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## Sri Lanka to Protest to Countries Allowing Pro-Rebel Rallies

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COLOMBO (AFP)--Sri Lanka will lodge strong protests with countries where demonstrators have show support for the island's separatist Tamil Tiger rebels, a minister said Thursday. Sri Lanka's Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe said pro-rebel sympathizers have been staging demonstrations in Australia, Belgium, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland, the U.K. and the U.S., using Tiger propaganda.

There had been several self-immolations at pro-Tiger demonstrations in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu, but Colombo won't take up issue with New Delhi because the demonstrators didn't display Tamil Tiger flags, the minister said. Sri Lanka's Tamils share close cultural and religious links with the 55 million Tamils in Tamil Nadu, which is also home to thousands of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. However, in other countries, the demonstrators had draped themselves in Tiger flags, the minister said. Several Tamils have also attempted self-immolation in Geneva and London. "The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) is a banned organization in some of these countries. We are surprised these countries allow LTTE sympathizers to use the LTTE flags so openly in their protests against us," the minister told reporters here. He said Sri Lanka had asked its diplomatic missions in these countries to lodge protests over the pro-rebel activities, which he described as "supporting terrorism." "We can only assume that these people will continue to fund the LTTE (and) that they are in the forefront of raising funds for the Tigers," he said. Sri Lanka's Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona added that the U.N. charter prohibited glorification of terrorism. "To glorify a terrorist organization is totally misplaced. We have asked our high commissioners, our ambassadors, to raise the issue with their host governments," Kohona said. Sri Lanka's military says it is on the verge of defeating the Tigers, who have been fighting for a separate state since 1972. The LTTE have now been confined to a small strip of land in the island's northeast. Source: Dowjones Business NewsCourtesy: easybourse.com