the pre-1983 period as people now freely speak out on Tamil rights and Tamil autonomy. "Unlike earlier there is no animosity by the Sinhalese against the Tamils. Earlier because of the Tamil insurgency (and demands for an independent homeland), many Sinhalese saw the Tamils as their enemy."

Perera added that there is a widespread view that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which has been leading the war against Colombo to secure a separate homeland in the north and east of the island for the Tamil minority, must be "crushed". "This is not an anti-Tamil feeling," he insists.

During the July 1984 riots many Sinhalese residents saved the lives and properties of Tamils from the gangs defying a curfew to maraud and rampage. Some Tamils were sheltered in Sinhalese houses during the violence as the mostly Sinhalese police and military looked on. The estimates of casualties varied from between 400 to 3,000 Tamils dead while more than 18,000 houses and commercial establishments were razed to the ground.

Hundreds of thousands of Tamils fled the country to India, Europe, Australia and Canada while Tamil youth joined various Tamil militant groups, including the LTTE, in droves. The LTTE later emerged as the most ruthless guerrilla group in the world, set up funding and promotion offices overseas and coerced Tamil expatriates to fund their war machine.

Many professionals from other communities have also left the country and still remain out as Sri Lanka struggles to contain a conflict that has cost more than 80,000 lives -- including combatants from among the military, the rebels, and civilians -- besides untold billions worth of damage and lost opportunities. Tourism, among the country's chief revenue earners, is now struggling to recover while garments exports and remittances from over a million Sri Lankan workers in the Middle East make up for the main earnings now.

Since 1983, the total economic loss, according to some estimates in 1998, is 1.27 times of Sri Lanka's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while a million people have been displaced internally. However, the economy has grown at a creditable five percent on an average annually since 1983 while drawing small levels of foreign investment.

The 33-month-old government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, after a couple of months trying to talk to the LTTE, launched a military offensive two years ago that has seen a great degree of success. The rebels have largely been driven away from the eastern region and have suffered serious reverses in parts of their main stronghold in the north.

Journalists are not permitted into the war zones. The few conducted trips by the military are not enough for an independent assessment of what parts remain under LTTE control or where its reclusive leader Velupillai Prabhakaran operates from. Kilinochchi, the town where the rebels have their official headquarters, is constantly being bombed by government war planes.

"I can't see any peace (in the near term)," says Saravanamuttu, adding that the army commander who said the rebels would be destroyed by the end of 2008 now says it would take the whole of 2009. "Even if the government succeeds in chasing the Tigers from their headquarters, they will go into the jungle and resort to guerrilla warfare as before, unless there is a political settlement."

Perhaps the worst consequence of the protracted conflict has been the rising level lawlessness in society prompted by a sense of impunity that soem say has origins in the fact that none of the perpetrators of the 1983 violence were brought to trial. Human rights violations, by all parties, have steadily increased over the years.

Lately, the number of abductions of civilians -- mostly Tamils suspected of being connected to the LTTE -- has intensified, while assaults and harassment of journalists, critical of the war, have increased. This has not helped the cause of Tamil-Sinhalese amity.

Clashes between the Tamils and the Sinhalese majority originated with British colonial rulers favouring the Tamils in administrative, educational, and economic situations. Post independence the situation reversed with the majority

SRI LANKA : NO LESSONS LEARNT FROM 'BLACK JULY' OF 1983

community ruling the country and cornering plum jobs and the larger chunk of resources. Soon Sinhalese and Tamil sub-nationalism began to grow and became sharply polarised.

"I am not bitter and have no regrets but I feel sad for my country," says Chris Kamalendran, an experienced Tamil journalist and a victim of the riots. Kamalendran, living with his father, mother and other family members in the predominantly Sinhalese town of Homagama, south of Colombo, saw a mob --of mostly neighbours -- set fire and loot the family home. "I was angry, hurt and wanted revenge," he recalled, adding that he was restrained by moderate Sinhalese friends.

Kamalendran -- like many Tamils and Sinhalese -- is desperate for a solution in his lifetime so that "my daughter won't suffer". Believing in communal amity, he has married a Sinhalese woman and has a daughter who follows Buddhism, the majority religion. But, he says, the problem will drag on "until a national leader capable of providing a viable political settlement emerges".

Load-Date: August 14, 2008

End of Document

Four killed as Tamil Tiger rebels fire at bus: military

Agence France Presse -- English

July 11, 2008 Friday 11:07 AM GMT

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Length: 249 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, July 11 2008

Body

At least four people were killed and 26 injured Friday when Tamil Tiger rebels opened fire on a bus in southern Sri Lanka, the defence ministry said.

The incident took place just south of the capital Colombo in Buttala, police said, adding that the injured had been taken to nearby hospitals for treatment.

"Two **females** and a 12-year-old child were among the victims killed when **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) terrorists opened fire at the civilian bus," the ministry said. The fourth victim died shortly after admission to hospital.

In January, 25 people died when rebels set off a roadside mine in the same area, hitting a crowded passenger bus.

Sri Lanka's rebels have been waging a war against the government since 1972 to carve out a separate homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east.

Fighting is currently centred around the north, but the rebels routinely carry out attacks against military, economic and civilian targets elsewhere on the island.

At least 19 Tamil Tiger rebels and two soldiers were killed as both sides exchanged sniper fire across the island's northern regions on Thursday, the ministry said Friday.

The **LTTE** did not comment on Friday's bus attack or fighting in the north.

The latest figure given by the ministry raises the number of rebels killed by government forces to 4,859 since January, while 435 soldiers have died in the same period.

Casualty figures cannot be verified as the defence ministry bars journalists from travelling to the frontlines.

Load-Date: July 12, 2008

'There should be an unconditional ceasefire by both sides'

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 14, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 261 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 14 -- There should be an immediate, unconditional ceasefire by both sides in Sri Lanka, Times Online UK quoted Robert Evans, MEP, and Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with South Asia said.

However, he also said the time has come for the UN Secretary- General, Ban Ki Moon, to demand that a United Nations peacekeeping mission be allowed access to the country to avoid a civilian bloodbath. "Reports from the country say that the remaining doctors and medical staff in the **LTTE** (Tamil Tiger)-controlled area in the north of Sri Lanka have been ordered to leave. The Sri Lankan Government has urged Tamil civilians to come over to its side, but there is a natural reluctance and fear of such a move. Equally there are stories suggesting that the **LTTE** will shoot anyone who tries to escape from the remaining area under its control,' he said. Evans said the Tamil people have seen so much death and destruction. They are terrified of Sri Lankan troops and their "holding camps", not to mention their different language. There could be as many as 250,000 men, **women** and children massacred in the next few days, unless the international community acts immediately. "In addition, I am calling on the United Nations and the international community as a whole, to demand that the Sri Lankan Government allow humanitarian aid to these people and full access for the world press and media corps. Time is running out. This help must be delivered as a priority," he said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Navy rescues civilian captives in Mullaitivu

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 2, 2009 Monday

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Length: 246 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 2 -- The Lanka Navy has facilitated rescuing of 281 civilians held captive by the **LTTE** terrorists in Mullaitivu.

Navy said the 6th batch of civilians including patients requiring immediate medical attention was transported to Trincomalee by the 'MV Greed Ocean' on Saturday. The Navy provided the safe passage for the vessel carrying civilians from Mullaitivu and received the passengers at Trincomalee harbour. Navy medical teams provided immediate medical treatment to the needy patients upon disembarkation and rushed them to the government hospital Trincomalee for further treatment. The government has chartered MV Green Ocean in order to rescue civilians held as human shield by the **LTTE** terrorists in Mullaitivu. The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) sails the ship under its flag. The government hospital of Trincomalee has been sufficiently staffed and provided with adequate stocks of medicine by the Lankan Health Ministry in order to meet the requirement. According to the Navy source, the last batch of civilians included 95 men, 128 **women** and 58 children. Out of them 65 men and 72 **females** were patients. From 10th February 2009, Sri Lanka navy has assisted rescuing of 1907 civilians including large number of patients by MV Green Ocean. This was in addition to the large number of civilians rescued by Sri Lanka navy sea units deployed in the Northeastern coastal waters. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Safety of Wanni civilians: A priority for the Government

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 22, 2008 Wednesday 1:30 PM EST

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Length: 1264 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 22 -- One of the most common fabrications being spread about by those working against the Government is that a large number of civilians are being killed in air strikes. Nobody likes conflict and it is easy to conjure up images of death and destruction being rained down from the air - we've all seen plenty of war films. It is not just fiction, of course. Air strikes have a thoroughly ugly past, and people tend to believe these stories without feeling the need to ask for supporting evidence. But they simply are not true.

Just this week, a British Member of Parliament called for an urgent debate on the conflict in Sri Lanka because of his concern about what he described as 'Government bombing of areas in the North and East of the country.'

Barry Gardiner, representing a constituency that is home to a considerable number of Tamil expatriates, demonstrated how uninformed he is - the East hasn't seen violence on anything other than a very local scale for over a year now. And he was almost equally wrong about the North.

The LTTE will have fed Barry Gardiner this disinformation in the hope that he would agitate for pressure to be exerted on the Government to capitulate to the separatist demands of the organisation.

It is but one example of the kind. Foreign observers are regularly to be heard pontificating on this topic, spurred on by local propagandists.

The Peace Secretariat has been collecting data on all accusations of civilian deaths and injuries made in Tamil newspapers and websites, including from a number of publications that are known to be intimately associated with the LTTE.

While this opens up the possibility of abuse by keenly encouraging the generation of false claims, it also gives a clear indication of the maximum possible extent of any issues there might be with air operations.

The findings are highly instructive. In the last two and a half years, the Sri Lanka Air Force has carried out hundreds of strikes against LTTE targets. All these Tamil media sources have reported the demise of no more than 106 civilians. This covers almost the entire period in which the Government has been responding to LTTE actions - from June 2006 to October 2008.

It should be noted that all but 45 of these 106 alleged deaths occurred in a single incident at the beginning of the confrontations. The Sri Lanka Air Force hit an LTTE camp in the jungles of Mullaitivu in August 2006.

Safety of Wanni civilians: A priority for the Government

The SLAF maintains that those killed were cadres undergoing military training, and testimony of injured girls who subsequently found their way to areas under Government control backs up photographic and intelligence data supplied by the Sri Lanka Air Force.

However, the LTTE claimed that the young women were attending a residential first aid course. Proof of this hasn't been established, and the reputation of the organisation for the recruitment of girls as suicide bombers as well as fighting cadres must surely be taken into account.

The Sri Lanka Air Force can therefore be said to do a good job. Their efforts to safeguard the civilian population compare favourably with those of other countries, including military forces much better equipped than ours.

Human Rights Watch has carried out analyses of the air strikes of the United States Air Force in both Afghanistan and Iraq. They show a far more worrying record.

In Afghanistan, two studies have been conducted. The first looked at the six months from October 2001 to March 2002. Human Rights Watch found evidence of an absolute minimum of 152 civilian deaths, which it put down to the fairly widespread use of cluster munitions. These release a large number of smaller bombs, a proportion of which don't explode on impact and therefore become landmines.

The United States Air Force dropped a total of 1,228 cluster munitions containing around 248,056 bombs in the period studied, and Human Rights Watch says that a conservative estimate of the number that wouldn't have exploded on impact is around 5 per cent, which would leave more than 12,400 landmines.

Human Rights Watch noted that unexploded bombs from cluster munitions dropped by the United States Air Force and its allies in the first Gulf War eventually killed a total of 1,600 civilians.

The second report on Afghanistan looked at the two and a quarter years from May 2006 to July 2008. Human Rights Watch says that the United States Air Force killed at least 556 civilians in this period. It blamed this very high number of deaths on the tendency of the United States Army to call in air strikes on unverified targets in support of ground troops to avoid casualties on their own side.

In Iraq, Human Rights Watch didn't attempt to quantify the number of civilians who were killed in air strikes. However, the British medical journal The Lancet published an article suggesting that a total of 601,027 Iraqis died because of the conflict in the three and a quarter years from March 2003 to June 2006, of which 13 per cent or over 78,000 people in air strikes.

Human Rights Watch did say that the majority of the civilian deaths in air strikes occurred as the United States Air Force targeted Iraqi leaders, unwisely relying on intercepts of satellite phones that could only narrow down a location to the nearest 100 metres. All 50 of the acknowledged hits on Iraqi leaders failed, and Human Rights Watch claimed that most Iraqis they questioned were convinced that the targets weren't even present at the time of the attacks.

We dwell on these experiences because they demonstrate the restraint with which the Sri Lankan Government is prosecuting its air operations. Tactics that have led to significant numbers of civilian deaths in other theatres of war have not been employed here. It should be remembered that the methodology used by the Peace Secretariat in collecting these figures is rather more prone to overestimation than that used by Human Rights Watch, especially given the well known propaganda capacity of the LTTE.

Civilian deaths and injuries are a truly appalling prospect, and it is the duty of a Government to ensure that they do not occur under any circumstances.

This effort by the Peace Secretariat to quantify the instances in which such things may have taken place supplements the routine work done by the Sri Lanka Air Force to monitor the results of its strikes and take action to ensure the safety of our people. This has also borne fruit. Since fighting intensified in the North, only five allegations of civilian deaths in air strikes have been made in the three months from July 2008.

Safety of Wanni civilians: A priority for the Government

Interestingly, Sri Lankan NGOs who are known for their hostility to the Government admit that there have been very few civilian deaths in this phase of the conflict. Kumar Rupesinghe, head of the Anti-War Movement, was quoted in an interview in The Island this week admiring the introduction of what he called precision bombing to the Sri Lanka Air Force.

Planes have been flying very low, so they have been able to study the maps and be very precise about their targets, he said. If the Anti-War Movement chief ideologue admits that the Government is succeeding in its attempts to safeguard civilians, others must surely be ready to accept it.

The Government welcomes accurate and relevant criticisms of its policies and is very happy to engage with those who can assist it to achieve its objectives of looking after its people. Such healthy dialogue is however at risk of being overshadowed by the current plague of fabrications that are attaching themselves to our record.

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Load-Date: October 22, 2008

End of Document

43 to 45 wounded in Colombo market blast

Hindustan Times

August 30, 2008 Saturday 3:49 PM EST

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Length: 240 words

Byline: Report from Asian News International brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 30 -- At least 43 people have been wounded in an explosion in a Colombo market on Saturday.

Military sources said that the blast occurred near the city's main bus station, and added that no one had claimed responsibility as yet for the incident.

The blast comes as Sri Lankan forces continue to penetrate large tracts of rebel Tamil territory in the north and east of the island-nation, leading to the fleeing of tens of thousands of people from their homes in Kilinochchi District.

Three of the 43 wounded were said to be in serious condition. Dr. Anil Jansinghe, a director at Colombo National Hospital, said between 43 and 45 people had been admitted, and among them were two boys and four **women**.

A foreign news agency quoted Senior Superintendent of Police Ranjith Gunasekara as saying that the bomb had gone off between 12 noon and 12.10.

"Initial investigations show that the bomb contained 75-80 g of explosives and that it was a time bomb. We think it was hidden in a cardboard box, the way it had been placed most of the injuries to the people must be below the waist," he was further quoted, as saying

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting for a separate homeland in the north and east for 25 years, and so far, over 70,000 people have died. The government blames the rebels for a string of bomb attacks on public targets amid the offensive in the north.

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

Amnesty Condemns Female Suicide Attack In Lanka

RTT News (United States)

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 284 words

Body

(RTTNews) - Rights group Amnesty International condemned Monday's suicide bombing by a woman Tamil Tiger suicide-bomber who killed 28 persons at a camp for refugees who have fled Sri Lanka's ethnic war, media reports said.

The bomber detonated her explosives as she was being searched by female soldiers outside the camp near Visuamadu in the northeast of the island the military recently captured from the rebels. The blast killed more than 20 soldiers and eight civilians, besides injuring with 64 others.

Asserting the attack should not lead to retaliation, Yolanda Foster, Amnesty's Sri Lanka representative said in a statement: "The use of such attacks by one party to an armed conflict does not excuse unlawful attacks in response."

The rights group also noted that the government had restricted media access to war zone making it impossible to verify accounts of what was happening on the ground.

