

# Aid agencies challenge Lanka over war victims

International aid agencies and the United Nations yesterday pushed Sri Lanka to allow desperately needed help to be rushed to displaced civilians now that the fighting against Tamil rebels is over.

The government has severely restricted access to hundreds of thousands of non-combatants who managed to escape the fighting in the northeast, despite widespread fears of a deepening humanitarian crisis.

Men, women and children waded through swamps as they fled the savage final battles between the government troops and the Tamil Tigers in a small sliver of coastal jungle.

Carrying no more than a few bundles of clothes and at risk of being shot or shelled by either side, they escaped the violence only to be herded into spartan, state-run camps where they await screening by the authorities.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said

the government urgently needed to allocate more land for emergency shelter, water and sanitation facilities for the 265,000 people who fled the fighting in recent months.

UNHCR complained its access to civilian camps in the district of Vavuniya had recently been "greatly curtailed" and warned another exodus of tens of thousands of people was expected in the coming days.

The agency plans to erect 10,000 more shelters to accommodate the Tamil refugees and said Sri Lanka must take immediate steps to improve conditions at 42 existing sites.

Since fighting ended on Monday, the government has come under renewed pressure to drop all restrictions imposed on aid groups and to lead a massive programme to get help to the victims of the war.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, the only neutral organisation that was working in the conflict zone, said

the military's final assault had halted its access to civilians in desperate straits.

"No humanitarian aid has reached those who need it for over a week," director Pierre Kraehenbuehl said.

"Under international humanitarian law, the lives of all those who are not or are no longer fighting must be spared," he added in response to fears of a wave of killings after hostilities ceased.

Much of the north and east of Sri Lanka has been off-limits for years to aid workers, international observers and journalists -- leaving few independent accounts of the devastation wrought by the war.

Despite its victory, the government is expected to keep many restrictions in place especially as the UN has called for an independent war crimes probe.

A spokesman for the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights said last week an investigation into possible war crimes was vital, stressing there had to be "accountability for what has gone on in Sri Lanka."



Sri Lankan Defence Ministry photo released on Monday shows troops walking amongst debris inside the war zone, when they helped evacuate the last of the Tamil civilians from the area.



A member of the Tamil community stands in front of a banner during a demonstration outside the United Nations Offices on Monday in Geneva. Shocked Tamils mounted a vigil outside the UN offices urging international action to help the minority after Sri Lanka declared a final victory over Tiger rebels.

## Tamil protest in London turns violent

AFP, London

A protest outside Britain's parliament turned violent early Tuesday as relief agencies and governments called for urgent humanitarian aid after Sri Lanka announced defeat for Tamil Tiger rebels.

As Sri Lankan television broadcast footage of what it said was the body of Velupillai Prabhakaran, with the Tamil rebel leader's face visible, three police officers and five protesters were in hospital and 10 protesters under arrest in London.

The clashes broke out when police moved to disperse 2,500 Tamils who staged a sit-down outside parliament, with Scotland Yard claiming another 21 officers received minor injuries.

## Can Tigers carry on without Prabhakaran?

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, Pune

Velupillai Prabhakaran, the founder and chief of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was reportedly shot dead Monday by the Sri Lankan army, possibly bringing a final blow to the rebel group just one day after conceding defeat in one of Asia's longest-running wars.

For decades the charismatic leader played an instrumental role in demanding a separate homeland for the island's ethnic Tamil minority and in building up the LTTE's military capabilities.

"(Prabhakaran) was the LTTE's supreme leader, its god, its icon. Minus him, the LTTE will never be its old self," says Narayan Swamy, the New Delhi-based author of a biography of the rebel leader, "Inside an Elusive Mind."

Prabhakaran is believed to have been killed while escaping the war zone in the northeast of the island in an ambulance.

Prabhakaran founded the LTTE in the

1970s in response to discrimination against Tamils by the island's majority Sinhalese population.

For nearly three decades, his group waged war with the Sri Lankan army to achieve a separate homeland for Tamils or Tamil Eelam in the north and east of the island. To achieve this goal, he developed a well-trained militia cadre, naval wing, and an air force comprising of rudimentary light aircrafts, becoming the only armed separatist group in the world to have all three military wings.

The LTTE, which is considered a terrorist group by 32 countries, has committed hundreds of suicide bombings.

It has also carried out assassinations of high-profile politicians that got in its way, including former President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993 and former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. The LTTE targeted Rajiv Gandhi for his sending Indian troops for peace efforts in 1987 that eventually engaged in open conflict with the rebels.

Supporters of Prabhakaran have praised his dedication to the cause. During peace

talks in the 1990s and in 2002 he refused to negotiate for anything less than a homeland.

