



Sri Lankan Defence Ministry photo released yesterday shows troops after capturing the last patch of coastline in the Mullaitivu district held by the Tamil Tigers Saturday, leaving the rebels completely surrounded and cut off from any sea escape.

All civilians out of war zone, says Lanka

AP, Colombo

The last remaining civilians trapped by fighting in northern Sri Lanka poured across the front lines yesterday as Tamil Tiger suicide bombers targeted troops in the final battles of the quarter-century civil war, the military said.

Troops on Sunday killed at least 70 rebels trying to escape the 0.4-square mile (1-square kilometre) patch of land that government troops have surrounded, the military said.

Thousands of Sri Lankans poured into the streets Sunday morning, dancing and setting off celebratory fireworks, after President Mahinda Rajapaksa declared victory in the country's quarter-century

civil war with the separatist rebels.

"We are celebrating a victory against terrorism," said Sujewa Anthonis, a 32-year-old street hawk.

As the fighting raged on in recent days, concerns mounted for the fate of the tens of thousands of civilians trapped in the war zone amid heavy shelling and intense fighting.

But all 50,000 civilians fled the area over the past 72 hours, clearing the way for the government to finish off the rebels, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said Sunday.

"We're relieved to hear that all civilians have come out of the combat zone," UN spokesman Gordon Weiss said. A total of nearly 250,000 civilians have fled the fighting in recent months.

Rights groups have accused the rebels

of holding the civilians as human shields, which the rebels have denied.

The UN says 7,000 civilians were killed and 16,700 wounded from Jan. 20 through May 7. Health officials say more than 1,000 have been killed since then in heavy shelling that rights groups and human rights organizations have blamed on Sri Lankan forces.

The war zone was wracked by chaos Sunday, as troops sought to mop up the final pockets of resistance, Nanayakkara said. At least one suicide bomber attacked troops in the morning, the latest in a wave of rebel attacks on the advancing forces in recent days, he said.

The rebel Web site TamilNet, citing a doctor in the area, said the bodies of hundreds of wounded and dead people lay strewn across the battlefield.

Fate of Prabhakaran still a mystery

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka is gripped by rumours about the fate of Tamil Tiger chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, who is said to either have been killed, smuggled abroad, or even be living under the sea in a survival capsule.

Without him in a body bag or behind bars, the island's long ethnic war cannot be considered over.

But there have been no confirmed sightings for months, even by senior rebel figures or their family members captured by the army in recent fighting.

"They say he is still there, leading the fight. But we haven't found anybody, not a single person, who has actually seen him," a Sri Lankan defence official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

With intelligence so thin, speculation has been rife.

Defence sources say that on Friday night a huge fireball erupted in the jungle where the once formidable Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been making their last stand.

One theory doing the rounds in Colombo is that Prabhakaran blew himself up along with his top lieutenants -- ensuring his body would never be found.

The defence ministry has also said the rebels, who are renowned for wearing cyanide capsules around their necks so as not to be taken alive, were planning a "mass suicide" as defeat loomed.

But Prabhakaran may also be alive, either hiding or having fled overseas.

After all, he has been living underground since 1972, the year he started his bloody campaign for a separate state.

Last week, troops said they found a "metal home" built out of iron stripped off a beached container ship and adapted to be submerged underwater off the coast as a

survival capsule. The military's advance into rebel territory has also uncovered a basic submarine and an underground multi-storey bunker complete with air conditioning.

A more mundane possibility is that he escaped by a speedboat earlier this year



Velupillai Prabhakaran

and remains at sea after transferring to a bigger vessel.

He may also have fled to nearby India, where in Tamil Nadu state some politicians openly support the LTTE -- even though Prabhakaran is wanted in connection with the 1991 assassination of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Other places cited as possible destinations for his escape are the small fishing communities along the coasts of Thailand and Malaysia, where police have been put on alert on several occasions in the past few months.

Sri Lanka said on Sunday that troops had yet to find any trace of Prabhakaran as they moved in to finish off the Tigers.

"We have still not come across Prabhakaran and his senior leaders," military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara told reporters. "We believe they are still in this land. We hope to meet them soon."

Lanka victory over Tigers sullied by allegations of war crimes

AFP, New Delhi

The Sri Lankan government's historic defeat of the Tamil Tigers has been tarnished by mounting charges of war crimes, with thousands of civilians reported killed in months of indiscriminate shelling.

As its troops mop up the remnants of the rebel army, who on Sunday said they were giving up the fight to defend a tiny patch of jungle in the northeast, the island's government is also facing a major diplomatic headache.

While few dispute that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been holding tens of thousands of civilians as human shields -- a war crime -- there has been a stream of eyewitness testimony to indiscriminate shelling by government troops.

Aid workers have also been denied access to those trapped, despite accounts of a jungle area littered with the dead or dying, with the elderly, women and children cowering in shallow dug-outs with no food or water for several months.

The United Nations human rights office is demanding an investigation.

"There has to be accountability for what has gone on in Sri Lanka, there has to be clarity and there cannot be impunity," said Rupert Colville, a spokesman for UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay.

Pillay said in March that both sides may be guilty of war crimes.

"Nothing we've seen since then has caused us to change our minds, quite the contrary," Colville said on Friday, adding that an independent inquiry of some form "is now essential."

Chronology of the war

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's president has declared victory over the Tamil Tiger rebels after decades of ethnic bloodshed.

December 2, 1995: The Sri Lankan army captures the Jaffna peninsula.

October 8, 1997: The United States declares the LTTE a foreign terrorist organisation.

