

Freedom of movement

- 50,000 have fled across frontlines to army internment camps in 2009
- Due to concerns for their safety living under SLA, when Vanni inhabitants are shelled out of homes, they have continued to stay under protection of Tigers. Now these people concentrated in a very small area.
- Tigers taking heavy casualties protecting civilians from army
- Fears that if army takes civilians, many will be killed immediately
- Most INGOs & governments accuse Tamil fighters of holding civilians against their will & using them as human shields
- Some local INGO employees prevented from leaving a humanitarian catastrophe on orders from government



Bunkers to protect from SLA shelling

Endangered children

- "Hundreds of children have been killed and many more injured as a result of the conflict in Sri Lanka," Veneman said. "Thousands are now at risk because of a critical lack of food, water and medicines." – *UNICEF 3/18/09*
- "Sixty-five thousand school going children are being affected by this prolonged war as 288 schools failed to reopen in the Vanni from the beginning of the current year. – *Dr. J. Sivamanoharan, Maththalan Hospital, 3/27/09*

How to help civilians

- Most INGOs, the UN & missions in SL work within framework of 'war on terror'
- Active participants in GoSL plan to 'separate' civilians from their protectors
- Evacuation to SLA-controlled internment camps main goal
- Little understanding that civilians have well-justified fear that, if they end up in SLA hands, the result will be worse than death by shelling



Shelling victims March 2009

Issues to be addressed

- SLA shelling into no-fire zone
- Humanitarian corridors/ humanitarian access
- Wishes of the civilian population
- Screening of civilians & combatants entering SLA territory
- Internment camps: quality, access for aid workers & journalists, freedom of movement & length of stay
- Speed of re-settlement
- Likely creation of large military zones to control Tamil civilian spaces
- Possible colonization of Sinhalese by state-sponsored & army-protected Sinhalese
- Autonomy or other political settlement for Tamil homeland

Sangam Research, March 2009