"In a war with no witnesses, it is the civilians who pay the price for both parties' disregard for international humanitarian law," it said.

The United Nations and the U.S. government, which has asked the Tiger rebels to negotiate terms of their surrender to government forces, had already condemned the attack.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has recently suffered huge territorial losses as a result of a major army offensive.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has said that the LTTE, which has been fighting for a separate Tamil homeland for more than 25 years, will be "completely defeated" within days. Over 70,000 persons were killed in the conflict.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010

Violence Escalates at Gospel for Asia's Sri Lanka Bible College

Christian Newswire

March 17, 2008 Monday 11:30 AM GMT

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Length: 271 words

Byline: By Gospel for Asia

Body

[Gospel for Asia](#), 972-300-7777

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, March, 17 / [Christian Newswire](#) -- The volatile situation at Gospel for Asia's Sri Lanka Bible College is escalating as a local elected official and a small group of Buddhist monks are falsely accusing the school of being a front for a Sri Lankan terrorist group, the **Tamil Tigers**. The Tigers are fighting to divide Sri Lanka along ethnic lines.

On Saturday, March 15, the elected official attacked a school security guard who was on duty about midnight. The official, who was carrying a gun, severely beat the guard and threatened to return to the campus and rape the **women**. Earlier in the day, this man and the monks staged a protest at the school carrying banners and placards. The Sri Lankan media covered the protest.

After the midnight attack, the elected official filed a police complaint against the security guard, but the police arrested the official instead. The politician told police that he was acting out of patriotic concern for his country.

On March 2 a group of students from the Bible college were attacked while on their way to worship at a nearby GFA-related church. The militants responsible for that attack say their ultimate goal is to close down the Bible college.

Gospel for Asia's leaders in Sri Lanka ask prayer for the safety of the students and staff at the Bible College. They also request prayer that God would intervene in this injustice and stop this kind of violence against His children.

Gospel for Asia is an evangelical mission organization based in Carrollton, Texas, involved in sharing the love of Jesus across South Asia.

CONTACT: Taun Cortado,

Load-Date: March 17, 2008

Top US Senators worried over Sri Lanka violence

Agence France Presse -- English

February 2, 2009 Monday 10:51 PM GMT

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Length: 289 words

Dateline: WASHINGTON, Feb 2 2009

Body

Two senior US Senators on Monday jointly urged Sri Lanka's government and Tamil Tiger rebels to safeguard civilians and ease humanitarian access to areas affected by the deadly conflict.

Democrat John Kerry, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Republican Richard Lugar, the panel's top Republican, said they were "greatly concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation."

"We urge the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to immediately take all necessary steps to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian access," the lawmakers said in a joint statement.

Kerry and Lugar said they were "deeply troubled" by the government's recent threats to expel aid agencies, diplomats and foreign journalists seen as supportive of Tamil rebels.

Sri Lanka does not allow independent media free access to the island's conflict zone and to the camps housing those displaced civilians who have managed to flee the fighting.

"Reporters have already experienced physical attacks and intimidation, including the latest brazen assassination of renowned journalist Lasantha Wickrematunga," Kerry and Lugar said.

"Together, we urge the government of Sri Lanka to protect all of its citizens and conduct swift, full, and credible investigations into attacks on journalists and other civilians."

The government maintains that it has a policy of "zero civilian casualties" and accuses the **Tamil Tigers** of using tens of thousands of men, **women** and children as a human shield.

Since the January 8 killing of Wickrematunga, who was editor of the anti-war Sunday Leader, at least eight senior journalists and media activists have fled the island, fearing that they too could be targeted by unidentified attackers.

Load-Date: February 3, 2009

Accomplice in Rajiv Gandhi assassination seeks release; Latest bid for freedom comes soon after late Indian PM's daughter visits her in jail

The Straits Times (Singapore)

May 3, 2008 Saturday

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Section: ASIA - ASIA

Length: 461 words

Byline: P. Jayaram, India Correspondent

Body

NEW DELHI - A WOMAN serving a life sentence over the 1991 assassination of Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi has again sought early release despite failing in her previous attempts to do so.

Nalini Sriharan, 43, who is jailed in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, said in her petition before the Madras High Court on Wednesday that she had already served nearly 17 years in prison.

Her lawyer, Mr S.Doraiswamy, noted that a life term in Tamil Nadu is only 20 years, according to the state jail manual.

In addition, the probation officer at the Vellore central prison where Nalini is serving her sentence had recommended that she be released for good conduct and because she had already spent nearly 17 years in jail, added Mr Doraiswamy.

Nalini's petition comes just weeks after Mr Gandhi's daughter Priyanka, who bears a striking resemblance to her father, had visited her in jail to find out why a 'good man' like her father was brutally killed.

Nalini, the only Indian accomplice of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) in the assassination, had accompanied an **LTTE female** suicide bomber to an election rally attended by Mr Gandhi in Sriperumbudur on May 21, 1991.

Mr Gandhi was killed in the attack, along with scores of others in the crowd.

The killing shocked many Indians, especially those in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere who were sympathetic to the Tigers.

After the assassination, many turned their backs on the **LTTE**.

Nalini was arrested on June 14, 1991, and was sentenced to death along with three others, including her husband Murugan.

But Nalini had her sentence commuted to life in 2000 after Ms Priyanka's mother and ruling Congress party president Sonia Gandhi petitioned for clemency.

Accomplice in Rajiv Gandhi assassination seeks release Latest bid for freedom comes soon after late Indian PM's daughter visits her in jail

Nalini is now the mother of a five-year-old daughter, who was born in prison and is living with Nalini's parents-in-law in Sri Lanka.

The court, which rejected her past petitions for early release, will take up her latest petition next month.

Sources close to the Gandhi family say Ms Priyanka and her brother Rahul, who were 19 and 20 respectively when their father was assassinated, are still traumatised by the event.

Ms Priyanka's visit to prison to see Nalini, which was debated by her family for several days before the go-ahead was given, was an effort to obtain 'emotional closure'.

Her visit, on March 19, was kept secret until the media got wind of it almost a month later.

Ms Priyanka confirmed that she had visited Nalini, who, according to police investigations, was the back-up suicide bomber if the original bomber, Dhanu, failed.

'It was purely a personal visit on my own initiative...' said Ms Priyanka in a statement.

'I do not believe in anger or violence and I refuse to let it overpower me. Meeting Nalini was my way of coming to terms with my father's death.'

Load-Date: May 2, 2008

End of Document

Sri Lanka minister escapes assassination bid

Japan Economic Newswire

October 9, 2008 Thursday 9:59 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 261 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Oct. 9

Body

A suspected Tamil Tiger rebel attempted to assassinate a Sri Lankan government minister Thursday by blowing herself up near his convoy, killing herself but not the minister, the government said.

The **female** suicide bomber targeted the vehicle convoy of Maithirpala Sirisena, minister of agricultural development and agrarian services development, at Borlasgamuwa near Colombo at 1:15 p.m., the Ministry of Defence, Public Security, Law and Order said on its website.

The ministry said police confirmed that Sirisena was unharmed it said seven people were wounded, including Deputy Minister of Agrarian Services Siripala Gamlath, whose injuries were only minor.

A military spokesman had earlier told Kyodo News a person in a backup security vehicle in the minister's convoy was killed, while the ministry's website had earlier also said one person was killed.

Sirisena is general secretary of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the biggest party in the ruling United People's Freedom Alliance.

The ministry blamed the attack on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who have been fighting for a separate state in northern and eastern Sri Lanka for the country's ethnic Tamil minority since 1983.

The **LTTE** has been responsible for a number of such attacks targeting soldiers, police and even civilians.

In January, the government withdrew from a six-year-old cease-fire agreement with the rebels.

Thursday's assassination attempt was made as government forces were inching closer to Kilinochchi, the administrative capital of the **LTTE**, within the rebel-held Wanni district in the north.

Load-Date: October 10, 2008

Lanka model for healthcare: PM

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 17, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 530 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 17 -- Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake said yesterday Sri Lanka over the years has been able to achieve a tremendous growth rate in health, education and other socio-economic sectors despite our resources being channelled into combating the scourge of terrorism and natural disaster, the tsunami of 2004.

Mercifully, the tsunami disaster was well behind us and the terrorist menace was about to be rooted out. Delivering the keynote address at the inauguration of three-day Annual Regional Ministerial Meeting on Financing Strategies for Healthcare in Colombo yesterday, Mr. Wickremanayake said in post colonial Sri Lanka free healthcare for all has gone hand in hand with strengthening of democracy and basic freedom. The gradual empowerment of rural poor and factors such as gender equality and high levels of female literacy have contributed towards a greater awareness of healthcare and the progressive establishment of salutary practises. "Ancient records show that 18 hospitals were established during the reign of King Dutugemunu in the second century B.C. This tradition was strongly influenced by Buddhist culture which records high priority to actively caring for the needy, the poor and sick," Mr. Wickremanayake said. Sri Lanka has maintained a liberalised economic policy over the past several decades. Though the average growth rates were moderate the country has systematically spent a fair portion of its national income on social welfare, he emphasised. Health Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said Sri Lanka's model of healthcare has often been described by health economists and others as extremely cost-effective yielding a very high return from the investment in health. "Communicable diseases especially the immunisable diseases are steadily declining through effective control measures. HIV is at a very low prevalence and we have been able to keep SARS and Avian Flu at bay through stringent surveillance. According to WHO standards Sri Lanka has eradicated polio and has reached elimination levels in Leprosy, Filarial. Malaria and iodine deficiency diseases," Minister de Silva stressed. Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama said Sri Lanka was early among developing countries to understand the importance of investing in human resources, gender equality and social development. "Government continues to effectively deliver healthcare facilities to the civilians in the LTTE-held areas despite the well known fact that much of the medical supplies and facilities are used by the LTTE for their own cadres. Right now the highest priority has been accorded to the provision of healthcare to about 36,000 civilians and displaced persons in Vavuniya, who have escaped from the LTTE clutches," Minister Bogollagama noted. Vice President of the UN's ECOSOC, Hamidon Ali, Asst. Secretary General of the UN, Thomas Stelzer and DDG WHO, Anarfi Asamoah - Baah also spoke. The Regional Ministerial Conference had been organized by the Healthcare and Nutrition Ministry and Foreign Affairs Ministry and sponsored by the Economic Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN and the WHO. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: March 19, 2009

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Female suicide bomber kills 24 in Sri Lanka

Associated Press Online

February 9, 2009 Monday 6:26 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 740 words

Byline: By JEAN H. LEE, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

A suspected Tamil Tiger rebel who pretended to be a war refugee blew herself up Monday as Sri Lankan soldiers frisked her at a checkpoint. Twenty troops and eight civilians died.

State TV showed the carnage after the suicide bombing in Vishwamadu, a northeastern town where hundreds of civilians had been waiting to be sent to refugee camps: a woman in a blue dress curled up in the fetal position, her face and neck spattered with blood; plastic lawn chairs upended and piled in a jumble from the force of the blast.

A soldier briskly picked up a dead child who was sprawled face down in the dirt, yellow shorts peeping out from beneath her bloodstained pink-and-purple dress. He dropped her rag-doll body on top of another corpse in a truck, leaving their bloodied, bare feet jutting out the back.

The footage, released by the government, did not show the bodies of any soldiers.

Government troops claim to be closing in on the Tamil Tiger rebels in their push to end a 25-year-old war that has killed some 70,000 people. The military has backed the rebels into a strip of land on the northeastern coast, and the Red Cross says some 250,000 civilians are trapped there too.

The suicide attack Monday fed fears that the rebels could be stepping up guerrilla warfare in their battle for a separate state for the Tamil minority. The **Tamil Tigers**, blamed in more than 200 suicide attacks since 1983, are listed as a terror group by the U.S. and the European Union.

The bomber had concealed herself among more than 800 civilians who had crossed the front lines from rebel-held territory and were being searched by soldiers before being sent to camps further south, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said. He blamed the **Tamil Tigers** for the blast, which also wounded 24 troops and 40 civilians.

It was not possible to confirm the details of the attack. Independent journalists are barred from the war zone and most independent aid workers have fled the fighting. The rebels could not be reached for comment late Monday because communications to the north have largely been severed.

The United States and United Nations condemned the bombing.

Female suicide bomber kills 24 in Sri Lanka

"We deplore the loss of civilian life in this targeted killing. It's a blow for people who have suffered so much," U.N. resident coordinator Neil Buhne said in Colombo, the capital.

The U.S. Embassy called on the rebels "to allow all civilians freedom of movement" and urged the government to ensure that all civilians who flee the fighting are transferred to the camps "in accordance with international standards."

Monday's suicide attack showed the rebels have no consideration for civilians, Disaster Management Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe said, adding that more than 20,000 civilians have fled the shrinking area held by the rebels in recent days.

Nobel Peace laureate Jose Ramos-Horta, the president of East Timor, urged both sides to agree to a cease-fire to allow aid groups and journalists full access to the conflict zone, and to begin talks to seek a political solution.

Independent U.N. experts in Geneva criticized the "deteriorating human rights situation" in Sri Lanka.

"A climate of fear and intimidation reigns over those defending human rights, especially over journalists and lawyers," Margaret Sekaggya, a U.N.-appointed independent human rights expert, said in a statement Monday.

Last week, Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa accused the BBC, CNN, and Al-Jazeera TV networks of favoring the Tamil rebels and warned they might be banned from the country.

The BBC said Monday it was suspending FM radio programming to the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corp. starting Tuesday because of what it called "deliberate interference" in its broadcasts.

Sri Lanka Broadcasting chairman Hudson Samarasinghe said the station was not concerned.

"Let them suspend if they want," he said. "We are fighting against ruthless terrorists and we can't allow foreign media to carry biased news."

Meanwhile, in Colombo, hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankans flocked to a patriotic exhibition displaying weapons, boats and even submarines captured from the rebels, underscoring growing optimism that decades of war could be drawing to a close.

"The capturing of these huge vessels and weapons confirms that the end of the Tiger terrorists is very close," Susantha Kumara, 35, said as he ran his hand over the side of a submarine.

Associated Press writers Ravi Nessman and Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

Female suicide bomber kills 24 in Sri Lanka

The Associated Press

February 9, 2009 Monday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 740 words

Byline: By JEAN H. LEE, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

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Load-Date: February 10, 2009

Female suicide bomber kills 24 in Sri Lanka

Associated Press International

February 9, 2009 Monday 6:42 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 741 words

Byline: By JEAN H. LEE, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

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Independent U.N. experts in Geneva criticized the "deteriorating human rights situation" in Sri Lanka.

"A climate of fear and intimidation reigns over those defending human rights, especially over journalists and lawyers," Margaret Sekaggya, a U.N.-appointed independent human rights expert, said in a statement Monday.

Last week, Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa accused the BBC, CNN, and Al-Jazeera TV networks of favoring the Tamil rebels and warned they might be banned from the country.

The BBC said Monday it was suspending FM radio programming to the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corp. starting Tuesday because of what it called "deliberate interference" in its broadcasts.

Sri Lanka Broadcasting chairman Hudson Samarasinghe said the station was not concerned.

"Let them suspend if they want," he said. "We are fighting against ruthless terrorists and we can't allow foreign media to carry biased news."

Meanwhile, in Colombo, hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankans flocked to a patriotic exhibition displaying weapons, boats and even submarines captured from the rebels, underscoring growing optimism that decades of war could be drawing to a close.

"The capturing of these huge vessels and weapons confirms that the end of the Tiger terrorists is very close," Susantha Kumara, 35, said as he ran his hand over the side of a submarine.

Associated Press writers Ravi Nessman and Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

Not just freedom, but freedom with peace

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 21, 2008 Saturday 3:23 PM EST

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Length: 1386 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 21 -- In one taped interview with me in 2003, Maheswary told me, 'if I die, I want to die in my own home. I was born on that soil. Take me to Karaveddy if I die, my mother and house are there.' In a macabre twist of fate, last month on the 13th of May, Maheswary, unarmed and defenseless, was brutally murdered at her home in Karaveddy in front of her family by LTTE hit men in disguise. It was for this reason that she had not returned previously to the home she loved. She had followed up her earlier comments by telling me that if the troubles in Sri Lanka ended she would go and live in Jaffna again immediately. As she told me 'I don't go and live there now because of fear of the Tigers, that is the only reason. I don't know if they will do anything to me or not, but I can't live there under that fear.'