January 25, 1998: An LTTE suicide bomb devastates Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine, the Temple of the Tooth, killing 17 people.

September 26, 1998: Tigers overrun Kilinochchi army camp, killing more than 1,000 government soldiers.

February 2001: Britain outlaws the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, followed swiftly by Canada and Australia.

February 23, 2002: Government and Tamil Tiger rebels sign a Norwegian-brokered ceasefire agreement.

December 2002: At peace talks in Norway, the government and rebels agree to share power, with the minority Tamils enjoying autonomy in north and east.

March 3, 2004: Renegade Tamil Tiger commander, V. Muralitharan, known as Karuna, leads split from main rebel movement.

November 2, 2007: The head of the Tamil Tigers' political wing, S.P. Thamilselvan, is killed

in a government air raid.

January 2, 2008: Sri Lanka withdraws from the ceasefire agreement and steps up attacks against the Tigers.

January 2, 2009: Sri Lankan forces capture Kilinochchi, leaving the Tigers only the jungle district of Mullaitivu.

January 25, 2009: Sri Lankan troops capture Mullaitivu town, confining the rebels to a stretch of jungle.

February 20, 2009: Tamil Tiger planes conduct suicide raids against the capital Colombo.

March 13, 2009: The United Nations' human rights chief says both sides could be guilty of war crimes.

April 14, 2009: The Tamil Tigers say they are ready to negotiate a ceasefire and restart peace talks. The government refuses, telling them to surrender.

April 20, 2009: Tens of thousands of trapped civilians manage to flee from the shrinking area under rebel control.

May 13, 2009: The United Nations Security Council for the first time asks warring parties to spare civilians.

May 16, 2009: Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapaksa says the rebels have been defeated.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ethnic divisions a barrier to peace in Lanka

AFP, Colombo

The military defeat of Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels leaves a new challenge for the island's hawkish government in the form of lingering ethnic tensions and a massive humanitarian crisis.

Decades of bitter warfare have tended to obscure the origins of the conflict -- the long-held sense of grievance among the country's ethnic Tamils that they have been reduced to second-class citizen status by the Sinhalese majority.

The government may have won the war, but they must still address its root cause -- discrimination against many in the

Tamil community," said V Anandasangari, leader of the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, elected in 2005 on a war platform, must act swiftly and show his willingness to devolve power and treat minority Tamils as equals, Anandasangari said.

The most pressing problem is that of the 200,000 ethnic Tamils displaced by the military offensive that succeeded in crushing the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) but at a high cost to the civilian population.

Rights groups say most of the displaced have been collected in overcrowded, heavily

guarded "welfare camps" without adequate food, water and sanitation.

US-based Human Rights Watch described the camps as "internment centres."

"Entire families detained in these military-controlled, barbed-wire camps are denied their liberty and freedom," the rights watchdog said.

The government says the camps are sealed off for the security of those inside, arguing that former LTTE rebels were trying to escape by mingling in with the civilians.

Opposition legislator Kabir Hashim said the Tamils inside the camps had to be resettled as soon as possible.

Advertisement for Nyanashal Tibbus Limited, featuring a logo and contact information.

Advertisement for API Licensee, mentioning ISO-9001:2000 certification.

Advertisement for 'এয়ার কম্প্রেশার ও বিভিন্ন খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ ক্রয়ের টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তি' (Air Compressor and various spare parts purchase tender notice).

Table with 4 columns: ক্র. নং (Sl. No.), টেন্ডার নং ও তারিখ (Tender No. & Date), দ্রব্যের নাম ও বিবরণ (Name & Description of Goods), আর্পেট মানি (ফেরখোয়া) (Estimated Value), টেন্ডার দাখিলের মূল্য (অফেরখোয়া) (Tender Value), টেন্ডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময় (Tender Opening Date & Time).

টেন্ডার সিডিউল নিম্নলিখিত মূল্য পরিশোধ সাপেক্ষে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে হিসাব বিভাগীয় প্রধান, ন্যাশনাল টিউবস লিমিটেড, টংগী শিল্প এলাকা, গাজীপুর এবং হিসাব নিয়ন্ত্রক, বাংলাদেশ ইম্পাত ও প্রকৌশল করপোরেশন, বিএসইসি ভবন, ১০২ কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১২১৫ হইতে পাওয়া যাইবে।

(ডঃ মোঃ আমিরুল মমিন) অতিরিক্ত প্রধান প্রকৌঃ (বাণিজ্য) ফোন নং ৯৮০২৭৩৭

Nepali Maoists rally against 'foreign intervention'

PTI, Kathmandu

Thousands of Maoist supporters yesterday took to streets to protest against what they alleged "foreign intervention" in Nepal's affairs and to oppose President Ram Baran Yadav's move to reinstate the army chief.

All major roads in the capital Kathmandu were blocked as protesters gathered in the Tundikhel Open Ground for the rally, which came two weeks after Premier

Prachanda resigned in the wake of the controversy over his sacking of army chief Gen Rukmangad Katawal.

Most of the schools and colleges remained closed and the Maoist leaders ordered their cadres to ferry students, workers and other activists to the venue for their protest show. Maoist Lawmakers have been blocking parliamentary proceedings for over a week now, asking the President to rectify his step of reinstating the army chief.



Senior leaders of the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) caretaker ministers Ram Bhadr Thapa known as Badal (L), Hisila Yami (C), and Baburram Bhattarai (R) march during a protest rally against Nepalese President Ram Baran Yadav in Kathmandu yesterday.

Large advertisement for 'খোলা বিক্রয় বিজ্ঞপ্তি' (Open Sale Notice) with a detailed table listing items for sale and their estimated values.