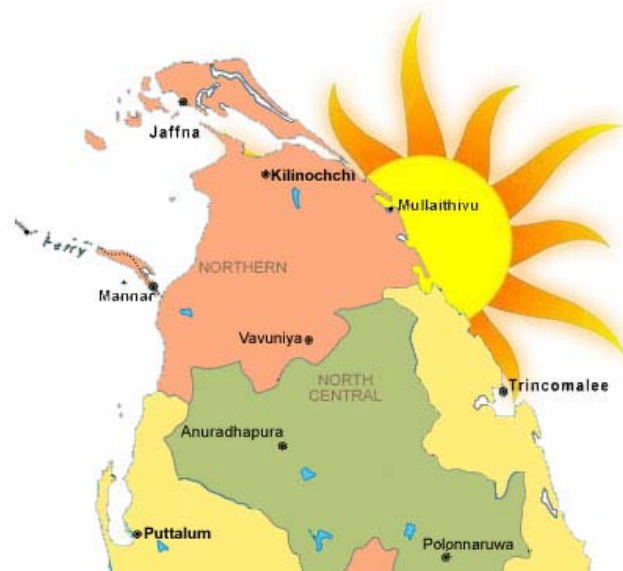


Uthuru Wasanthaya- a gateway to development, recovery, revival, reconciliation and resuscitation

Government of Sri Lanka Protects and Facilitates the Internally Displaced Persons more than any other in the world. Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, Member of Parliament, Senior Advisor to the President and Chairman of the Presidential Task Force for the Development of the North, whilst speaking at a meeting of the Task Force at the Vavuniya Divisional Secretariat on June (15) said that the progress of the 'Uthuru Wasanthaya' programme was being discussed that while offering a political solution to the people of the North who have been liberated from the grip of terrorism, steps are being taken to develop the province according to home-grown strategy by the name of 'Uthuru Wasanthaya' (Northern Spring).



Infrastructure development, electricity, water supply and sanitation, agriculture, irrigation, livestock development, inland fisheries, health, solid waste disposal, education, sports, cultural affairs and transportation are some of the areas that will be covered under this program.

Projects worth Rs. 1010 million are already underway in the district. The total cost of developing the A-9 Highway with ADB assistance was

said to be Rs. 710 million. A total of Rs. 380 million will be spent on the Vavuniya-Horowpathana road and Rs. 360 million on the Medawachchiya-Mannar road. Meanwhile road construction in relief villages currently housing IDP's is nearing completion at a cost of Rs. 150 million. Hon. Rajapaksa instructed officials to ensure that all electricity be provided to all houses in the Vavuniya District within the stipulated 180-day period. At present, 62% of the households in the district have access to electricity, it was pointed out. He reiterated that the process of providing electricity to the remaining areas should commence immediately after they are cleared of landmines and that priority should be given to this. He further instructed officials to expedite the work related to water supply and agricultural activities in order to facilitate the quick return to normalcy. He observed that President Mahinda Rajapaksa had wanted to encourage the use of organic fertilizer in the North. Since Vavuniya is a land-locked district, it has been decided to develop inland fisheries in the area and issues pertaining to this were also subject to discussion at the meeting. With respect to livestock development, it was decided to launch a special programme to capture stray cattle and streamline milk production. Since there is a serious problem in transporting milk to other parts of the country, a programme will be launched to ensure that each child in the district gets a glass of milk. In addition to developing sectors such as education and health, steps have been taken to set up police stations, divisional secretariat offices, post officers etc in the area.

He declared “The Northern Spring Programme is being implemented by officers from the area itself and they are fully aware of the needs, aspirations and sensibilities of the people.” Hon.Rajapaksa is now acknowledged by the people of the North as the Saviour of the IDP’s and the rest of the people. The expertise, knowledge and implementation of strategic programs of Hon. Basil Rajapaksa is acknowledged over the years.



He has taken good care and made special arrangements for the IDP’s to be given all facilities and protection until they are resettled. It is a fallacy to consider that Sri Lanka has a high rate of IDP’s. What and who are IDP’s? A United Nations report, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement uses the definition:

“internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.” While the above stresses two important elements of internal displacement (coercion and the domestic/internal movement) it is important to note that rather than a strict definition, the Guiding Principles offer “a descriptive identification of the category of persons whose needs are the concern of the Guiding Principles. The IDP concept should be defined even more narrowly, to be limited to persons displaced by violence. It is very difficult to get accurate figures for IDPs because populations are constantly fluctuating:

The largest IDP populations can be found in Colombia, the DRC, Iraq, Sudan and Turkey each with IDP populations of over one million. An updated country by country breakdown can be found at: IDMC Global Statistics It has been estimated that between 70 and 80% of all IDPs are women and children.