As the daughter of another Tamil activist and professional murdered by the LTTE, I am not surprised that the LTTE continues to eliminate those that choose to stay in Sri Lanka and dedicate themselves towards serving Tamil people. Since 1975 the LTTE have cleared their path to power on the basis of murder and terror. We all know the beginnings, but now we have to ask, "When will this end?" Maheswary's killing undoubtedly is partly tit for tat for the murder of the MP Maheswaran among others, and I unreservedly condemn those too. This political culture of internal killings we Tamils have nurtured and allowed to grow through our silences, our partisanships, our substitution of rhetoric for meaningful political dialogue, and above all our short sightedness is eating us up from the inside. Tamil websites that trumpet Maheswary's killing as the 'righteous killing of a Tamil traitor' epitomize the depths to which our political culture has sunk. This is not just reserved for the Tamil community, but those Tamil and Sinhalese commentators who condemn LTTE killings but remain quiet about the alleged excesses of the Sri Lankan state, including the EPDP and TMVP must also bear responsibility. The kind of politics we need in Sri Lanka right now are those which are accountable and life-affirming rather than the murky politics of murder and counter-attack. Sri Lanka is in dire crisis and we are losing the people who could have helped us through this. I join others in paying tribute to a fearless and pioneering Tamil activist, one whom I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing many times.

I met Maheswary first in 2003 as part of my research. I was seeking out women from non-LTTE political groups, militant and civilian, to document the vibrant Tamil alternative political history that had once existed, but now was slowly being forgotten in the face of mass migration and targeted terror by the LTTE. Many ordinary Tamil women that one might pass by in Wellawatte market without a sideways glance have political and personal stories which are rarely acknowledged or known, even in southern women's groups and NGOs which have largely failed to access this hidden Tamil speaking world except in limited 'workshops'. Maheswary was herself far from ordinary and as the weeks and months passed and I continued to meet her, we became friends. We had political and ideological differences, I was uneasy about her alliance with EPDP and she was disturbed by my lack of religiosity

but I respected, admired and most of all just liked her greatly as a woman and friend. She affectionately helped and encouraged me in all kinds of things. On one occasion at Subathiran's funeral (Robert from EPRLF), she had to personally assure the CID who had been tailing me through Borella cemetery that I was not a suicide bomber! When I, unsuspecting, finally arrived at the gathering, she called me over, highly amused to tell me of the exchanges between her and the CID.

It was impossible not to like Maheswary's irrepressible larger than life spirit, her love of dressing beautifully and standing out in a crowd, her voluble and emphatic Tamil, constant slightly girlish laugh, and her declamatory arm movements. She was an older single Tamil woman and professional lawyer who refused to efface herself in any way. Her deep religious conviction and commitment to Vedanta philosophy and meditation guided her life and actions, not least her brand of feminism. As she told me, her Vedanta philosophy had led her to the conviction that we all had the divine in us and why should she kowtow to any man, "I too am divine," she said dramatically striking her breast. It was hard to argue against that or to imagine Maheswary kowtowing to anyone. Even as I write this memorial, this reminds me of Maheswary's spirit and fire. She was a larger than life person.

Maheswary's political involvement was typical of a whole generation. Growing up in the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, she began to be aware of anti-Tamil discrimination when she was studying for her 'A' levels in 1971. In 1972 she came to study Law at Colombo University. Her father's death in 1974 affected her greatly and she found herself at a personal and professional loss upon leaving university. She immediately began a job at the National Archives upon passing out; initially the only Tamil member of staff when she joined. Her experiences in the National Archives sharpened her determination to fight for Tamil rights. In a completely Sinhalised organisation she both made good friends among many of the other young women but also constantly experienced discrimination. In the 1977 riots she faced considerable difficulties within the institute. She however continued to work there and more Tamil staff joined the institute. She also began to meet members of EROS and others like Padmanabha (later the general secretary of EPRLF).

Maheswary recalled her first meetings with the young men in the newly emerging Tamil militant movement, as the beginning of a new political arena but also with considerable discomfort. She found the militant scene exceedingly male with little space for women. Disappointed, she attempted to find an easier space for herself to work within. Finally, she decided on the TULF which had become active in Colombo. Writing to the TULF she offered her services to them and in particular the Ilaignar Peravai. She smiled wryly as she told me of how, caught up with her then reading on Gandhi and satyagraha, she had seen the TULF and Ilaignar Peravai leaders as great men dedicated to the people. She had even consented when one of the Ilaignar Peravai leaders had asked her to make and bring food for him regularly. She ended her involvement with Ilaignar Peravai when on one campaign trip one of the prominent leaders had made inappropriate advances. Instead she had continued to work with the TULF, but with little illusions about the difficulties for young Tamil women within the political sphere both in more official party politics and the new militancy. This strengthened her resolve even further to be true to herself and her own convictions, to make her own space for political involvement.

Unmarried till her death, Maheswary faced the opprobrium reserved for women who achieve success and independence without the concealing and protective veil of marriage and motherhood. The latter has been the dominant model by which women in Sri Lanka, without being subordinate or unsuccessful, have been able to make themselves recognized. Her life illustrates the macho world of Tamil politics but also serves as a model for younger Tamil women like myself. Being single was not a considered choice on her part, she loved children in particular and talked often about her sadness that she had never had children. When I met her, she was trying to set up a multi-faith and multi-ethnic children's home where she also proposed to live, and constantly exploring options to adopt children. However, she told me, 'I didn't want to live asking for things, I wanted someone who would understand me and my life and not just get married for the sake of it. At home they were trying to arrange a marriage for me and give dowry, but I told them when I can look after and provide for other people's families even my husband's family easily, why should I give a man money to marry me? I thought that whatever happened I would never give money to get married.'

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UNSG: Groping in New Moon darkness

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

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Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 13 -- The substance of this column last week was about the orchestrating of a planned grand performance on the international stage about a humanitarian catastrophe in Sri Lanka, and the willingness of some international news channels to write the score for it.

It now appears that there are others more eager than these news channels, to do their own tear-jerking performances on the world stage about what they would like to project as a humanitarian crisis in what was once known, very aptly too, as "This Other Eden".

Similar to the situation so well described in the Sinhala adage about the one who is waiting to cry being poked in the eye, the choreographers of this Sri Lankan Jeremiad have taken the cue from the decision of the Government to call on all UN and INGOs to carry out their relief operations from Vavuniya, instead of from the Vanni, where the fighting to defeat the LTTE's terrorism is getting more intense each day.

At last Monday's high level policy meeting of the Consultative Committee on Humanitarian Assistance (CCHA), its Chair, the Minister for Disaster Management and Human Rights Mahinda Samarasinghe informed the CCHA that the Secretary/Defence had communicated a decision taken by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) that all UN agencies and INGOs working in the Vanni should relocate their humanitarian and development operations to Vavuniya with immediate effect for the safety of personnel and property.

This was immediately interpreted by the BBC and some other news outlets as the Government ordering UN and other aid agencies out of the Vanni. Precious little was said of the Government's statement that this was being done in the interests of the safety of the aid personnel involved.

The Government was very clear in stating that as the UN and INGOs are working in the Vanni at the invitation of the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL), that it has an obligation to ensure the safety and security of all those working there.

In asking them to move out for their own safety the Government also clearly expressed its appreciation of the agencies' contributing and complementing the GoSL in providing assistance to displaced persons in the Vanni.

They were requested to continue with their good work by supporting the GoSL in the provision of humanitarian assistance by relocating their operations to the humanitarian hub established by the Government in Vavuniya.

UNSG: Groping in New Moon darkness

This was by no means a "Get Out" order, but a shift outside decision. But, it appears that the UN and other INGOs believe that it is their prerogative to decide on where they should carry out their activities, and not that of the duly constituted Government of the sovereign state of Sri Lanka.

New Moon

The new player in this continued performance of crying foul at Sri Lanka, that is carrying on a war against terrorism, the scourge that has led to much tragedy, suffering, disruption of life and economic loss to the people and this country, (comparatively much more than what Bin Laden did to the United States on 9/11, 1991 that led to its own and the Western world's War of Terror) appears to be the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon.

The night of the New Moon is considered the darkest night in the lunar month, in contrast to the Full Moon. It would now seem that the office of the UNSG is groping in such New Moon darkness about the situation in Sri Lanka.

A statement of the Sri Lankan situation, attributed to the spokesperson of the Secretary-General says: "The Secretary-General expresses his deep concern over the increase of hostilities in Northern Sri Lanka, and the grave humanitarian consequences for civilians.

In light of the Government's request for the relocation of UN humanitarian staff in affected areas, he reminds all concerned of their responsibility to take action to ensure the safety and freedom of civilians, allowing humanitarian organizations to do their work in safety, as well as to reach persons affected by the fighting who need humanitarian aid.

"The Secretary-General reminds all concerned of their obligations under international humanitarian law, especially in regard to the principle of proportionality and the selection of targets. "He emphasises strongly the importance of a negotiated settlement to the political problems facing Sri Lanka." (Emphasis mine).

On first reading it would appear the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has as a ghostwriter of his statements must be the same person who has been drafting recent statements for President George W Bush, especially on the issue of Georgia, Russia and South Ossetia.

The favourite theme of the US President in criticising the Russian action was to say that it was disproportionate to the threat faced by South Ossetia.

What exactly is the "proportionality" of action when dealing with an organization that over the years has had a disproportionate number of children in its ranks carrying arms for a cause that they had no understanding of, and were anyway too young to understand and come to an informed decision on what they were being made to do?

What is the level of proportionality that should apply in dealing with an organisation so committed to violence that it snatches children away from families for the purpose of strengthening its fighting cadres, with no attempt at consultation with the parents as to the justice of the cause they are fighting for?

What measure of proportionality does one apply to those who have perfected, if that is the correct description, the terrible skill of carrying out suicide killings of people, with the full knowledge of, and least regard for, the fact that the actual victims of its suicide killers will be children and women, and almost always civilians, who have no part in the battle that is being waged by them or against them?

The Beggar's sore

It is interesting to see the Secretary-General reminding all concerned of their obligations under international humanitarian law, especially in regard to the principle of proportionality and the selection of targets.

Has he, or his spokesman, bothered to send this message of proportionality to the LTTE, even through some of the UN "humanitarian workers" who have been fraternising with that organisation, and in fact have met them without informing the Government of Sri Lanka? Has the UNSG sent such a message to the LTTE through any of the

UNSG: Groping in New Moon darkness

INGOs that have been supplying tsunami relief and other goods to the LTTE (proportionately?), and have been found out?

It will be an interesting exercise for the office of the UNSG to know what the LTTE, that is a party to this conflict, thinks of international humanitarian law, and any obligation that a combatant has with regard to the observance of conventions governing humanitarian practice in armed conflict.

There is little purpose in preaching to the converted, which happens to be Sri Lanka. It is the Government of Sri Lanka, and its Security Forces that have carried out attacks on the LTTE with the least number of casualties among civilians.

This is a situation much to the annoyance and dislike of aid workers and news hounds who see little evil in the US and NATO's "proportionate air strikes" on Afghan villages, or US/NATO raids into the sovereign territory of Pakistan, in what they describe as hot pursuit of the Taliban and / or the agents of Bin Laden; America's Number One Enemy who has become such a chimera, that one is led to believe the US forces are somehow evading his capture just to keep the War on Terror going on. One is not ignorant of the local aphorism of the "Beggar's Sore".

It is time the Office of the UNSG realised that what the Government did in calling on all UN and INGO staffs to do their relief work from Vavuniya, was exactly trying to protect civilians life - the lives of these aid workers.

It was only too well aware of what happened to those local employees of a French INGO who were killed in Muttur, about which much has been made of in the international media, and among human rights and humanitarian organisations (One senior UN officer on Humanitarian Affairs even called Sri Lanka the most dangerous place for aid workers to be in, after that) and is the subject of an official inquiry in Sri Lanka.

No doubt there would be some in the "International Community": who would be waiting to see some more aid workers being killed in this manner in the Vanni, to readily heap the blame on the Government and its troops. What is necessary to note is that a country has to take its own precautions, proportionate to the danger it perceives.

While on "proportionate targeting" it is interesting to know what the Office of the UNSG said about the proportionate nature of the Israeli targeting of Lebanon in the 30 day war over the abduction of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah, when large parts of Beirut and Palestinian Refugee Camps were virtually bombed off the ground, while Israel took very little casualties.

Possibly by coincidence President George W Bush and former Prime Minister Tony Blair, too, did not see anything disproportionate in this bombing, and also did not call for a ceasefire in the conflict.

The UNSG's statement "emphasises strongly the importance of a negotiated settlement to the political problems facing Sri Lanka." Once again this is best directed at the LTTE, and not to the Government of Sri Lanka.

The Office of the UNSG cannot be ignorant of the several attempts made by the present government to negotiate with the LTTE, which were spurned with the least concern for the need for any settlement other than separation through violence.

It is best if such reality is taken into full consideration by such an important office, rather than moving towards knee-jerk reactions to that are the Xerox copies of what INGOs with vested interests in the success of the LTTE's separatist efforts have to say about the developments in Sri Lanka that has suffered enough from terrorism for nearly three decades.

Baghdad and Algiers

The UNSG refers to the importance of reaching "persons affected by the fighting who need humanitarian aid." How well said and what a wonderful idea it is. How does his office believe this can be done when the LTTE, according to many independent reports, are said to be forcing the Tamil people to move into areas still held by it?

UNSG: Groping in New Moon darkness

Is one to believe that an organization that extorts the food, medicine and other essentials that the Government of Sri Lanka sends to the Tamil people, to serve the needs of its fighting cadres, who are also supplied by some INGOs, will allow any UN or other genuine aid or relief workers to come to the aid of the people they have taken hostage by preventing them from moving to safer areas that are now under the control of the armed forces of Sri Lanka?

It was more than curiosity that took me to the web site of the UN Secretary-General. There I found his Remarks to the Solemn Ceremony marking the Fifth Anniversary of the Baghdad Bombing that took place on August 19, 2003. That was the biggest attack suffered by a UN Mission anywhere in the world. It was carried out by terrorists.

The UNSG said: "Five years have passed since the terrorist attack on our UN headquarters in Baghdad, killing twenty-two people, including Sergio Vieira de Mello [the Head of the UN Mission]. We lost some of our best and bravest staff.

"Their children have grown without a parent. Their other loved ones, many who are with us now, feel their absence everyday. We, too, mourn them all."

Recalling the targeting of the UN Office in Algeria more recently he said: "But the risks remain. The attack on our offices in Algiers last December is a reminder."

It is to prevent such calculated violence that can bring about so much tragedy that the Government of Sri Lanka asked the UN and INGO relief workers out of the Vanni, and into manageable and more secure areas, from which can they carry out their outreach of relief and assistance to the people who really need it, and are able to receive it; with no danger to the lives of those who are assisting the Government in its own commitment to bring relief to the Tamil people, who are being held in bondage by the terror of the LTTE.

Deliberate distortion

To even suggest a disproportionate nature of the targets being taken by the Sri Lankan Security Forces in a situation when there have been no reports of even minor scale attacks on civilians, is not only a distortion of the truth, but a deliberate effort to draw the attention of the world from the daily atrocities taking place, where civilians are targets in places where regime change has been carried out and the subjugation of people is being done under a UN mandate; or, separatism is encouraged to suit the needs of the European Union; or where no statements of concern emanate from the highly concerned office of the UNSG about the battle being waged against the terror by the government of the Philippines.

What has the UNSG said about the "proportionality" of what the US is doing today in carrying out raids inside the sovereign territory of Pakistan, which both Barack Obama and John McCain pledge to continue?

Speaking at the memorial to the Baghdad killings the UNSG also said: "Recently, our Independent Panel on Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises completed its worldwide review. It found that, and I quote: 'Total security has not been achieved anywhere by anyone in the past and will not be achieved by anyone in the future. But security conditions can and must be constantly improved.' That is the truth. Security conditions can and must be improved.

