

## News Diary 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008

### LTTE in wanni trapping and mistreating civilians: HRW

Daily Mirror, Tuesday, December 16, 2008

The LTTE is risking the lives of the Wanni Tamils by subjecting them to forced recruitment, abusive forced labor, and placing restrictions on their movement, Human Rights Watch said in a report released yesterday.

The 17-page report titled -- Trapped and Mistreated: LTTE Abuses against Civilians in the Wanni -- detailed how the LTTE, which had been fighting for an independent Tamil state for 25 years, is brutally abusing the Tamil population in areas under its control.

"The LTTE claims to be fighting for the Tamil people, but it is responsible for much of the suffering of civilians in the Wanni. As the LTTE loses ground to advancing government forces, its treatment of the very people it says it's fighting for is getting worse," HRW Asia Director Brad Adams said

He said that in the face of an ongoing government military offensive, the LTTE has increased the pressure on the civilian population living in areas under its control and by having long used a coercive pass system to prevent civilians from leaving areas it controls, the LTTE has now completely prohibited movement out of the Wanni, except in case of medical emergencies.

"By refusing to allow displaced people to move into government-held territory, the group has severely restricted their access to essential humanitarian relief. Only about a thousand people have managed to flee the conflict zone since March 2008," Mr. Adams said. "By refusing to allow people their basic right to freedom of movement, the LTTE has trapped hundreds of thousands of civilians in a dangerous war zone."

Mr. Adams said the LTTE had a long history of forced recruitment with a dramatic increase in the practice of compelling young men and women, including children, to join its forces.

"The group has recently gone beyond its long-standing 'one person per family' forced recruitment policy in the territory it controls and now sometimes requires two or more family members to join its ranks. Trapped in the LTTE's iron fist, ordinary Tamils are forcibly recruited as fighters and forced to engage in dangerous labor near the front lines," he said.

The HRW report said that while increased international pressure and other factors had led to a decrease in LTTE's recruitment of children, recent reports indicated that the group had stepped up child recruitment in the Wanni.

It said LTTE cadres had urged students between the ages of 14 and 18 to join the group and it often sends 17-year-olds for military training, apparently calculating that by the time such cases are reported to protection agencies, the youths would have turned 18 and no longer could be considered child soldiers.

In the report "Trapped and Mistreated," the HRW called upon the LTTE to allow civilians leave areas under its control; to respect the right to freedom of movement and the right to move to government-controlled territory for safety; Stop all forced recruitment; end all abductions and coercion; end all recruitment of children under the age of 18; cease the use of children in military operations; release all its child combatants including those recruited when children but were now over the age of 18; to stop all abusive or unpaid forced labor, including what it characterizes as 'voluntary'; cease demanding that all families provide labor to the LTTE; stop forcing civilians to engage in labor directly related to the conduct of military operations, such as constructing trenches and bunkers; Provide humanitarian agencies and UN agencies safe and unhindered access to areas under its control, and guarantee the security of all humanitarian and UN workers, including Wanni residents working as humanitarian or UN staff.

### **Yal Devi travels up to Vavuniya**

Daily Mirror, Tuesday, December 16, 2008

The Yal Devi train service which terminated at Medawachchiya earlier, will continue to Vavuniya from today, the government information department said.

Quoting the Sri Lanka Railways Operating Supervisor Vijaya Samarasinghe, it said there would be a train leaving the Fort Railway Station at 5.45 am and arriving in Vavuniya at 12.10 pm. The return train will leave Vavuniya at 1.00 pm and reach Colombo Fort at 10.00 pm.

It said the train service to Vavuniya was suspended in February this year due to threats of terrorist attacks and the resumption was another indication of the success of the government's humanitarian mission in the Wanni.

### **UN agencies to assist families hit by floods**

Daily Mirror, Tuesday, December 16, 2008

Representatives of UN agencies in Sri Lanka who called on Social Services and Social Welfare Minister Douglas Devananda at his ministry recently assured him of their cooperation to provide relief to the people in the Jaffna hit by the floods and gale force winds.

They also said they would support the government's endeavour to rehabilitate the affected families and reconstruct the damaged infrastructure, a ministry spokesman said.