But Prabhakaran has been accused by the government of using the lull period of peace talks to augment his military capabilities -- a claim also made by his former lieutenant, Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, known as Col. Karuna Amman, who later defected to the government side.

But after the peace process broke down in 2006, President Mahinda Rajapakse made annihilating Tamil Tiger rebels its priority. He hiked the island's military budget to \$1.7 billion for the 2009 fiscal year, nearly 5 percent of the gross domestic product. He also intensified recruitment of soldiers across the island and re-recruited war deserters by granting them amnesty if they returned to the frontlines.

Rajapakse claimed his actions were necessary given his enemy was one of the world's fiercest armed separatist group.

## Failure to compromise led to Prabhakaran's demise

LUKE HARDING, The Guardian Online

The green fatigues had vanished, the trademark cyanide capsule had been discreetly tucked away and after 20 years of ruthlessly eliminating his enemies Velupillai Prabhakaran was giving a rare press conference his last as it turned out.

It was 10 April 2002. The vicious seesaw war that had convulsed Sri Lanka since 1983 was enjoying a brief lull. I had driven into the Tamil Tigers' normally forbidden northern stronghold, along a rough dirt track and past lagoons filled with pink lilies and teak trees.

I, and about 200 other journalists, had been summoned to witness what was apparently a major historical event -- the end of the Tamil Tigers' violent struggle against the Sri Lankan government, and one of the world's most

intractable conflicts.

We waited for 10 hours. Tamil Tiger guards carried out the most severe security checks I have ever encountered, confiscating satellite phones and searching my ears. Finally Prabhakaran emerged from the jungle, where he had spent the last 12 years in hiding, dodging assassination.

In the flesh the legendary guerrilla leader looked surprisingly well-fed, tubby even. Instead of a military uniform he was wearing a clean civilian shirt -- a hint that his days of revolutionary mayhem were perhaps over.

Prabhakaran's message was conciliatory: he said his Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were considering abandoning their armed struggle. They were prepared to compromise with Sri Lanka's ethnic Sinhalese leadership -- a historic step.

## India asks Lanka to address 'root causes of conflict'

AFP, New Delhi

India asked Sri Lanka on Monday to "address the root causes of the conflict" with ethnic Tamils and to provide aid to tens of thousands of civilians displaced in the last months of the war.

India is home to millions of Tamils in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, which is separated by a narrow strip of sea from Sri Lanka. About 74,000 Sri Lankan Tamils are also housed in refugee camps in the state.

"As conventional conflict in Sri Lanka comes to a close, this is the moment when the root causes of the conflict in Sri Lanka can be addressed," foreign

ministry spokesman Vishnu Prakash told reporters in New Delhi.

He said India wanted "effective devolution of power within the Sri Lankan constitution so that Sri Lankans of all communities including the Tamils can feel at home and lead lives of dignity of their own free will."

Resentment of the minority Tamils' privileged status in Sri Lanka under British colonial rulers surfaced when the Sinhalese majority took power after the island gained independence in 1948.

With Sinhalese nationalism on the rise, Tamil youngsters took up arms and a full scale war erupted in the 1980s.

### Sri Lanka's war against the Tamil Tigers

The government says its forces have taken the last territory held by rebels, ending a conflict that lasted decades and left 70,000 people dead

A history of conflict

1971	Marxist revolts	2006	February	Peace talks fail in Switzerland
1972	Name changed from Ceylon to Sri Lanka; Tamil Tiger rebel group formed	2007	November	Head of the Tigers' political wing killed in an army attack
1983	Civil war with Tamil Tigers escalates	2008	January	Government withdraws from ceasefire agreement. Launches offensive
2002	Ceasefire, paving way for Norwegian-backed peace talks	2009	2 January	The army captures the Tigers' political capital Kilinochchi
2003	Last rebel-government face-to-face meeting	20 April		Thousands of civilians trapped by the conflict flee war zone
2004	National disaster declared after tsunami which killed 30,000 people in Dec.	17 May		Tigers admit defeat
2005	Deal reached between government and rebels to share tsunami aid	18 May		Government declares final victory



This handout picture released by the Sri Lankan Army yesterday shows the body of Tamil Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. Sri Lankan state television broadcast video footage on Tuesday of what it said was the body of Prabhakaran, hours after the rebels claimed he was still alive.

## India to seek evidence from Lanka to shut Rajiv murder case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

India will seek forensic evidence from Sri Lanka to confirm the deaths of Tamil Tigers chief Velupillai Prabhakaran and his intelligence head to finally close the case on the assassination of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi 18 years ago.

Prabhakaran and Pottu Amman, who oversaw all covert killings in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), were the last of two suspects still wanted in India for the

killings of Gandhi, who was blown up by a woman suicide bomber at an election rally near Chennai May 21, 1991.