The first priority in that is to defeat terror in all its forms, and until then make sure that aid workers are safe from the horrors of battle. That is currently the very proportionate targeting by Sri Lanka.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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UNSG: Groping in New Moon darkness

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Why talk about the past? in Sri Lanka; SRI LANKA: No Lessons Learnt From 'Black July' of 1984

NoticiasFinancieras

July 24, 2008 Thursday

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Byline: Feizal Samath

Body

Pakiasothy Saravanamuttu, executive director of the think tank Centre for Policy Alternatives and an often-quoted political analyst, says billions of dollars have since been spent on the quarter century of ethnic strife that followed 'Black July'.

"We are nowhere near a solution than we ever were," he said, adding that the present government does not seem interested in a negotiated settlement.

Most victims from the Tamil minority community are reluctant to speak about the terrible tragedy that befell them on Jul. 24, 1983 and thereafter. "Why talk about the past?" said one elderly Tamil woman when asked to comment.

Widespread riots broke out in Colombo and southern Sri Lanka a day after 13 government soldiers were killed in an ambush by Tamil rebels in the northern city of Tamil-dominated Jaffna. Angry mobs from the majority Sinhalese community retaliated by attacking and killing Tamil residents, raping their women and setting fire to homes and shops. The pogrom followed bouts of anti-Tamil violence in 1958 and 1977.

A Tamil industrialist K. Vignarajah spoke of how his wife, who owned and managed two garment factories that were razed to the ground, was devastated by the events. "Sarada (wife) was shocked and shattered by the events. We lost a house too but thank God nothing happened to us," he said, adding that soon after that the couple and their 10-year-old daughter left for Britain.

"Sri Lanka would have been a paradise and even better than Singapore if not for this conflict," Vignarajah, now an international consultant on garments and a stock market investor, says. "It was the absurdity of chauvinistic politicians who are responsible for this situation. We have many friends amongst the Sinhalese," he added.

Vignarajah's daughter lives and works in Britain, but he, after spending time in the southern Indian city of Chennai, has returned to Sri Lanka.

Around 1981-82, Sri Lanka -- the first South Asia country to liberalise its economy, far ahead of India -- had a booming economy and was heading for the kind of prosperity enjoyed by the 'Asian Tiger' economies when the conflict reversed the trend.

Will Sri Lanka ever recover from this crisis? Noted peace activist Jehan Perera believes the situation has improved compared to the pre-1983 period as people now freely speak out on Tamil rights and Tamil autonomy. "Unlike

Why talk about the past? in Sri Lanka SRI LANKA : No Lessons Learnt From 'Black July' of 1984

earlier there is no animosity by the Sinhalese against the Tamils. Earlier because of the Tamil insurgency (and demands for an independent homeland), many Sinhalese saw the Tamils as their enemy."

Perera added that there is a widespread view that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), which has been leading the war against Colombo to secure a separate homeland in the north and east of the island for the Tamil minority, must be "crushed". "This is not an anti-Tamil feeling," he insists.

During the July 1984 riots many Sinhalese residents saved the lives and properties of Tamils from the gangs defying a curfew to maraud and rampage. Some Tamils were sheltered in Sinhalese houses during the violence as the mostly Sinhalese police and military looked on. The estimates of casualties varied from between 400 to 3,000 Tamils dead while more than 18,000 houses and commercial establishments were razed to the ground.

Hundreds of thousands of Tamils fled the country to India, Europe, Australia and Canada while Tamil youth joined various Tamil militant groups, including the **LTTE**, in droves. The **LTTE** later emerged as the most ruthless guerrilla group in the world, set up funding and promotion offices overseas and coerced Tamil expatriates to fund their war machine.

Many professionals from other communities have also left the country and still remain out as Sri Lanka struggles to contain a conflict that has cost more than 80,000 lives -- including combatants from among the military, the rebels, and civilians -- besides untold billions worth of damage and lost opportunities. Tourism, among the country's chief revenue earners, is now struggling to recover while garments exports and remittances from over a million Sri Lankan workers in the Middle East make up for the main earnings now.

Since 1983, the total economic loss, according to some estimates in 1998, is 1.27 times of Sri Lanka's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while a million people have been displaced internally. However, the economy has grown at a creditable five percent on an average annually since 1983 while drawing small levels of foreign investment.

The 33-month-old government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, after a couple of months trying to talk to the **LTTE**, launched a military offensive two years ago that has seen a great degree of success. The rebels have largely been driven away from the eastern region and have suffered serious reverses in parts of their main stronghold in the north.

Journalists are not permitted into the war zones. The few conducted trips by the military are not enough for an independent assessment of what parts remain under **LTTE** control or where its reclusive leader Velupillai Prabhakaran operates from. Kilinochchi, the town where the rebels have their official headquarters, is constantly being bombed by government war planes.

"I can't see any peace (in the near term)," says Saravanamuttu, adding that the army commander who said the rebels would be destroyed by the end of 2008 now says it would take the whole of 2009. "Even if the government succeeds in chasing the Tigers from their headquarters, they will go into the jungle and resort to guerrilla warfare as before, unless there is a political settlement."

Perhaps the worst consequence of the protracted conflict has been the rising level lawlessness in society prompted by a sense of impunity that soem say has origins in the fact that none of the perpetrators of the 1983 violence were brought to trial. Human rights violations, by all parties, have steadily increased over the years.

Lately, the number of abductions of civilians -- mostly Tamils suspected of being connected to the **LTTE** -- has intensified, while assaults and harassment of journalists, critical of the war, have increased. This has not helped the cause of Tamil-Sinhalese amity.

Clashes between the Tamils and the Sinhalese majority originated with British colonial rulers favouring the Tamils in administrative, educational, and economic situations. Post independence the situation reversed with the majority community ruling the country and cornering plum jobs and the larger chunk of resources. Soon Sinhalese and Tamil sub-nationalism began to grow and became sharply polarised.

Why talk about the past? in Sri Lanka SRI LANKA : No Lessons Learnt From 'Black July' of 1984

“I am not bitter and have no regrets but I feel sad for my country,” says Chris Kamalendran, an experienced Tamil journalist and a victim of the riots. Kamalendran, living with his father, mother and other family members in the predominantly Sinhalese town of Homagama, south of Colombo, saw a mob --of mostly neighbours -- set fire and loot the family home. “I was angry, hurt and wanted revenge,” he recalled, adding that he was restrained by moderate Sinhalese friends.

Kamalendran -- like many Tamils and Sinhalese -- is desperate for a solution in his lifetime so that “my daughter won't suffer”. Believing in communal amity, he has married a Sinhalese woman and has a daughter who follows Buddhism, the majority religion. But, he says, the problem will drag on “until a national leader capable of providing a viable political settlement emerges” © 2008 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

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TIGER PLANES SHOT DOWN

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 21, 2009 Saturday

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 21 -- Two aircraft belonging to the nascent **LTTE** air wing were shot down by the security forces last evening when they raided the Colombo skies in their ninth mission targeting the defence sectors and the economic nerve centres in the city.

The wreckage of one destroyed aircraft and the body of its pilot were found near the Katunayake Air Force base while the other crashed onto the Inland Revenue Department building. The pilot wore a cyanide capsule round his neck and hand grenades strapped to his chest. Immediately after the detecting the Tiger aircraft taking wing at 9.20 pm from a location in the uncleared areas, air defence systems were activated, and anti aircraft guns were fired. The colourful anti-aircraft streamers were seen criss-crossing the Colombo skies around this time with people gathering in tall buildings in Colombo to get a better view of the scene which looked like a fireworks display. After the first aircraft crashed with a big thud on the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) Building, the building caught fire, and the fire brigade was fighting the raging flames at the time this edition went to press. Air Force spokesman Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara said that he could not confirm whether the aircraft had dropped a bomb on the building before being shot down. "I cannot confirm it. However, the aircraft has crashed on to the building," he said, adding that possibly a bomb had caused the fire. National Hospital Director Dr. Hector Weerasinghe said that 50 injured persons were brought to the hospital and two of them succumbed to their injuries.. He said there were seven **females** among the injured. "There are two airmen as well. Four or five persons have serious injuries," he said, adding that some of the injured could be discharged by noon today. Army spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said the **LTTE's** air wing was totally destroyed now. "According to our information, they had three aircraft. We had destroyed one earlier. The remaining two have also been brought down now. So, their air wing is totally finished now," the Brigadier said. Asked how these aircraft had taken off despite military having captured seven air strips belonging to the Tigers, he said that they were light aircraft which did not need an air strip to take off. He said that a small stretch of road was sufficient for takeoff. Meanwhile, Media Minister Lakshman Yapa Abeywardane said that the **LTTE** was on its last legs, and would try to muster all its strength to do as much damage as possible before perishing at the hands of the military. The minister said that this was also a similar exercise, and the vigilance of the military helped to detect and destroy the Tiger aircraft. He described that this as a major victory in the final battle against the terrorists. Airport authorities said that three flights had been cancelled following the intrusion by the Tiger aircraft. An airport official said a Hong Kong bound flight scheduled for 10.35pm, a Bangkok bound one at 12.25 pm and a Chennai-bound one at 2.20 pm were cancelled. He said the airport had been closed for flight operations, but could not give details of the work schedule for today. Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa also visited the site of the plane wreck after the incident. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

TIGER PLANES SHOT DOWN

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SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT MUST ACT NOW TO PROTECT 300,000 DISPLACED

States News Service

November 19, 2008 Wednesday

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Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK, NY

Body

The following information was released by Amnesty International USA:

The humanitarian crisis in the Wanni region of northern Sri Lanka is worsening as the government fails to provide shelter and protect over 300,000 displaced civilians.

Tens of thousands of families are now enduring the monsoon season with limited food, shelter, water or sanitation. They fled their homes to escape the fighting between the Sri Lankan military and the opposing Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**).

These civilians are trapped in the **LTTE**-controlled Wanni region. The Tigers continue to forcibly recruit one person per family with recent steep recruitment of younger people. The **LTTE** have hindered people from moving to safer places by imposing a strict pass system.

In some instances they have forced family members to stay behind to ensure the return of the rest of the family. The **LTTE** also controls the movement of displaced people within the Wanni. These measures seem designed in part to use civilians as a buffer against government forces.

Denied outside aid and humanitarian assistance

In September, the Sri Lankan government ordered the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental aid workers to leave the region. The government then assumed total responsibility for ensuring the needs of the civilian population affected by the hostilities are met.

As yet, despite assurances that it has the situation under control, there is evidence to suggest that the Government of Sri Lanka lacks the capacity to provide the required humanitarian relief to displaced people and the civilian population in the Wanni.

In particular, the government agencies and their staff will face difficulties in responding to the needs of the displaced without the assistance of the humanitarian agencies. The Indian government has recognised the gravity of the situation by choosing to send 2,000 tonnes of relief material to Sri Lanka. The deliveries are to be managed through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT MUST ACT NOW TO PROTECT 300,000 DISPLACED

The Sri Lankan government has refused to allow independent international monitors into the Wanni to oversee and ensure that convoys with food, medical and other essential supplies enter into the area, as well as to oversee the distribution of such supplies.

Severe food shortages

According to the World Food Programme WFP standard food list, approximately 773 tonnes of food is required per week to feed the 230,000 currently registered under the WFP scheme in the Wanni. The last three convoys only carried 650 tonnes, 750 tonnes and 462 tonnes of food each. So, immediate and long term food security remains an issue.

It is estimated that approximately 35 percent of the Wanni's rice and vegetable producing areas are no longer accessible. Displaced people report that they are already pawning or selling jewellery to buy basic food items. Lactating mothers and infants are especially vulnerable as they are not receiving adequate supplementary food to meet their specific needs.

Tens of thousands without shelter

By the time aid agencies had left on 16 September, they had built 2,100 temporary shelters. Government agents for the Kilinochchi and Mulaithivu districts have estimated that at least 20,000 families are in need of shelter. The Government of Sri Lanka's recent suggestion that cadjan (palm leaf) is appropriate shelter does not live up to the minimum standards required for the shelter needs of the displaced. Many families are living in the open under makeshift shelters.

Many displaced people have gathered in areas that were once paddy land and prone to flooding. Shelter agencies had previously assessed some of this land as potential sites for displaced people and found them unsuitable.

Recent images from the Wanni show that people have torn up rice sacks to hang over bits of wood in a desperate attempt to make their own shelters. Without proper shelter people are having problems keeping food and other essentials dry and are more vulnerable to snakes.

"People's access to livelihoods has shrunk. There's no boat fishing and many people are displaced from paddy lands...many of their fields are now conflict zones and full of unexploded ordnance," said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Director.

Lack of sanitation, safe drinking water and medicine

The heavy monsoon rains last until mid February. The average monthly rainfall at the moment is 300mm. While the rains have slowed down the fighting, they have wreaked havoc on the displaced population. There is an increased risk of disease outbreak with limited access to medicines. The healthcare system in the Wanni desperately needs staff and supplies as hospitals have closed or been forced to move with the relocation of displaced populations. If malaria cases develop patients will find it hard to access relevant treatment.

Local authorities have estimated 5,230 temporary toilets are needed. Ninety five percent of the displaced do not have proper latrine facilities, leave aside having separate toilet and sanitation facilities to meet the practical gender needs of women, according to local NGO workers who were engaged in constructing temporary toilets.

Due to a blockade of cement, toilets cannot be built in the standard method and the Wanni health authorities have approved a toilet with the basin set on wooden floor and drums sunk into the ground as pits. Unless immediate action is taken Wanni health authorities fear it may be too late to save the displaced population from outbreak of epidemics.

Acute shortage of safe drinking water has already precipitated a crisis resulting in the development of various water-borne ailments including diarrhoea. Health officials said the safe water and sanitation in the region has become a major problem causing infections.

SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT MUST ACT NOW TO PROTECT 300,000 DISPLACED

Amnesty International is calling upon the Sri Lankan government to give assurances of unimpeded humanitarian access to provide for the immediate material needs of the displaced and assure their safety. The government must ensure the safety and support of humanitarian workers and their families, especially those who remain in the Wanni.

"The Sri Lankan government and the LTTE must allow international monitors to assess the needs of the thousands of people trapped in the Wanni and to ensure proper distribution of food and other resources. Furthermore, international staff played an indispensable role in protecting local humanitarian aid workers from the LTTEs abuses," said Sam Zarifi.

Load-Date: November 20, 2008

End of Document

'Film Corp director' behind Colombo massacres held

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

June 22, 2008 Sunday 2:07 PM EST

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Length: 501 words

Byline: Report from the Sri Lanka Sunday Observer brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 22 -- Sri Lanka police intelligence sleuths on Friday arrested the mastermind behind the recent civilian massacres carried out in Colombo and the suburbs by **LTTE** terrorists.

According to police sources, the terrorist had been acting as a handler of "suicide bombers" and the main distributor of bombs for the terrorist network in the South.

Police media spokesperson, Deputy Inspector General Ranjith Gunasekara said that the arrest was made on Friday evening during a special raid carried out in the Kotahena area.

He said the arrest was made on information provided by one of the suicide bombers arrested in the Wellawatte area a few days ago.

The suicide bomber had been handled by the terrorist who was arrested, he said.

"The terrorist was found in possession of an identity card issued by the National Film Corporation calling him to be a "Director" of the Corporation, he said.

The "Director" said that he was to participate in a cultural show at the BMICH on Friday.

Prime Minister Rathnasiri Wickramanayaka and Media Minister Mahinda Yapa Abeywardane were also to participate in the same event.

Police found an invitation addressed to the terrorist for the event issued by the Director of the Cultural Department.

"Also, he ran a shop on the first floor of the Kotahena Supermarket where he used to keep the suicide cadre harboured during night hours", he said.

The police media spokesperson refrained from revealing the names of the two suspects but confirmed that both of them have already confessed to the crimes they had committed against innocent civilians.

"It was this 'Film Corp. Director' who had sent the **female** suicide bomber on the mission that killed 14 people including seven school boys of the D.S Senanayake College at the Fort railway station on February, 3 in the wake of the Independence Day celebrations", he said.

' Film Corp director' behind Colombo massacres held

"The suicide bomber who was arrested in this case is the one who had made the bombs under his handler's shelter at the shop in Kotahena". "The 'Film Corp. Director' had distributed the bombs to the other bombers to carry out civilian massacres," he added.

It is further learnt that the police had found 9.5 kg of high explosives, a stock of detonators, iron balls weighing 1.5 kg, and batteries with the suicide bomber. During the interrogations made he had revealed vital information on the LTTE network in the south.