The minister also handed over to the UN representatives the copies of a report on the damage caused by floods and cyclonic winds on the occasion.

Dr. Mazahim Hanifa Emergency Livelihood Recovery Advisor of the International Labour Organization ( ILO) Paul Castella, Head of Delegation, international committee of the Red Cross, Sheila A. Young, Office Director, Programme and Policy Support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Steve Ray, Field Office coordinator for Sri Lanka of the IUN-OCHA, Laurent Raguin, Senior Programme Manager of the UNHCR, Giovanni Cassani, Head of Emergency Operations of the IOM Dr. Harishcandra Yakandawala. National Consultant, Emergency Health Management of the World Health Organization (WHO), Jay Edward of the UNICEF, S. Arnniainathan, Planning and Monitoring Officer of the UN-HABITAI'. Wuria Karadaghy, Senior Programme Manager of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Gihan Hettige, Assistant, Representative of the Flood and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) V. Jegarasasingam, Secretary to the Ministry and Dr. A. S. Kunasingham, Advisor to the Minister participated in this discussion.

### **Police clarification**

Daily Mirror, Tuesday, December 16, 2008

With reference to the lead story in yesterday's Daily Mirror titled "OIC, constable arrested for alleged LTTE connections," Police Spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekara clarified that the mentioned officers were not involved in LTTE related activities.

In a statement sent last evening from Police Headquarters he said: "Further investigation revealed that alleged officers have not been involved for robbing of vehicles, extortion and leaking information to the LTTE to plan terrorist activities or involved in robbing large number of vehicles in and around city.

"Inquiries are being continued to ascertain whether the alleged officers were involved having demanded money from the particular businessmen," he said..

### **Two farmers shot at in Kantale**

Island, Tuesday, December 16, 2008

Two farmers were injured due to the shooting incident at Samagipura in Kanthale, on Sunday (14), police said. Police suspects it was the LTTE gunmen have shot the farmers while they were working in their fields.

The injured had been admitted to the Kanthale hospital, police said.

Kanthale police is conducting further investigations.

## 'Shell attacks' on Mullaitivu hospital

Lankapage, 15 December 2008

Two wards of the Mullaitivu government hospital were damaged after heavy shell attacks on Monday, officials said.

Medical Officer (MO) at Mullaitivu hospital, Dr. S Shanmugarajah told BBC Sandeshaya that resident patients were removed from the hospital as a precautionary measure.

Patients were transferred to Pudukudiyiruppu hospital and staff have also left due to security reasons, he said.

Mullaitivu and Pudukudiyiruppu are currently controlled by the Tamil Tigers

## Two claymore mines weighing 6.75kg recovered in Gampaha

MCNS, 15 Dec 2008 - 21:25

GAMPAHA: On information received from a civilian troops recovered two claymore mines weighing 6.75kg, under a drain in Pubudu Mawatta near the first railway crossing in Peralanda area to Kadana around 6.00pm today(15).

## Troops captured Ampakamam village in Mullaitivu

MCNS, 15 Dec 2008 - 15:38

MULLAITTIVU: Today (15) morning troops of Task Force III captured Ampakamam village in 7 km north from Olumadu area and 8 km East from A 9 road, Mullaitivu . Troops captured Ampakamam village after heavy fighting between LTTE terrorists during the past few days.

## SLAF fighter jets and MI 24 Helicopters pounded Two LTTE terrorists' targets

MCNS, 15 Dec 2008 - 15:37

KILINOHCHI: SLAF Fighter jets carried out three air strikes on LTTE terrorists FDL in west of Kilinochchi area between 8.30am to 9.30am today (15). These air strikes were made to help the 57 division troops who are advancing in Kilinochchi battle front.

MULLAITTIVU: Meanwhile SLAF MI 24 Helicopter pounded a LTTE terrorists gathering point in south of Mullaitivu area around 9.00am today (15). These air strikes were made to help the 59division troops who are advancing in Mullaitivu battle front.