The LTTE initially denied killing Gandhi but in later years some of its leaders privately and otherwise voiced regrets over his death, which led to the Tigers being outlawed in India in 1992.

But the CBI, in what is acknowledged to be one of finest investigations in the world of crime, proved conclusively that Gandhi was killed by the LTTE, on the specific orders of Prabhakaran.

## Lessons of war from Tigers' defeat

BBC ONLINE

The defeat of the Tamil Tigers might encourage other governments to put more emphasis on fighting insurgents by military means.

This would go against the modern theory of counter insurgency that tries to win over populations as the key to long-term peace.

The modern theory has been enshrined in the US manual of counter insurgency, which was written by General David Petraeus, the man who led the surge in Iraq and brought a greater degree of stability. He is now trying to do the same thing in Afghanistan.

"Counter-insurgents should prepare for a long-term commitment" is one sentence from the manual. "Offensive operations are only the beginning," is another.

In Sri Lanka it was certainly a long-

term counter-insurgency commitment. But offensive operations were the end as well as the beginning.

The Tigers' war

It can be argued that the Tigers themselves defined what war they would find themselves in and that therefore this was a special case.

The Tigers armed and drilled like a regular army and their tactics, which included suicide bombings, were part of an all-or-nothing mentality.

The Sri Lankan government developed a strategy of siege and attack -- isolating the Tigers in a smaller and smaller area and using a modern army to crush them slowly but surely.

The basis of the plan can be seen in the dominance of artillery in the government's arsenal.

It has 157 heavy guns, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

These are led by 40 massive, 152mm artillery pieces, called the Type 66, a Chinese copy of a Soviet weapon.

More weapons?

So one lesson that other armies might examine is whether they too need heavier weaponry.

The Russians never needed such a lesson. They overwhelmed the rebels in Chechnya in 1999-2000 using much the same kind of fire power.

But other governments fighting rebel movements in Africa, South East Asia and elsewhere might be tempted to go down this route.

The Turkish army, fighting the PKK in the mountains of south east Turkey and northern Iraq, and the Colombians in combat with the FARC in the remote jungle are no strangers to the use of force.

But even they might be looking again to see what more they could do.

## Prabhakaran raised formidable force before demise

AP, Colombo

The portly rebel leader with the bushy mustache and trusty Browning pistol turned a small band of poorly armed guerrillas into one of the world's most sophisticated and ruthless insurgencies.

But Velupillai Prabhakaran also made a series of mistakes that led the Tamil Tigers to total defeat and his own death at age 54.

At the height of his power, Prabhakaran ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow state of hundreds of thousands of people in northern Sri Lanka with its own flag, police and court system.

Sri Lanka said Monday that it had finished off the last of the rebels in the northern war zone and killed Prabhakaran and his top deputies.

To his followers, Velupillai Prabhakaran (pronounced ve-LU-pi-lay PRAH-bah-ka-ran) was the steadfast heart of the battle to establish a breakaway state for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority. But his many detractors saw him as the

brutal ruler of a suicide cult who repeatedly sabotaged peace deals in pursuit of power.

In more than a quarter-century of civil war, his Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam perfected the art of suicide bombings, assassinated top politicians including former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and fought the Sri Lankan government to a near-standstill.

Prabhakaran's guerrilla force was armed with heavy artillery, a rudimentary air wing that once bombed Colombo's international airport, and a squad of suicide attackers. Its navy consisted of small attack craft, suicide boats laden with explosives, crude submarines and huge smuggling ships.

The rebels reportedly earned as much as \$300 million a year from arms and drug smuggling, fake charities and donations from Tamil expatriates.

Prabhakaran rarely appeared in public, preferring to communicate via radio addresses delivered every November.



Sri Lankan people beat a drum as they celebrate their country's military victory against the Tamil Tigers in Colombo yesterday.

## Don't ignore Tamil cry for self-government

Solheim tells Lanka govt

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

Norwegian minister Erik Solheim, the chief architect of Sri Lanka's 2002 peace process, has urged Colombo to be generous and not to ignore the Tamil desire for autonomy just because the Tamil Tigers chief is dead and his organisation decimated.

"The government of Sri Lanka has won the conventional battle but it is far from winning the peace," Solheim said in a telephonic interview from Oslo hours after Velupillai Prabhakaran, head of the Liberation Tigers of

Tamil Eelam (LTTE), was killed Monday in a remote part of the island's north.

Also killed in the little strip of land were his son Charles Anthony, who headed the LTTE's IT wing and was being groomed to take over from the father, LTTE political head B. Nadesan, LTTE intelligence wing leader Pottu Amman and LTTE Sea Tigers chief Soosai.

"It is now that the government must show generosity, give substantial offer of self-government in the north and east (of Sri Lanka) and start creating an inclusive state for both Tamils and Sinhalese alike," Solheim told IANS.