The suicide bomber had told the police that he had been engaged in reconnaissance operations on VIP movements close to the Government Information Department at Narahenpita during the recent past.

According to sources, the suicide bomber had requested the Wanni to give him a target as soon as possible for he could end his life and the immense mental agony that he had been suffering. The suicide bomber had told the police that he does not wish to die for the LTTE any longer and agreed to give his full cooperation for the investigations, the sources said.

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Load-Date: October 1, 2008

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Civilians slowing Sri Lanka advance: defence chief

Agence France Presse -- English

February 25, 2009 Wednesday 7:26 AM GMT

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Length: 517 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, Feb 25 2009

Body

Sri Lanka's advance against Tamil Tiger rebels, now in its final stages, has been slowed considerably by the presence of civilians in the war zone, the nation's top defence official says.

An estimated 70,000 civilians are inside the shrinking territory in the coastal area of Mullaittivu, into which the rebels have been penned after losing their mini-state, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapakse said.

"The military is taking more casualties now because they can no longer soften the target using artillery and air attacks," he told AFP late Tuesday in an interview at his tightly guarded sea-front office in the capital.

At the same time, he said troops were on the verge of victory after 37 years of fighting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), who have been struggling for a separate Tamil state within the Sinhalese-majority island.

The plight of non-combatants has sparked UN-led calls for a truce to allow civilians to leave. The International Red Cross warned earlier this month a humanitarian catastrophe was unfolding in the region.

But Rajapakse, who is President Mahinda Rajapakse's younger brother, said a ceasefire was unnecessary as troops were not attacking a coastal stretch designated a no-fire zone in order to allow civilians safe passage.

"There is no meaning to (having) a ceasefire now," said Rajapakse.

Government officials say some 35,000 civilians have crossed the front lines despite the rebels firing on fleeing men, **women** and children. The UN and other governments have also accused the Tigers of attacking escaping civilians

But the Tigers have strongly denied the allegations and say the civilians are remaining in the territory on their own accord.

Rajapakse said the length of the hostilities depended "on how quickly the Tigers release civilians."

"If there are no civilians in that area, that will also mean the end of the **LTTE**," he said, accusing the rebels of using the civilians "as a human shield." "They also take part of the food and medicines sent for the civilians. Without civilians they have no supply line," he said.

Civilians slowing Sri Lanka advance: defence chief

Rajapakse, a retired army colonel and main figure spearheading the campaign, said the first stage of military operations would end after all rebel territory was seized.

"I would not say we have defeated the Tigers completely until we have completed all three phases of our operation," he said, adding the next would be to mop up remaining resistance and seize all guerrilla weaponry.

The final phase would be to ensure stability.

"We're not going to leave any room for them to come back," he said.

After the Tigers quit peace talks in 2003 and refused to return to the negotiating table, the government almost doubled the military's strength and increased its weaponry.

The battlefield victories have helped the ruling party win all local elections despite economic hardships attributed to the war effort in which tens of thousands of people on both sides have died.

"The main reason for the success is from day one, we maintained a clear mission," the defence secretary said. "We maintained it without ambiguity: that is to finish off the LTTE."

Load-Date: February 26, 2009

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Will the Colombians silently move to the victor?

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

January 26, 2009 Monday

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Length: 958 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Jan. 26 -- This was the chatter in the cocktail circuit-the women outdoing the men- until the forces opened the Northern front. Unaccredited pundits given a hearing not because of acquired knowledge but of social positions held in society. They had contacts with diplomats of the west, journalists of doubtful integrity, INGOs seeking audiences, pseudo intellectuals with social graces, professionals of opportunistic nature and academics in search of dollars and an assortment of social climbers of like mind.

They truly believed in what they said, because their minds were small, compartmentalized and closed -partly genetic largely environmental. So distanced were they, knew not the feelings of the masses. They lived virtually on another planet- in a mini world of their own. Latterly with the winds blowing in the other direction, they are quiet, but still wishing their dreams will come true, waiting for some news to come- at least to say, so we said. Wait in vain, they still do.

The damage they did with little knowledge and big talk often with a glass in hand is insurmountable.

They created an opinion for a class in Colombo-the Colombians. Those mindless private sector executives-from bank clerks carrying glorified titles of no prestige; to garment exporters with a fistful of dollars whose world revolves around the GST ; the insipid servile public officials (mostly retired) sitting in every conceivable committee doing sweet nothing seeking upward mobility depending on a diplomatic or NGO connection for a trip abroad; to the breed of academics who have more to learn than teach, making a living on international connections as their hired hands; associates among the NGOs who sing for their breakfast to the tune of their foreign masters- to such, this is a war that cannot be won-where defeat awaits us, their anthem to the nation. They made that opinion infectious on epidemic proportions.

There were a few coming from their own ranks who told them where they were wrong. Such were dismissed as freaks, fanatics and fakirs unfit to be a Colombian. Those who held competing views were socially ostracized. Such yakos in their artificial genteel world were fit to be in the domain of the servants' quarters. Those who opposed were ridiculed.

The war was not fought not in wilds of Wanni alone but on media, at seminars, in publications and talk shows. There was both the known and the unknown enemy. In the streets of Colombo roamed the suicide bombers in search of prey while in plush limousines traveled those who thirsted in desperation for devastation on detonation, hopefully it will down the morale of the forces.

Of course it must not descend on them or on their close ones- little did they care for any other. Logic was elementary-LTTE was on a rampage to destroy many whom the Colombians yearned destroyed. Hatred against a government they voted against made them proximate in mind and body to a terrorist organization.

Will the Colombians silently move to the victor?

There were no Colombians in the battle front. The Colonel Blimps have all faded away. The fodder for the war was provided by sons and daughters of the masses. To the Colombians, loss of life on the battle field did not count, as they are not their children. No heroes or heroics can be raised other than from the wombs of affluent Colombo or outside the shores of the island.

LTTE links with west made it easy to cheer terrorism. They wanted the terrorist to defeat our sons and daughters who were sacrificing their lives to give security and stability to the Colombians to send their children to school, to do their business, to earn from their professions and to have fun. The source of the distorted psychology was inherited genetically or soaked by impersonation -those aping did it in with more flourish than those born to it.

It is their style to be different to mortals whom they consider less. If others were cheering with the forces reaching Killinochchi; instinct made them pick holes in a victory achieved with lives lost to defeat terrorism.

They cheered for Colombo not for Sri Lanka. Without the LTTE they have to search for another effective force to destabilize the government with an opposition stupid. Even the terrorists are better than a government they voted against. To keep the LTTE alive was a live factor to destabilize the government they hate- the psyche and hype of the Colombians. Instead of the four letter initials of the local terrorists if the name was Hamas or Hezebulla or Al Queida detested by the West possibly the equation may have changed.

With the downfall of the LTTE, occult may well say the serial losers have the enduring knack in selecting the fallen, whenever an option is available. Naturally, they are so out of touch with the reality in the country of their birth. In the search for an alternative they may soon turn to the contemporary scriptures originating from the Supreme Court orders at least for a while. They well seek salvation from any saint or scarecrow, if the gospel is according to the elite.

The final victory was delayed primarily due to the voice of the opinion makers of Colombo with the perennial chant the "war cannot be won on the battlefield". We have suffered for 25 years, in getting our priorities in order because of the misguided sounds of a vocal minority in Colombo given a hearing by the ruling elite.

Their mantra has a greater reach because of easy access to media and advertising channels. Their erroneous imprudent flawed wisdom has contaminated society many times; but never as toxic as when they prevailed upon, to seek the path of negotiating instead of eliminating terrorism. So will the Colombians silently stealthily slyly move to the victor?

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Load-Date: May 6, 2009

Bringing solace to women and their families- Women's Empowerment Minister

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

March 4, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 1302 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 4 -- Extracts from an exclusive interview with Child Development and Women's Empowerment Minister Sumedha G. Jayasena

Q : What will be the theme of this year's International Women's Day and how does your Ministry plan to celebrate it? A : This year's theme is 'Let us unite to end harassing women'. The national ceremony will be held on March 8 at Royal College, Colombo 7 under the patronage of First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa. This year's celebration will be different. A large number of rural women will take part in the ceremony and about 1,000 such women will arrive in Colombo. Women from the North will also take part in the ceremony.

Apart from this, awards will be presented to women who have excelled in different fields such as in Armed Forces, medicine, law and sports. It will be an encouragement for them and other women to excel in various other fields. Women police officers attached to the Children and Women's Bureau have rendered a significant service to children and women in this country and their service will also be recognised at this ceremony. Q - What is the most common request made by Sri Lankan women at the moment? A : A common request made by the majority of rural women is to find good local and foreign markets for their products. Various types of loan facilities are available for all rural women and the majority of them have already started self employment projects and similar ventures. Some Non-Governmental Organisations engaged in women's welfare are assisting them. They demand markets for their products. Q : What is the gravest problem faced by Sri Lankan women? A : One can think it is violence against women, sexual harassment or something similar. But it is not. Violence against women, sexual harassment and similar crimes have gone down drastically during the past year. One of the main reasons for this situation is Mathata Thitha concept introduced by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Now a large number of families that had been affected by alcoholic fathers, live in peace because alcohol consumption is very much less in villages now. Earlier it was Thanamalwila Divisional Secretariat which recorded the highest suicide rate in the world (not only in Asia). Now the suicide rate has drastically gone down and even the families destroyed by alcoholism and suicides are doing well. The work done by the Security Forces to eradicate illegal drugs by destroying cannabis cultivations has also helped significantly for the betterment of these villages. Women have shown their strength by constructing tanks themselves without the assistance of men. Women are well ahead of men now. They have more will power, dedication and understanding. It is men who need to be educated and need to attend awareness raising programs. The gravest problem lies with the women in the LTTE clutches. What the LTTE is doing right now is very inhuman and against all the rules and ethics of the world. I strongly condemn the use of that 12 year old girl as a human bomb. She begged for mercy from the Armed Forces just minutes before the LTTE activated her suicide jacket and killed her. Our Armed Forces are doing their best to ensure the safety and welfare of women. They sometimes carry pregnant women in their arms. Obtaining adequate sanitary needs was another major problem faced by

Bringing solace to women and their families- Women's Empowerment Minister

women in welfare camps. The Child Development and Women's Empowerment Ministry has sent two lorry loads of such items to them so far and continues to send them. The other problem is stranded LTTE terrorists killing and injuring innocent people in the areas such as Yala. Since the LTTE is going to be eradicated very soon, they are desperate and are killing innocent civilians. Very recently, such terrorists killed several women and children in a village and also killed several farmers who were working in a chena. Q : What happened to the Cabinet Paper presented by you seeking death penalty for criminals who murder children and women? A : I presented that Cabinet paper and obtained Cabinet approval to impose life imprisonment on murderers of children and women. I made the request for the death penalty but I think life imprisonment has a better impact on that type of criminals because then they have the time to realise the gravity of the crimes they committed. So the punishment is adequate for the time being. Q : What is the latest development in connection with increasing female participation in politics? A : Many women contested the last Provincial Council Elections and they all won and only one or two were defeated. One of them was among the top ten of the 18 elected members. It shows that more women are coming into politics. There is a Parliamentary Forum on this issue and I hold the Chairmanship of that forum. All women Parliamentarians are in that forum representing all political parties. Even Tamil women MPs are there. The members of this forum went abroad to study the situation of those countries. They saw that many countries have already allocated 30 per cent representation for women in their Parliaments. Women hold very important ministries such as Defence and Justice and in some countries women hold the post of Speaker of Parliament. Women are very powerful and in top decision making positions in countries such as South Africa and Uganda. In comparison with such countries Sri Lanka stands lagging behind. Women do not like to come into active politics under the existing system because it needs a large amount of funds and most of the time money wins over hard and good work. The Ministry had a UNDP assisted project on increasing women's representation in politics. Q : You held the same post more than once in the past. Apart from various services done for the betterment of women and children, what else can you do to ensure their safety and well-being? A : It is the law. Law is the problem. Sometimes the delay in legal procedures causes more problems for victimized girls than doing any good to them. Such Court cases drag on for over 20 years. For example a 14-year-old-girl was raped and there was a Court case in connection with the incident. When years passed by somehow the victim managed to get married and had two kids. While she was leading a happy married life, the Court case came up again after many years. The girl faced a very unfortunate situation and her married life was destroyed because of that case. Medical reports get delayed for years. The DNA test result of the girl who was murdered in a paddy field a long time ago is still pending. This is how our judiciary functions sometimes. I personally made a request to the Chief Justice to get rid of all unnecessary delays caused by existing laws in connection with women's issues. I requested him to formulate a system to solve such cases at least within a period of two years. Discussions had also been conducted with the Justice Ministry and other relevant institutions in this regard. We cannot let the victimised females subject to more verbal and mental harassment because of the delays in litigation. Q : How are you going to assist women and children affected by terrorism? A : Various types of assistance have been made available for the children and women affected by the LTTE terrorists. They have been given scholarships and houses. The children who lost parents will be educated. The NCPA is also rendering a significant service for them. A special program will be formulated shortly to assist the displaced women. Any woman in Sri Lanka can submit her problem to the Child Development and Women's Empowerment Minister every Wednesday from morning to evening. All such problems will be looked into or forwarded to relevant institutions if the Ministry itself cannot solve such a problem. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Tigers killed one civilian fleeing fighting: Sri Lanka army

Agence France Presse -- English

March 28, 2009 Saturday 1:55 PM GMT

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Length: 306 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, March 28 2009

Body

Sri Lanka's military on Saturday accused the Tamil Tiger rebels of firing at civilians fleeing fighting in the north of the country, killing one and injuring two.

It said the shooting took place as 381 men, women and children fled the war zone on Friday and sought shelter in government-controlled areas.

Sri Lankan troops have boxed the rebels into a tiny strip of jungle along the island's northeastern shoreline.

Since the beginning of January more than 55,000 civilians have escaped Tiger-held areas, according to the military.

Fighting also raged near the Tiger defence line of Puthukkudiruppu on Friday, where troops recovered three guerrilla bodies, the defence ministry said.

There was no immediate comment from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who the government says is facing "imminent defeat" after nearly four decades of fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils.

On Friday, Amnesty International renewed its call for a pause in the fighting to allow tens of thousands of civilians to leave the combat zone.

"We cannot stress enough the importance of an immediate pause to allow the displaced to leave before thousands more are killed," Sam Zarifi, the rights organisation's director for Asia Pacific, said in a statement.

Amnesty said the Tigers were holding civilians hostage and were "reported to have deliberately attacked civilians that have tried to escape from areas under their control."

The government estimates some 70,000 people remain inside.

On Thursday John Holmes, the UN's top humanitarian official, estimated that 150,000 to 190,000 civilians were trapped by the fighting and could not escape, resulting in dozens of deaths each day.

Sri Lanka says the LTTE must first lay down its arms before any ceasefire. It has accused the rebels of using such truces in the past to rearm and regain strength.

Tigers killed one civilian fleeing fighting: Sri Lanka army

Load-Date: March 29, 2009

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A Tiger rattling of chains

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 28, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 981 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 28 -- The air raid by the LTTE that took place on Friday evening was an extraordinary event, with an added human interest inasmuch as it happened while the Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights was entertaining Sir John Holmes to dinner. Sir John, like Colonel Fazackerley in the poem of that name, was magnificently calm throughout the episode, while SMS alerts proliferated around the table.

