

Continuing Crisis for Tamil Civilians in Sri Lanka

The Sinhala-dominated government of Sri Lanka says that the latest phase of the long ethnic civil war in Sri Lanka has ended, but the crisis for Tamil civilians continues.

This crisis includes:

- >300,000 Tamil civilians traumatized and confined to GOSL internment camps
- 25,000 Tamil civilian casualties in last week of war.
- No access to conflict area by humanitarian workers¹ & journalists.
- Disappearances during the screening process, including three doctors who cared for displaced.
- Internment camps guarded by military and paramilitaries with disappearances, rapes, starvation deaths and no freedom of movement,.



Action required:

- Insist on immediate access to all Tamil areas for humanitarian workers, the UN & the media.
- Screening monitored and aid delivery by UNHCR & ICRC.
- UN-run IDP camps independent of GoSL.
- Resettle Tamil IDPs promptly in their own lands.
- De-militarize Tamil areas & formulate political settlement for autonomy.

Crimes against humanity and war crimes:

- Deaths of more than 8,000 Tamil civilians by Sri Lankan armed forces (SLA).²
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights & the EU have called for a commission of inquiry into war crimes committed during the last few months.
- Incessant shelling & bombing of civilians, including hospitals,³ for months by SLA.
- Use of cluster & white phosphorus bombs & mustard gas in areas of high civilian concentration by SLA.
- Food & medicine as weapons of war by SLA.
- Killing of thousands of surrendered combatants and civil administrators by SLA.
- Disappearances & torture of civilians.

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Sangam!
Association of Sri Lankan Tamils in the USA
www.sangam.org

¹ "The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has suspended its aid operations in Sri Lanka due to restrictions placed on it by the government." 5/20/09

² *The Economist*, 5/18/09: UN figures up to May 7, 2009. *The Guardian*, May 19, 2009: 15,000 from a health official.

³ HRW, 5/8/09