## Severe Damages to LTTE in Confrontations

MCNS, 15 Dec 2008 - 09:27

MULLAITTIVU: LTTE terrorists suffered severe damages in 12 different confrontations in the KUMULAMUNEI area between 10.20am and 6.40pm yesterday (14). SL Army troops succeeded in extending their forward defence line after the confrontations. Subsequently troops recovered 04 LTTE dead bodies (03 male and 01 female) with 04 T-56 assault rifles and 06 hand grenades in search operations conducted in the area. Few army soldiers also were wounded during the clashes.

Mean while troops have recovered 01 hand grenade and 06 antipersonnel mines in another search operation conducted in the AMPAKAMAN area around 6.00pm yesterday.

## Losses to LTTE Terrorists in Clashes

MCNS, 15 Dec 2008 - 09:26

KILINOHCHI: LTTE terrorists suffered Losses in two different clashes in the ADAMPAN area around 2.45pm and 3.30pm yesterday (14). Meanwhile troops also suffered minor damages in two different clashes in the MANKULAM area and the south of KILINOHCHI town around 5.40pm on the same day.

## LTTE Terrorists Suffered Losses in Jaffna

MCNS, 15 Dec 2008 - 09:14

JAFFNA: LTTE terrorists suffered losses during confrontations in MUHAMALEI area around 3.00pm yesterday (14). Meanwhile couple of soldiers also suffered injuries in three different Artillery attacks and light arm attacks launched by the terrorists in the KILALY area between 09.00am and 4.00pm on the same day.

### **Police detain 8 Tamil youths in Batticaloa**

[TamilNet, Monday, 15 December 2008, 17:14 GMT]

Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and police, assisted by paramilitary men, arrested eight Tamil youths in a joint cordon and search conducted Sunday night in Kokkaddichchoalai, Batticaloa town, Kaaththaankudi and Ea'raavoor police divisions. More than 900 houses were searched while nearly 4000 persons were interrogated during the operation, police media spokesman said.

The search party, going from house to house, asked for certain persons from a long list of names they had.

The persons asked for are former members of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who are now married, leading normal life, residents of the areas said.

All the eight youths arrested are being detained by the police for further interrogation.

### **3 abducted, teacher reported missing, in Jaffna**

[TamilNet, Monday, 15 December 2008, 16:22 GMT]

Unidentified armed men arriving in a white van abducted three persons including a student from their houses during curfew hours in three separate incidents in Thenmaraadchi, two Friday and the third Saturday, according to complaints lodged with Human Rights Commission (HRC) Jaffna by the abductees' family members. Meanwhile, the wife of a teacher from Vadamaradchi has reported her husband missing since 8 December with HRC Jaffna office.

The armed men arriving in a white van abducted Ratnam Ranjithakumar, 23, an A/level student, from his house in Va'ra'ni North in Thenmaraadchi, Friday around 11:00 p.m, his parents said in their complaint to HRC.

A labourer from Va'ra'ni North, Ramanathan Sathiyathan, 25, was abducted from his house at Chimil Amman Koayilady Friday around 11:00 p.m, according to his family members' complaint.

The person abducted Saturday is Rasan Ravinthiran, 36, the father of 2 children and a trader from Meesaalai West, family members of Ravinthiran told HRC.

The teacher reported missing by his wife is Thavarasa Surenthirakumar, 30, from Uchchil Veethi, Karaveddi in Vadamaradchi.

Surenthirakumar is missing since 8 December after leaving home to Jaffna town.

Three persons being abducted during Sri Lanka Army (SLA) imposed curfew time in two successive days has caused shock and fear among the residents of Thenmaraadchi.

### **Unidentified men shoot, injure two sinhala settlers**

[TamilNet, Monday, 15 December 2008, 10:01 GMT]

Two Sinhalese villagers were injured when unidentified men opened fire on a village Samaagipura in Kanthalaai police division in Trincomalee district Saturday night around 7:00 p.m. The villagers were guarding a chena cultivation when they were shot. Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers and police rushed to the site on receipt of information and opened fire in retaliation.

The injured men were admitted to the Kanthalaai general hospital.

More police and SLA soldiers have been deployed to provide security to the village.

Samaagipura is a settlement created following the state aided colonization scheme since the country gained independence.