Fazackerley in the poem is a colonel who is visited by a ghost while having dinner in a castle he has just bought. The ghost howls and rattles his chains but the colonel calmly continues with his meal, while telling the ghost that he really should not make such a nuisance of himself. The ghost, who had successfully frightened all previous tenants, gets more and more upset, but there is nothing he can do. If I recollect right he finally vanishes up the chimney and is never heard of again. The poem seemed particularly apposite since, apart from the horror of some people being killed, and more injured, the performance of the pilots, as surrogates for Mr. Prabhakaran, was rather like that of the ghost. Ghosts, it should be noted, are generally frightening creatures, and the damage that might have occurred should not be dismissed lightly. After all it was a considerable achievement to have got two planes airborne from a small patch of jungle, to have flown them all the way to Colombo, and to have done much damage to the Inland Revenue building with one of them. But this certainly was not an embarrassment to the government of Sri Lanka, as one media outlet claimed, suggesting that it gave the lie to the Government claim that the LTTE was almost finished. On the contrary, had it not been for the dead and wounded, one would have almost thought it was a performance the Government had ordered, to make crystal clear what it has continuously asserted, that the LTTE is still a force for terror, and that we cannot relax. The forces have almost wholly destroyed the pretensions of the LTTE to being an orthodox fighting force, and that is just as well, since they have for years been pretending to be precisely that, with a 'national' army and navy and police force and most recently an air force. They engage in formal training and, though this includes barbarous rituals, there is a veneer of orthodoxy about this training, even of children, that has taken in a number of gullible foreigners, in addition to the more gullible members of the diaspora who continue to fund what they think is the core of a future nation. That game is now over and, if the President pursues swiftly his vision of a united pluralistic Sri Lanka, it is not likely to start again. But, as Government has never hesitated to declare, the sudden surprise attacks of a ruthless and efficient terrorist outfit will not be got rid of so easily. That is why our security system has to be tight, that is why we still need our forces to maintain the vigilance and care that has lessened but not eliminated horrendously destructive acts. In that respect, the air raid was an object lesson for Sir John of the importance of security also in the Welfare Villages in Vavuniya where, among thousands of poor abused civilians finally escaping to freedom, there may lurk one or two suicide bombers, waiting to pounce. And even one suicide bomber is one too many, so we absolutely must take every precaution to prevent the type of slaughter that took place on February 9, when women and children who thought they were on the threshold of freedom were killed by a woman who pretended to be like them, escaping from Tiger control into the safe haven of Government territory. The precautions we have taken, which should under no circumstances be

A Tiger rattling of chains

reduced at this crucial stage, have however lessened the destruction that Tiger ingenuity had for so long perpetrated. And even the episode of the planes was in retrospect rather like the last rattling of his chains by the castle ghost, the damp squib with which the two planes exploded indicating that the ghost's luck is fading. It may only have been good fortune that prevented the planes destroying an air force building, or the airport, but as it happened, the destruction of some floors of the Inland Revenue Department building could not have brought much joy to Tiger hearts. After all that skilful flying over jungle and sea coast and city, a few tax files cannot be seen as feathers in the caps of the latest human sacrifices to the desperation of the ghost. But a few more civilians have died, and sadly we know that the ghost will continue to kill civilians, Tamils now, but also Sinhalese and Muslims, if he has half a chance. There may be no more planes left, but we cannot be sure, and we certainly know that there are hundreds of guns and heavy weapons still in terrorist hands. Given the entrenched habits of the ghost, using any weapon that lies to hand to kill any available victim, we cannot therefore relax in our efforts until all those arms have been surrendered. We must, as previously, take all care possible to avoid civilian casualties, knowing now from what happened from January 26 onward, as indicated by the UN report of the shooting that day as coming from LTTE territory, that the Tigers will happily sacrifice civilians if there is the slightest chance of the blame falling on Sri Lankan forces. But, as the record of the Sri Lankan forces has shown over the past few years, we know how to take care of civilians, our civilians, which is perhaps what makes this natural to us, unlike in other contemporary theatres of war. Working with that knowledge, we have to make sure that the struggle against the forces of terror continues, until the ghost vanishes up the chimney, and not only Sir John but all Sri Lankans can eat and sleep and work in peace. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

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Contenders vie for high stakes at EP election

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 10, 2008 Saturday 3:07 PM EST

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Length: 978 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 10 -- Not for the last twenty years have the people of the Eastern Province witnessed such a large presence of politicians in each Divisional Secretariat. The region is just inundated with politicians going in Pajero jeeps with large contingents of security personnel roaming around the streets and lanes of the East. For the citizens, it has become a circus; for some, it is a joke played on them to be bestowed with so much attention. The majority of the people are very cynical about the politicians' new found interest in their wellbeing. They have witnessed all this previously when politicians came with empty promises.

The elections are being held with the assumption that the Government will be able to sustain its military campaign in the Wanni and secure Kilinochchi by defeating the LTTE. This itself is a bold assumption but the indications from the battlefield suggest that the military battle will be protracted and there is no immediate evidence to assume that the Government will secure a military victory within the deadlines imposed by General Fonseka.

The people of the East have in the last twenty years only witnessed many marauding armed gangs in their countryside, who then invaded their homes, raped their women and abducted their men, who were never seen again. The people of the East, irrespective of whether they are Muslim, Tamil or Sinhalese have witnessed these armed gangs, who professed to have come to liberate them. In fact, there have been so many, that people have lost count of the names and numbers.

What is different this time is that the current elections are being held in the wake of the so called liberation of the East from the LTTE by the Sri Lankan armed forces. The Government of Mahinda Rajapaksa, as a result of the victory over the LTTE in the East, is now attempting to consolidate its military gains through political means. It is a bold experiment, but fraught with many questions. It should be noted that the elections are being held in the East after the JVP obtained an order from the Supreme Court to the effect that the merger of the North and Eastern Provinces through the Indo Lanka Accord was illegal, thus paving the way for the de-merger of the two provinces. Further, it was during the period of the CFA that regional differences between the Tamils in the North and those in the East surfaced, which could be said to have shaken the very foundations of the merger. It was these very same differences among the Tamils that played a role in the defection of Karuna from the LTTE, which aided the Government in defeating the LTTE in the East, paving the way for the holding of the Provincial Council elections.

At present, the battle lines for this contest are clearly drawn between the UPFA Government and the UNP alliance with the SLMC. The UNP is arguing that a vote for them will be a vote against the dictatorship of the Rajapaksa regime with its attendant human rights violations and the increasing cost of living. At the same time, those who are pro- government are arguing that voting for the UNP -SLMC coalition would lead to a Muslim chief minister being voted into power, which would drive the Muslim areas of the Eastern Province towards Muslim extremism. They

Contenders vie for high stakes at EP election

also point out that since the majority of the people are engaged in agriculture, they would stand to benefit by a victory of the UPFA, which has ensured a good price for rice.

For the Government, it is an effort to make a showpiece of the East as a development model, which would be the envy of the world. It is assumed that after the military victory in the Wanni the Government will have a similar Provincial Council in the North. An Interim Council has now been set up in the North to pave the way.

The election will be a test case for the Government which has to win the elections; as a defeat in the East will be a disaster for its future position in the country. Given the rise in the cost of living, war generated inflation and rampant corruption; the people will read such a defeat as a signal for similar defeats in other Provincial Council elections. Therefore, the Government forces will do everything possible, including rigging the elections to win it. Already preparations for rigging the elections are being reported with large numbers of ballot papers, over 180 lying in the post offices; rumours are rampant of people being intimidated and their ballot papers being taken away; efforts are allegedly under way to secure the votes of the refugees by impersonations and the presence of politicians from the ruling party who are known for their expertise in election rigging is exacerbating the problem. Further, the large handouts, the use of government vehicles etc. are reported from all the three districts. This manner of large scale election rigging will have serious consequences for the future course of events in the country.

For the UNP - SLMC alliance, it is also an important election. For the UNP, a victory in the East will encourage their efforts to destabilise the Government in the South. At the next budget debate, it will provide the necessary encouragement to defeat the Government, which will force the Government to hold general elections yet again. Such a victory will also encourage other parties to vote against the Government. With the split in the JVP, the Government would not be able to secure a majority as it did the last time, with the support of the JVP. For the SLMC, its leader has staked his entire political future in resigning from his seat in Parliament to contest the elections in the East. It is an opportunity for him to regain his lost credibility with depleted and stolen numbers in Parliament and unite the Muslims under the banner of the SLMC. As such, the stakes are obviously very high for all parties.

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

States News Service

February 5, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1980 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: LONDON

Body

The following information was released by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO):

Foreign Office Minister Bill Rammell delivered an opening speech ahead of a debate in the House of Commons on the conflict in Sri Lanka, voicing particular concern over the worsening humanitarian situation. He also stated that the only way to bring an end to the conflict and achieve a lasting peace was through a political solution that addresses the legitimate concerns of all communities in the region.

Read the transcript

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased that we are having this debate because, bluntly, the situation in Sri Lanka is nothing short of shocking. We are very concerned about the humanitarian and human rights situation in Sri Lanka. The humanitarian situation in the north particularly has seriously deteriorated since the House last debated this subject in December. At this critical moment it is timely to return to this issue.

Humanitarian Situation

Hon. Members, in recent weeks the fighting between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka has become increasingly bloody and the humanitarian situation has deteriorated dramatically. Fighting has continued even within the Government-declared "safe zone" and on Sunday a hospital, which had been declared a no-fire zone, was shelled three times. Further shelling has taken place this week. The UN reports that at least 50 civilians died at the hospital and many more were wounded, including women and children. And there are more civilian casualties every day.

These attacks are serious violations of international humanitarian law. Any attempts, including by representatives of the Sri Lankan Government, to defend shelling of the hospital would be frankly unacceptable. We expect and urge the Government of Sri Lanka to investigate any allegations of abuses by their forces. We would support a full investigation into the shelling of the hospital and into other civilian deaths. The primary burden for investigation rests on the authority against whose forces allegations of war crimes are made.

The statement made by the Government on Tuesday that civilians should move out of the conflict area because it could no longer guarantee their safety was very worrying. The Government has a duty to protect all of its citizens and should do all in its power to ensure their safety.

Accurate figures of casualties are very difficult to come by, but we estimate that there are around 250,000 Internally Displaced Persons caught up in the conflict area. The UN has been unable to send a major humanitarian convoy

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

into the conflict zone to assist civilians since 16 January, although some supplies were sent on 29 January. These are matters of great concern.

Our overwhelming priority is to press for a humanitarian ceasefire. Both sides have to respect international humanitarian law and take steps to protect civilians from the profound threats they face and also allow humanitarian agencies the access they need to bring these desperate people the help they need. Over the past few weeks we have increased our efforts to urge the Government of Sri Lanka to take action to alleviate the suffering of civilians.

We have also been acutely aware of the concern felt by all members of Tamil communities over the suffering of Tamils in Sri Lanka. My right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble friend Lord Malloch-Brown met last week with over 100 representatives of the Tamil communities in the UK to listen to those concerns, to reassure them that we take them very seriously and to explain the efforts we are making to help to bring about an end to this conflict.

My right honourable friend the Prime Minister wrote to President Rajapakse in mid-January expressing our concern. My right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary telephoned the President last week and urged him to declare a humanitarian ceasefire. My right honourable friend has since repeated his call for a humanitarian ceasefire and has publicly called on both sides to allow the wounded to receive medical treatment, to allow civilians to leave conflict areas and to allow access for humanitarian agencies.

My right Honourable friend also discussed this matter with US Secretary of State Clinton and they jointly called for a no-fire period to allow civilians to leave the conflict area and to allow humanitarian agencies access. There is no doubt that there is concern from within the UN about the safety and wellbeing of civilians caught up in the conflict, as the Secretary-General made clear in his statements of 26 and 30 January. We fully support the Secretary-General's sentiments and endorse his call for both sides to the conflict to abide by their humanitarian obligations.

The Foreign Secretary also shared our concerns with India during his recent visit there. The Indian Foreign Minister has since visited Sri Lanka to discuss the humanitarian situation with President Rajapakse.

On 29 January President Rajapakse offered safe passage to civilians but the LTTE failed to respond positively and hostilities did not cease even temporarily. The LTTE continue to refuse to allow civilians to leave the conflict areas. Worse yet they are deliberately using them as a human shield. There are credible reports that they fire artillery on Government troops from locations next to civilian centres, including from next to the hospital in a no-fire zone where civilians were killed on Sunday.

We call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to repeat their offer of safe passage. We are working with others in the international community, particularly the US and other members of the co-chairs - Japan, the EU and Norway, to increase the pressure on the LTTE to respond positively. The temporary no-fire period called for by the FS and Hilary Clinton this week should be acted upon immediately. The Co-chairs have also called upon both sides to allow a period for humanitarian aid to be delivered and have called upon the LTTE to discuss ways of ending the current hostilities and participate in a process to achieve a just and lasting political solution. Too many lives have already been lost in this terrible conflict. We do not want to see the situation deteriorate further.

Given the urgency of the situation we are also taking immediate practical steps to alleviate the suffering of civilians. We have allocated a further 2.5 million, on top of the 2.5 million we committed in October of last year, to support the efforts of humanitarian agencies in Sri Lanka. This money will help to ensure that emergency relief convoys can remain operational and that the International Committee of the Red Cross can continue its vital work protecting and assisting civilians in the conflict zone.

We are also sending DFID humanitarian experts to Sri Lanka this week, to undertake an assessment mission and bolster the capacity of the High Commission in Colombo to deal with the unfolding humanitarian situation. Our High Commission in Colombo continues to urge the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure further humanitarian assistance reaches civilians in the conflict areas.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

Hon. Members, when the House last debated Sri Lanka I explained that an objective assessment of the conflict was impossible as independent media and NGOs have limited access to the conflict zones. Attributing responsibility for individual attacks to one side or the other remains difficult. But it is very clear that both sides have to take immediate steps to protect civilian lives.

Need for Political Solution to the Conflict

Hon Members, the conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE has now been going on for over 25 years. It has claimed the lives of at least 70,000 people in Sri Lanka and is daily claiming more. We recognise the Government of Sri Lanka's right to root out terrorism but are seriously concerned about the impact the current military approach is having on civilians in the north. Our position remains that a political solution that addresses the legitimate concerns of all communities is the only way to bring a sustainable end to the conflict. We are continuing to call for a full debate amongst all communities, Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese, free from intimidation, on what an acceptable political settlement to the conflict might look like.

The Government of Sri Lanka must do more. It needs to reach out to the different communities, build their confidence and demonstrate real commitment to reaching an inclusive political solution to the conflict. Reaching a political solution now is also in the Government's interests. We are pressing the Sri Lankan Government to initiate an inclusive political process to address the causes of the conflict.

We also urge the LTTE to renounce terrorist methods and to demonstrate a genuine commitment to participate in a democratic political process to resolve the conflict. The LTTE should be doing all it can to protect civilians at a time when Sri Lankan Tamils are suffering the worst effects of the conflict. We call on those who have influence over the LTTE also to encourage them to enter the democratic mainstream.

Human Rights

Hon Members, an important part of any political solution will be the establishment of effective systems and structures to protect the rights of all Sri Lankans. We continue to be concerned about the use of child soldiers by paramilitary groups, the culture of ethnic discrimination and the reports of abductions, disappearances and extra-judicial killings of civilians. Prosecutions for such abuses are rare, feeding a dangerous culture of impunity.

The Government clearly has a direct responsibility to tackle all human rights violations. Only by ensuring that full and thorough investigations into such violations are followed by successful prosecutions of those responsible will the Government strengthen the rule of law and tackle this corrosive culture of impunity.

Admittedly, there has been some recent progress on human rights. In our last debate on Sri Lanka I mentioned that our lobbying had contributed to an agreement between the TMVP, UNICEF and the Government to work towards the release of all TMVP child soldiers. UNICEF report good progress on implementing this agreement.

But overall the last month has demonstrated how serious the human rights situation remains. Media freedom has been under particular threat throughout January. A senior editor, Lasantha Wickrematunge, was murdered in Colombo in broad daylight, another was assaulted and the broadcasting centre of an independent TV station was destroyed by a well armed gang. No one has yet been charged with any of these terrible crimes. Since these attacks many prominent figures in the media and civil society have left Sri Lanka in fear for their lives.

Recent attacks on the media are likely to have been carried out by extreme nationalist elements encouraged by recent military progress in the north to take action against those perceived as 'traitors'. We are urging the Government to take firmer action to discourage the current dangerous mood of ethnic nationalism and to take clear-cut and rigorous action to bring the perpetrators of such attacks to justice. It is unacceptable for the Government of Sri Lanka not to do this.

Whilst discussing human rights it is appropriate to mention here the concerns that some hon. members have expressed to me about the tone and substance of their contacts with representatives of the Sri Lankan government. Let me be unequivocal, every member has the absolute right to speak out in defence of their constituents.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

In conclusion, we want to see an end to this terrible conflict that has already claimed too many lives and has gone on for far too long. The present situation is unacceptable. We will do everything in our power to prevent more deaths, but ultimately it is for the Government and people of Sri Lanka to bring this about.