Countries with significant IDP populations

- Afghanistan has 132,000 – 200,000 IDPs, mostly in the south and west parts of the country, due to fighting between NATO and Taliban-allied fighters.
- Azerbaijan has over 580,000 IDPs due to the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, Agdam and surrounding territories by Armenian forces since the early 1990s.
- MYANMAR (Burma) has about 503,000 IDPs due to decades of a long Internal conflict in Myanmar as well as Cyclone Nargis.

- The Central African Republic has about 197,000 IDPs due to the 2003 coup d'état and the subsequent civil war.
- Chad has about 178,000 IDPs due to the proximity to Darfur and the civil war in eastern Chad.
- Colombia has over 2 (possibly 3) million IDPs according to the UNHCR, due to the war between the government, the FARC, the AUC and other armed groups.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo has almost 1,5 million IDPs due to the Second Congo War, mostly in the eastern provinces.
- Cote d'Ivoire has about 709,000 IDPs due to the civil war, mostly in the western regions.
- Cyprus has about 210,000 IDPs due to the inter-communal troubles of 1964 and the 1974 Turkish invasion and their aftermaths.
- Ethiopia has about 200,000 IDPs due to natural disasters, the Ethiopian-Eritrean War and the Ogaden conflict.
- Georgia has 220,000 – 300,000 IDPs due to displacement of the ethnic Georgian population who have fled Abkhazia and South Ossetia.
- Iraq has over 2.5 million IDPs due to forced displacement during Saddam Hussein's regime, and fighting between the Multi-National Force and Iraqi insurgent groups.
- India - 50 million people were internally displaced since 1950 due to haphazard industrial projects. About 600,000 Kashmiri Pandits from the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir have been internally displaced due to the ongoing violence. [9]
- Indonesia has 200,000 – 350,000 IDPs due to fighting between the government and secessionist rebel movements.
- Israel has 150,000 – 420,000 Internally Displaced Palestinians and Bedouins, most of whom are Arab citizens of Israel. Gaza and the West Bank have almost 2 million IDPs due to the multiple Arab-Israeli conflicts, starting in 1948.
- Kenya has 250,000 – 400,000 IDPs due to the violence that rocked the country after the 2007 elections.
- The Philippines have about 300,000 IDPs due to fighting between the government and communist and Islamic rebels.
- Somalia has over a million IDPs due to the civil war.
- **Sri Lanka** has about 406,000 IDPs due to the civil war between the government and the LTTE.
- Sudan has 5 – 6 million IDPs due to decades of civil war in the south and the Darfur conflict in the west.
- Turkey has over a million IDPs in its southeast provinces due to decades of conflict between the government and PKK rebels.
- Uganda has about 869,000 IDPs due to the insurgency of the Lord's Resistance Army.
- Zimbabwe has 560,000 – 960,000 IDPs due to political violence, major land reform and an economic collapse of the country.

· Pakistan has more than 400,000 IDPs at the end of 2008 due to ongoing conflicts in three regions of Pakistan. Currently one million people have displaced in NWFP province due to military operation. The problem of protecting and assisting IDPs is not a new issue. In international law it is the responsibility of the government concerned to provide assistance and protection for the IDPs in their country.

The UNHCR was mandated by General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950 to “lead and coordinate international action for the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems....

Guided by the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. ” The UNHCR has traditionally argued that it does not have a “general competence for IDPs” even though at least since 1972 it had relief and rehabilitation programs for those displaced within a country. However, In cases where there is a specific request by the UN Secretary General and with the consent of the State concerned it has been willing to respond by assisting IDPs in a given instance. In 2005 it was helping some 5.6 million IDPs (out of over 25 million), but only about 1.1 million in Africa. In 2005, the UNHCR signed an agreement with other humanitarian agencies.

“Under this agreement, UNHCR will assume the lead responsibility for

- protection,
- emergency,
- shelter

, and camp management for internally displaced people.”



DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS