
Sri Lanka is engaged in a legitimate military and humanitarian operation: DSG

Kodagoda at the UN

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In a right of Reply exercised by Sri Lanka during the debate under item 4 on Human rights situations that require the Council's attention at the 10th Session of the Human Rights Council, on 23 April 2009, Mr. Yasantha Kodagoda, Deputy Solicitor-General, Attorney-General's Department made the following statement:

“Mr. President, I say with responsibility that, as done in the past, the spokesperson for International Educational Development continued to utter complete falsehood at this Council this morning too, regarding the prevailing situation in Sri Lanka. Her presentation only supports lobbying by the internationally infamous and ruthless terrorist organization – the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which is now going through its final round of terrorism. She was most unfortunately backed by Franciscans International and Pax Romana. LTTE lobbying is of course not uncommon at this Council. The situation in Sri Lanka Mr. President, as clearly observed by the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator on Humanitarian Affairs Sir John Holmes, is an exceptional one. There is no genocidal situation in Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka is engaged in a legitimate military and humanitarian operation, aimed at liberating its own people from LTTE terrorists. Mr. President, LTTE terrorists are not sparing even the people whom they falsely claim to represent. This terrorist organization is abusing humanitarian gestures of the Government of Sri Lanka. It is now beyond proof that the LTTE has positioned themselves inside the ‘No Fire Zone’ declared and observed by the security forces of the Government of Sri Lanka. I have visual poof, Mr. President, which I am prepared to share with any interested delegate acting in good faith, showing clearly how the LTTE has positioned military hardware such as artillery guns inside the ‘No Fire Zone’ and is attacking the security forces who are fast approaching the limited and shrinking territory which the LTTE is now illegally dominating. As at this morning, Mr. President, a total of over 50,000 civilians who were being kept against their will by the LTTE and used as a portion of a human shield have escaped the LTTE and come to secured areas. These innocent people are being treated and looked after by the security forces and other government officials. Sir John Holmes personally visited the villages being administered by the Government of Sri Lanka in which Internally Displaced Persons are being provided decent shelter and other humane conditions of living. UNHCR officials are present at these villages, and it will be a complete falsehood to refer to such decent humanitarian facilities as detention camps. I am ready to share with interested delegates video recorded testimony of such internally displaced people, who claim that they were fired at by LTTE cadres when they escaped against the wishes of the LTTE. Most unfortunately, some of those who attempted to escape had been fired at and killed by the LTTE. To claim that the situation in Sri Lanka is genocidal in nature is a total distortion of the actual ground situation and a complete falsehood. However, it is indeed very clear, Mr. President, as to why the LTTE and its lobby groups are attempting to distort the actual ground situation and try to mislead the United Nations Human Rights Council and the international community. Thank You, Mr. President.”