Load-Date: February 5, 2009

End of Document

At Least 17 Civilians Killed In Rebel Firing, Says Sri Lankan Military

RTT News (United States)

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 327 words

Body

(RTTNews) - At least 17 civilians were killed after the Tamil Tiger rebels opened fire on a group of people who were trying to escape into government-controlled regions from the fighting zone in the north of the island nation, said the Sri Lankan military on Tuesday.

"The civilians came to an army position carrying the 17 dead and 69 others who had gunshot injuries," Brig Nanayakkara, the spokesman for the Sri Lankan army, told reporters.

He condemned the rebels for using civilians as a protective shield in the ongoing fighting with the government forces, and added that those killed in the rebel firing on Tuesday included five women and two children.

Separately, a Tamil Tiger website claimed Tuesday that at least 36 civilians were killed and 76 others wounded after mortar shells fired by the government forces hit a government-declared "safety zone."

However, the claims made by the rebels and the military cannot be verified as reporters and aid agencies are not allowed in the conflict zone in northern Sri Lanka.

Fighting between the Tamil Tiger rebels and the government forces intensified recently after the Sri Lankan government backed out of a 2002 Norwegian-brokered ceasefire in January 2008 and launched an all out offensive against the rebels, aiming to crush them by the year end.

Last month, the Sri Lankan forces had captured Jaffna peninsula, Elephant Pass and the rebel de facto capital of Kilinochchi from the Tamil Tigers, and are currently advancing into the remaining rebel-held regions in the northern part of the island nation.

It is estimated that more than 70,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed in the country's civil war that began after the Tamil Tiger rebels launched an armed rebellion in 1983, demanding an independent state for the Tamil minority in the island's northern and eastern regions.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010

THE WEEK AHEAD FEB.8-FEB.14

The New York Times
February 8, 2009 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 4

Length: 298 words

Byline: By MIKE HALE

Body

Film

Mike Hale

Olive Higgins Prouty completists, rejoice: the Film Society of Lincoln Center is offering a rare screening of the 1925 silent "STELLA DALLAS," directed by Henry King and starring the blowsy, voluptuous Belle Bennett as Stella, that monument to motherhood and socioeconomic martyrdom. Bennett is no Barbara Stanwyck, whose magnificent performance in the role would come 12 years later. But King's version of the Prouty novel holds its own, with the help of Frances Marion's witty screenplay. Ronald Colman plays Stella's cold-fish husband, and Jean Hersholt (yes, the man the humanitarian award is named for) gives a scene-stealing performance as the low-life Ed Munn. Friday at 7 p.m., Walter Reade Theater, 165 West 65th Street, Lincoln Center, (212) 875-5600, filmlinc.com; \$15.

The Museum of Modern Art's DOCUMENTARY FORTNIGHT series includes more than 30 films of varying length, artistry and objectivity. Uniting them is that most of them take us into places we wouldn't otherwise see: the single-room-occupancy building in Chinatown where a retired restaurant worker fights against eviction ("Here to Stay"); the Newark courtroom where relatives and friends of a murdered lesbian teenager speak at her killer's sentencing hearing ("Dreams Deferred: The Sakia Gunn Film Project"); the Tamil-controlled northern tip of Sri Lanka ("My Daughter the Terrorist"). That film, by the Norwegian director Beate Arnestad, is both timely and controversial: a portrait of two attractive, articulate, highly charming young women who were soldiers and suicide bombers in training for the Tamil Tigers separatists, it has been denounced by the Sri Lankan government. Wednesday through Feb. 25, Museum of Modern Art Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters, (212) 708-9400, moma.org; \$10.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

THE WEEK AHEAD FEB.8-FEB.14

PHOTO: Belle Bennett and Ronald Colman in the 1925 "Stella Dallas."(PHOTOGRAPH BY FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER/UNITED ARTISTS/KOBAL COLLECTION)

Load-Date: February 8, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lankan rebel bases bombed as 30 die in clashes

Associated Press International

October 1, 2008 Wednesday 11:45 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 313 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Air force fighter jets bombed two Tamil Tiger rebel bases in northern Sri Lanka on Wednesday while infantry clashes across the region killed 26 rebels and four soldiers, the military said.

Fighters pounded the headquarters of the Charles Anthony Brigade an elite rebel infantry unit and another base housing **female** fighters in the Tiger stronghold of Kilinochchi district, said Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara, an air force spokesman.

Early Wednesday, air force planes bombed a jungle hide-out in the Mullaitivu district believed to be used by top leaders of the Tamil rebels, he said.

Nanayakkara did not have details of damage or casualties.

Ground battles Tuesday in Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Welioya districts killed 26 guerrillas and four soldiers, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

With nearly all communications to the north severed, rebel spokesmen could not be contacted for comment.

It was not possible to verify the military's reports because most journalists and other independent observers are barred from the war zone. Both sides often exaggerate their enemy's losses and underreport their own.

The **Tamil Tigers** have fought since 1983 to create an independent state for Sri Lanka's minority Tamils.

Soldiers on Tuesday found 5.5 pounds (2.5 kilograms) of C-4 explosives hidden in a truck hired to transport food in a United Nations' aid convoy to people displaced by recent fighting.

Nanayakkara said the driver was arrested.

The U.N. deplored "the placing of explosives by an unknown party" on a vehicle joining a humanitarian convoy, a statement said Wednesday.

Two weeks ago, the U.N. and other aid agencies withdrew from rebel-held areas following a government order over safety concerns.

Sri Lankan rebel bases bombed as 30 die in clashes

The violence has forced about 160,000 people to flee their homes, and the withdrawal of aid groups has raised fears that the plight of displaced civilians could worsen.

Load-Date: October 2, 2008

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World Report

Windsor Star (Ontario)

January 4, 2008 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. C2; World Report

Length: 1598 words

Byline: Compiled from Star News Services

Body

ASIA

HEAVY FIGHTING GRIPS SRI LANKA AS TRUCE ENDS

COLOMBO - Heavy fighting between government troops and Tamil Tigers broke out in northern Sri Lanka Thursday, hours after Colombo announced it was pulling out of a tattered ceasefire agreement with the rebels.

At least six Tiger rebels and a government soldier were killed in the latest clashes along the de facto border of the mini-state run by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the defence ministry said.

For their part, the Tigers said they beat back a military offensive into their territory and claimed they killed 10 government soldiers and wounded 15 more. The rebels said in a statement that they did not suffer any losses.

Both sides are known to claim heavy losses for their adversaries and there is no independent verification.

In the capital Colombo, the already tight security was further strengthened one day after suspected LTTE rebels set off a roadside bomb targeting an army bus that killed five and wounded 28.

INDIA SEES SECOND SCHOOL SHOOTING IN A MONTH

BHOPAL, India - A teenager on Thursday shot a younger boy who later died of his injuries, said police in central India, in the second school shooting the country has seen in less than a month.

The 17-year-old pupil used a homemade gun to shoot a 14-year-old studying at the same state-run school in Madhya Pradesh state, police said.

"Police have registered a case and arrested the alleged offender but investigations are underway," police official Kamal Singh Rathore told Agence France-Presse.

"The exact cause of the incident could not be known immediately."

Police believe a scuffle between the two may have led to the shooting in Choraberi village, 500 kilometres north of the state capital Bhopal.

World Report

12-YEAR-OLD USED AS BAIT IN CHINA KIDNAPPING RING

BEIJING - A kidnapping gang in China used a 12-year-old boy to lure other children away from their parents, and then sold the victims to rural families looking for sons, state press reported Thursday.

Nine boys, aged between two and eight, had been abducted in central China's Henan province since April, before the gang was busted in recent weeks, Xinhua news agency said, citing local police.

Ten members of the kidnapping gang including its 55-year-old leader, Ye Zengxi, his brother, son and daughter-in-law, had been arrested, Xinhua said.

"The gang used Ye's 12-year-old nephew to lure other children away from their parents' view with toys or food, and then whisked them away by motorbike," Xinhua said.

Each child was sold for \$2,700 to farming families, who apparently wanted to raise the boys as their own sons to continue the family line, Xinhua cited police as saying.

All the children had been rescued, according to Xinhua. Kidnapping of children and women is a growing problem in China, the central government said last month.

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OCEANIA

'EXPLODING DOG' SPARKS SCARE AT CREMATORIUM

SYDNEY - An exploding frozen dog has been blamed for sparking a fire scare at an Australian pet crematorium, it was reported Thursday.

Fire engines in the Northern Territory capital Darwin rushed to the crematorium Wednesday night after a passing motorist reported the premises were on fire, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported.

It said emergency services personnel reported a "red glow" coming from the crematorium's chimney flue and called the owner, fearing the property was alight.

The ABC reported that the owner concluded that a frozen dead dog in the furnace was the cause of the overheating chimney, explaining to the gathered emergency workers that the chilled canines sometimes exploded when cremated.

- - -

EUROPE

NAPLES 'SUFFOCATED' BY RUBBISH, AGAIN

NAPLES - The Naples region was grappling Thursday with a chronic rubbish disposal problem as at least 2,000 tonnes of excess garbage piled up outside dumps and in the streets.

Overburdened waste treatment centres in the impoverished southern region have been unable to handle the surplus, a scenario that has been repeated countless times over the past decade and a half.

The daily La Repubblica described the region, with a population of some six million, as "a community that is sinking and suffocating in its own excrement."

Firefighters overnight doused 70 flaming rubbish heaps, set alight by angry residents, the ANSA news agency reported, after a similar number of fires were extinguished Tuesday.

'SMOKING JACKETS' FOR FRENCH CAFE CUSTOMERS

World Report

RENNES, France - A cafe owner in the western city of Rennes has found a friendly way of enforcing France's new smoking ban: He is lending customers fleece jackets to wear while they stand outside to smoke.

"To say to a customer 'go and smoke your cigarette outside' is a bit harsh. Lending him a fleece to wear is friendlier," said Gilles Berard, owner of the Chat Qui Peche cafe in central Rennes.

- - -

MIDEAST

TURKISH PARLIAMENT PASSES SMOKING BAN BILL

ANKARA - Turkey's parliament passed Thursday a bill banning smoking in bars and restaurants as part of a series of stringent restrictions on nicotine addicts in a country where 60 per cent of males smoke.

The law, which will take effect four months after it is approved by the president, allows for an 18-month transition period for bars, restaurants and cafes to prepare themselves for the ban. Smoking is already banned in Turkey on buses, airplanes and larger public institutions, but enforcement has been uneven.

The new law was passed with strong support from the Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, himself an ardent anti-smoking campaigner.

It bans smoking in all government buildings, work places and private institutions such as restaurants, bars, cafes, including even village coffee-houses, as well as shopping malls, schools, taxis, stadiums and hospitals.

ROCKET STRIKE PROMPTS HEAVY ISRAELI RESPONSE

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a Katyusha rocket 17 kilometres into Israel on Thursday, their deepest artillery strike yet, provoking some of the heaviest Israeli assaults in months. Nine Palestinians were killed in the day's fighting.

The rocket landed harmlessly on the northern outskirts of the coastal city of Ashkelon. An Israeli tank and helicopter offensive that was already under way in Gaza quickly intensified, targeting suspected arms depots and homes and hide-outs of militants, who fired back with grenade launchers and automatic rifles.

Palestinian medical workers said three of those killed were civilians -- the mother, sister and brother of a militant from the Islamic Jihad group, who also died when a tank shell ripped through their home in the city of Khan Yunis. Israel said it was responding to gunfire from the house.

More than 30 Palestinians, including five children, were reported wounded as the fighting spread from Khan Yunis to Gaza City and Rafah.

A Palestinian Authority spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdeneh, called the Israeli offensive "a bloody message" that could tarnish President George W. Bush's visit to the region next week.

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AFRICA

CHILD RAPE ON RISE IN NIGERIAN CITY: OFFICIALS

KANO, Nigeria - Child rapes have risen by an "alarming" extent in northern Nigeria's commercial capital Kano, with attackers under the delusion the act can cure disease or make them rich, officials said Thursday.

"The rape of under-age girls in this city is becoming widespread and alarming," Suleiman Abba, Kanos deputy police chief told Agence France-Presse.

World Report

Some rapists mistakenly believe child rape is a ritual that can lead to instant riches, while others think they can cure themselves of AIDS and various sexually-transmitted diseases by having sex with a virgin, said Ibrahim Abdullahi, spokesman for the body tasked with improving morals in Kano state.

"This is a sad development which requires the combined effort of the government, security agencies and the public to combat," Aminuddeen Abubakar, an Islamic scholar in the city told AFP outside his mosque.

"People rape small girls ... because their cult leaders tell them that is a precondition of becoming rich. It is a daily occurrence," Abubakar said.

WOMAN IN LEGAL TEST OF TEXT MESSAGING DIVORCE

CAIRO - An Egyptian woman is seeking clarification from a court on whether her husband's declaration of divorce by text message is legally valid, a state-run newspaper reported on Thursday.

After missing a call from her husband on her mobile phone, Iqbal Abul Nasr received a text message from him saying "I divorce you because you didn't answer your husband," Al-Akhbar said.

In line with sharia (Islamic law) men do not need to go to court to file for divorce. A unilateral declaration of divorce by a man, repeated three times, formally ends a marriage.

It was the third time Abul Nasr, an engineer from Cairo, received a divorce text message from her husband, prompting her to seek a legal decision from the a family court on the status of her marriage.

If the court declares the couple divorced, it would be the first reported case of divorce by SMS (Short message service) in Egypt.

13 ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL AFTER DRINKING FOUL WATER

LUSAKA - About 13 people have been admitted to hospital in Zambia after drinking water allegedly polluted by acidic effluents from a key mining company in northern town of Mufulira, an official said Thursday.

"About 13 people have been admitted to hospital after they drank contaminated water," Mufulira town official Charles Mwandila told reporters.

They were admitted to a hospital in Mufulira, a mining town about 400 kilometres north of Lusaka, after they on Wednesday drank water contaminated by an accidental acid spill from Mopani Copper Mines (MCM), he said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: David Hancock, Agence France-Presse, Getty Images; SPECIAL DELIVERY: Australia postman George Johnstone pauses for a quiet moment with his two-year-old pet cockatoo Bob as he delivers the mail in the Hunter Valley town of Aberdeen, New South Wales, Thursday. Johnstone found the injured bird after it walked into his home one day and adopted it as a companion on his daily mail run. ;

Colour Photo: Tayyip Erdogan ;

Load-Date: January 4, 2008

Civilians die as bomb rocks shopping mall

Gulf Daily News

May 1, 2008

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Length: 309 words

Body

COLOMBO: Tamil Tiger rebels set off a bomb at the entrance of a popular department store in a Colombo suburb yesterday evening, killing at least 17 people and injuring 43 others, the military said.

It was a rare attack by the separatist group on a purely civilian area in recent years, though civilians have been killed in previous Tamil Tiger attacks on government and military targets.

Earlier in the day, a female suicide bomber sent by the Tamil Tigers killed one person and wounded two others in an unsuccessful attempt to kill a cabinet minister in his office in Colombo, the military said.

The blast occurred just outside the four-storey No Limits store in Nugegoda as commuters crowded a nearby bus stop during the rush hour.

The powerful explosion shattered the department store's windows and sent piles of crumbled concrete pouring onto the bloodstained sidewalk. Crumpled and charred parts of motorcycles and three-wheeled taxis were scattered nearby.

Police and firemen were digging through the rubble in a search for more bodies.

The bomb may have exploded when a security guard at the mall became suspicious about a parcel and tried to open it, a defence official said.

However, police at the scene said the explosives may have been in one of the three-wheeled taxis that were destroyed.

Earlier, a handicapped suicide bomber blew herself up at social services ministry in the heart of Colombo.

The attack targeted the offices of Douglas Devananda, the minister of social services and the leader of the Eelam People's Democratic Party, an ethnic Tamil party considered a rival to the rebels.

Devananda, the target of repeated assassination attempts, was not injured in the attack, but the blast killed one of his staff members and injured two others, military officials said. The bomber was also killed.

