
Most UN member states against lifeline for Tigers

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By Easwaran Rutnam Most member states at the United Nations are against any move which will give the LTTE a lifeline while it continues to hold civilians as human shields, diplomatic sources at the UN told Daily Mirror yesterday.

As the security forces fast approach the safe zone where the LTTE is still trying to hold back an increasing outflow of Tamil civilians into government areas and there is a chorus of calls for freeing the remaining civilians to escape and for the LTTE to surrender and disarm, a diplomat at the UN told Daily Mirror on the condition of anonymity. "The Co-chairs of the Sri Lanka peace process in their last statement called on the LTTE to discuss surrender modalities and accept amnesty for junior cadres. Under the UN Charter the Security Council usually deals with issues threatening international peace and security or other matters on the council agenda. Sri Lanka represents neither and these council members were opposing any action that would serve as an opportunity for the LTTE to regroup and rearm, the diplomat said. They also noted that while the LTTE was blocking civilians trying to flee to safety, the government had been sending them food and medicines by ship although part of that supply was abused by the LTTE. "Observers say the LTTE lobbyist's attempt to get the UN Security Council to give them time and space failed to materialize. The LTTE has only to blame itself for holding civilians hostage, recruiting child soldiers and shooting the very people who were trying to flee to freedom. "The Government on the other hand seems to have benefited by expanding its cooperation and assistance through Agencies and by the action of the armed forces who exercised restraint and precaution to minimise civilian casualties while taking more casualties among its ranks," the diplomat said.

However, despite these views by the diplomat some countries were still pushing for Sri Lanka to be taken up at the Security Council. US Ambassador Susan Rice told the press on Friday that the United States feels strongly about and concerned about Sri Lanka and supports the provision of it to the Council. Inner City Press had asked, at the Security Council stakeout microphone after a US-requested meeting on Darfur, if the US was considering evacuation of the civilians trapped in fighting between the Sri Lanka government and the Tamil Tigers, being "fired on from both sides." Ambassador Rice did not directly address this point, but rather expressed support for a Security Council meeting. The Mexican and Costa Rican Ambassador have indicated they are actively supporting the request. Fact Box

International Crisis Group's envoy, Lakdhar Brahimi says "Supervised Surrender" of LTTE cadres to end military action.

China, Russia Vietnam, Japan, Uganda as well as Turkey and Croatia were opposing any action by UN Security Council that would be a bail-out for LTTE. "European Union members" of the Council have made a request for a meeting in the Council on the topic of Sri Lanka. Courtesy: dailymirror.lk