Civilians die as bomb rocks shopping mall

\$1.5 Iran loan - Page 37

Cricket match - Page 54

Load-Date: June 30, 2008

End of Document

AFP World News Summary

Agence France Presse -- English

January 4, 2008 Friday 1:20 AM GMT

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Length: 327 words

Dateline: WASHINGTON, Jan 4 2008

Body

Top world news stories at 0100 GMT:

US-vote-2008

DES MOINES: The first state contest to choose the candidates for the 2008 US presidential election opened in Iowa, with both Republican and Democratic races extremely close and unpredictable.

SriLanka-unrest

COLOMBO: Heavy fighting between government troops and **Tamil Tigers** broke out in northern Sri Lanka Thursday, hours after Colombo announced it was pulling out of a tattered ceasefire agreement with the rebels.

US-Libya-diplomacy

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged her Libyan counterpart to promote human rights and meet demands for compensation from the families of victims of the 1980s Pan Am Flight 103 and Berlin disco bombings.

Kenya-vote-unrest

NAIROBI: Kenyan police used tear gas and water cannon to prevent a mass protest rally by opposition leader Raila Odinga, as Europe and the United States pushed for a unity government to guide the country out of its current crisis.

Kenya-vote-unrest-economy-EAfrica-WorldBank

NAIROBI: Kenyan political unrest threatens to reverse its economic gains and further rattle regional economies that depend on the country's status as a regional hub, the World Bank warned.

Turkey-Kurds-attacks-toll

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey: At least five people were killed and about 70 injured in a car-bomb explosion in Diyarbakir, the main city in Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast, the governor said.

AFP World News Summary

Mideast-conflict

GAZA CITY: Nine Palestinians, including two women, were killed in Israeli ground and air bombardments in Gaza, medical sources said, in the latest blitz against the Hamas-ruled territory.

Commodities-energy-oil-price

NEW YORK: Oil prices leapt back above 100 dollars in New York on worries about tight supplies and US currency weakness, but eased back later in the day.

Serbia-Kosovo-EU

BELGRADE: Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said the European Union would have to choose between closer ties with Serbia and support for an independent Kosovo.

afp

Load-Date: January 4, 2008

End of Document

Sri Lankan loyalties in flux; Murder of contractor's family highlights danger for residents who defy government factions

The Toronto Star

February 19, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 733 words

Byline: Rick Westhead, Toronto Star

Dateline: Colombo

Body

On a Tuesday in late November, bidding for a construction contract was held in Batticaloa, a city of farmers and fishermen on Sri Lanka's east coast.

A local father of three won the contract. Within hours, he was contacted by a man who worked for the political party known as TMVP, a former militant group once aligned with the **Tamil Tigers** that has joined the government.

TMVP, the builder was told, wanted the contract awarded to someone else.

The contractor refused to surrender the work and was warned it would cost him and his family their lives, said a United Nations official familiar with the matter.

The next day, Nov. 26, an armed gang went to the contractor's home and shot him to death along with his wife and daughter.

Welcome to Batticaloa, a provincial capital of 480,000 on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka that's been offered by politicians and local media as an example for rebuilding this country's war-racked north.

"This is the model the government holds up as a model for the north, but I don't know anyone who would agree with that," said a Western diplomat based in Colombo. "You won't find people to say one word to you about it because here, one word can get you shot."

The contractors' two sons escaped the gunmen who had murdered their family, but the following day, one son went to police to help identify the murderers. Three hours later, that son was murdered, said the UN official, who declined to speak publicly for fear of being assassinated himself.

The UN officer, who said no one has been arrested in connection with the murders, asked that the dead family not be identified because their surviving son would surely be pursued.

Batticaloa, a port city where Dutch traders once loaded ships with pepper and cinnamon bound for Europe, until recently flew the **Tamil Tigers** flag, which features a menacing tiger flanked by rifles and bayonets on a crimson backdrop.

Sri Lankan loyalties in flux Murder of contractor's family highlights danger for residents who defy government factions

Eastern Sri Lanka was liberated by government forces in mid-2007, roughly 21/2 years after the top Tamil Tiger in the east, Col. Karuna Amman, flipped allegiances and joined the government.

His defection was a crippling blow to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Tigers' formal name.

Roughly a year after the east was liberated, elections were held on May 10. With more than 28,000 soldiers providing security, more than 60 per cent of 1 million registered voters in three eastern districts went to the polls.

On election day, 12 civilians were killed and others were injured in a bomb explosion in Ampara district, and Tiger commandos blew up an 80-metre naval cargo ship in the well-guarded port of Trincomalee.

Opposition politicians charged some voters were chased off or intimidated by pro-government mobs and said some people impersonated local registered voters.

Still, President Mahinda Rajapakse called the vote a "clear mandate" for peace after his ruling coalition secured 20 of 37 seats on the provincial council.

Since those elections, some advances have been made. Roads have been paved and others repaired. Electricity is being added along the region's main streets and cellphone service is more widely available.

Yet aid workers in eastern Sri Lanka say the region is as violent as ever. Abductions and murders are common and some families continue to send teenage children overseas or keep them as virtual prisoners in their own homes.

Amman, the former Tiger soldier, is battling for control of the region with his former protege, a one-time Tiger child soldier named Pillayan who is chief minister in the east.

"There's a sense of warlordism right now," said a Sri Lankan aid worker. "You don't know from one day to the next which military commanders are aligned with which faction of the TMVP."

Aid workers also say the venomous divide that has existed between Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority and its Tamil minority is as entrenched as ever.

(When Sri Lanka's top presidential spokesperson Lucien Rajakarunanayake was told Toronto has a large Sri Lankan diaspora, Rajakarunanayake replied: "No it doesn't. Toronto has a large Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora.")

Observers said even when elections are held in the north, the government will probably maintain its grip on essential services such as education and policing - as it has done in the east.

"The central government and the military will remain the real decision makers," said Alan Keenan, a Colombo-based analyst with the International Crisis Group.

Graphic

LAKRUWAN WANNIARACHCHI afp getty images FILE PHOTO Tamil women cycle past a police officer in Batticaloa, a port city on Sri Lanka's eastern coast that until recently flew the flag of the Tamil Tiger rebels.

Load-Date: February 19, 2009

30 rebel bunkers destroyed

Gulf Daily News

May 1, 2008

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Length: 311 words

Body

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan troops backed by tanks and artillery destroyed 30 Tamil Tiger bunkers in the island's far north yesterday killing 12 rebels, while air force jets bombed a gathering of rebel leaders, the military said.

The attacks were part of an escalating operation against the rebels' de facto state in the north.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa's government has promised to destroy the group by the end of the year and end the long-running war.

The pre-dawn ground fighting comes during the latest flare-up in a 25-year civil war analysts say neither side is winning.

It also came as families prepared to bury victims of a series of bombings in the government-controlled south.

"Troops attacked 30 bunkers of rebels in Jaffna and killed 12 Tiger terrorists," a military spokesman said.

The air raid targeted a gathering of senior Tigers near their de facto capital of Kilinochchi, the military added.

The **Tamil Tigers** were not available for comment and there was no independent confirmation of what had happened.

With the fighting increasing in the north, bombings of buses, train stations and other targets deep inside government-controlled territory have escalated.

Amnesty International said that the government and the rebels were "failing to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and are killing civilians on an increasingly regular basis."

The attack at the Fort railway station in Colombo on last Sunday, where a suspected **female** suicide bomber blew herself, killed 15 people, including more than half the baseball team from Colombo's prestigious D S Senanayake school.

The school held a viewing for the slain students before many of them were buried in separate funerals yesterday.

30 rebel bunkers destroyed

Rajarathnem Radeeswaran, was one of seven youngsters who were killed. The other six members returned a day early, said the school's principal, Asoka Hewage.

Load-Date: June 30, 2008

End of Document

**Obituary: AT Moorthy: A Sri Lankan diplomat, he resigned his post over
Tamil conflict**

The Guardian - Final Edition

May 19, 2008 Monday

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the **guardian**

Section: GUARDIAN OBITUARIES PAGES; Pg. 32

Length: 820 words

Byline: Tom Farrell

Body

In 1981 Arambamoorthy Thedchana "AT" Moorthy, who has died aged 79, became high commissioner for Sri Lanka to the Court of St James, a post normally reserved for senior politicians. That same year, Sinhalese thugs burnt down the Jaffna municipal library, one of the largest in Asia, with the apparent connivance of the police, destroying more than 97,000 Tamil volumes. Moorthy, who came from a Tamil background, believed in a common Sri Lankan identity and resisted the ethnocentric politics that would tear his island nation apart. Yet, in May 1983, a state of emergency was declared and that July, following the massacre of an army patrol in Jaffna, anti-Tamil riots erupted across Sri Lanka, killing hundreds of Tamils and forcing thousands abroad.

Moorthy knew that his position had become untenable. He belonged to a generation whose politics had not been corrupted by narrow, murderous nationalism. In early 1984, with the **Tamil Tigers**' remorseless campaign underway, he stepped down as high commissioner. He had refused to declare that his position was evidence that no serious discrimination existed against Sri Lanka's Tamil minority. Thus ended a career that could probably have culminated with a United Nations post.

Yet when he graduated in economics from the then University of Ceylon in 1948 - the year of independence from Britain - educated Ceylonese of Moorthy's generation did not define themselves along ethnic or religious lines. Having avoided the bloody birth pangs experienced by India, there was every reason to believe that Ceylon - which became Sri Lanka in 1972 - could be a model for newly independent nations. And if he refused to be defined by racial allegiances at home, on the world stage Moorthy was determined that his country would not be defined by cold war ideological allegiances.

Moorthy was born in the eastern Batticaloa district, an area of the island mainly populated by Tamils, a predominantly Hindu minority, making up around 10% of the population. Having completed his primary education at the Sivananda Vidyalayam national school in Batticaloa, and Jaffna college, he moved to the capital, Colombo, and the university, in the 1940s.

Moorthy entered the foreign service in 1953, a year before the Colombo conference at which India's prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, laid out the principles of non-alignment supported by many newly independent nations. His first

Obituary: AT Moorthy: A Sri Lankan diplomat, he resigned his post over Tamil conflict

diplomatic posting to Jakarta, Indonesia, coincided with the 1955 Bandung conference, hosted by the President Sukarno with the aim of promoting Afro-Asian economic and political co-operation and opposing colonialism.

In 1957 he became charge d'affaires to Beijing, meeting such leaders as Mao Zedong and Zhou En-Lai. Bilateral trade and economic agreements with China were integral to the policies being pursued by Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the world's first **female** prime minister, and Moorthy made many friends among the Beijing diplomatic community, including the British charge d'affaires Sir Duncan Wilson. In 1959, he married Suseela, the daughter of a supreme court judge.

From 1961 to 1963 he served as first secretary in London - and he and Suseela also studied for the bar at Gray's Inn, being called in 1965. He then served as first secretary in West Germany (1964-66) and as charge d'affaires in Thailand (1969-70) and also permanent representative to the Economic Commission for Asia and the far east. In 1970, he was posted as charge d'affaires to Iraq, shortly after the revolution.

In 1974, Moorthy returned to Colombo to help coordinate the fifth non-aligned summit, held two years later, Bandaranaike having become chair of the non-aligned movement. But by now, the island's ethnic fault lines were fraying at the edges, since Bandaranaike had continued the populist policies of her husband Solomon, assassinated in 1959, designed to appeal to chauvinistic impulses among the island's Sinhalese Buddhist majority, who made up around 80% of the population. Bandaranaike's government fell in 1977, but her successor Junius Jayawardene took an even harder line against Tamil militancy. His pro-western foreign policy antagonised New Delhi to the extent that India began arming and training guerrilla groups such as the **Tamil Tigers**.

In 1978 Moorthy was posted as ambassador to Pakistan, concurrent with Iran. In the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, he played a key role in Sri Lankan government efforts to free US hostages in Iran, one of several special missions during his diplomatic career. Then came the appointment to London.

In the years that followed his resignation, he devoted himself to voluntary work and the upbringing of his three beloved grandchildren.

Having lived quietly in London for many years, he was deeply affected by Suseela's death in 2005. He is survived by his three children and three grandchildren.

Arambamoorthy Thedchana Moorthy, diplomat, born August 10 1928; died April 1 2008

Load-Date: May 19, 2008

Sri Lanka celebrates 60th anniversary as bus attack kills 12 civilians

Associated Press International

February 4, 2008 Monday 1:06 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 858 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka celebrated its 60th independence anniversary Monday with parades, speeches and a security clampdown that failed to prevent suspected rebels from bombing a civilian bus, killing 12 people, the military said.

In an attempt to block such attacks in the capital, troops sealed off many roads and a major cell phone operator shut off its text messaging service throughout the morning as officials and residents gathered for the national ceremony.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa railed in a televised speech against the Tamil Tiger rebels and said the current economic and security difficulties would be over soon. He reiterated the government's vow to crush the rebels after decades of warfare, despite an escalation of the civil war in recent months.

"Our defense forces have achieved victories that were never before seen. Terrorism is facing a defeat that it has never before faced," he said. Top government officials have said they hope to rout the rebels by the end of the year.

Thousands of troops, local dancers and religious leaders paraded along Colombo's coastal road in the independence celebration.

Hours later, a roadside bomb blast tore through a civilian bus in the Welioya region, about 240 kilometers (150 miles) northeast of Colombo, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said. The attack killed 12 people and injured 17 others, he said, blaming the rebels.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan did not answer calls seeking comment. The **Tamil Tigers**, listed as a terror group by the United States and European Union, routinely deny responsibility for such attacks.

Another roadside bombing in the southeastern town of Buttala killed one soldier and injured two others, the military said.

The blasts came amid a wave of bombings targeting civilians across the country. On Sunday, a **female** suicide bomber blew herself up inside Colombo's main railway station, killing 11 people and wounding 92 others. A day earlier, a bomb on a bus killed 18 people, mostly Buddhist pilgrims, in the central town of Dambulla.

The independence celebration itself a display of military might began with a 21-gun salute and a parade by hundreds of army, navy, air force and police officials, along with tanks, artillery guns and multiple rocket launchers.

Sri Lankan celebrates 60th anniversary as bus attack kills 12 civilians

Twelve naval gunships and fast-attack craft sailed off the coast, while 26 fighter jets and attack helicopters flew overhead.

The U.S. Embassy advised American citizens to avoid unnecessary travel in the capital region during the holiday, warning of possible attacks. The government also closed schools in Colombo for the week because of the security situation, Education Ministry official Nimal Bandara said.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 for an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils after decades of marginalization by Sinhalese-dominated governments. More than 70,000 people have died in the conflict.

A 2002 cease-fire ushered in several years of calm and fostered hopes that peace would prevail, but the truce broke down as renewed attacks over the past two years killed 5,000 people.

The government ousted the guerrillas from their strongholds in the east last year, and daily fighting rages along the front lines in the jungles of the north, where the rebels still control a de facto state.

A string of battles in the north Sunday killed 36 rebels and one soldier, the military reported Monday. The rebels were not available for comment, but the two sides routinely give widely differing death tolls.

The government blames the rebels for the recent attacks on civilian targets inside government-held territory, which continue despite a maze of checkpoints throughout the country.

The government officially pulled out of the cease-fire last month and forced independent Nordic monitors to leave the country.

Many had high hopes for the nation, formerly known as Ceylon, when it achieved independence from Britain in 1948, months after South Asian neighbors India and Pakistan became independent.

But the civil war undermined the country's potential to become a regional economic power, said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, executive director of the Center for Policy Alternatives, a Colombo-based think tank.

"The development potential was huge, and it has been totally stymied by this war," he said.

Post-independence governments lacked the foresight to develop a national identity that would include all ethnic groups, Saravanamuttu said.

Tensions between the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority, who comprise about 74 percent of the nation's 20 million people, and the mainly Hindu Tamil community, who make up about 18 percent, quickly surfaced after independence.

Sinhalese-dominated governments, fearing local Tamils would work with Tamils in neighboring India to take over the nation, tried to marginalize the Tamil language and culture. At least two efforts to broker a compromise were retracted by the government amid protests by Sinhalese nationalists.

The tensions eventually erupted into violence, with Sinhalese mobs targeting Tamils and Tamil guerrilla groups launching attacks on government targets.

Associated Press writer Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: February 5, 2008