
Sri Lanka rebuts allegations in European Parliament

Wednesday, 01 April 2009

Last Updated Wednesday, 01 April 2009

"No military operation to defeat terrorism in the world is conducted without difficulty to the civilian population who live in the afflicted area. In the achievement of our military dominance over the LTTE, the civilians, held at gun point by the LTTE have been the centre of our concerns", said the Charge d' Affaires of the Sri Lanka Embassy in Belgium, accredited to the European Union, Ms. Saroja Sirisena, at a meeting of the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the European Parliament held in Brussels yesterday (31).

In the past 2 months, the Security Forces have held back their strength, even at the cost of suffering casualties themselves. The ground reality has unfortunately been disregarded in the European Parliament's Resolution of 12 March and makes several unsubstantiated assertions which the Government of Sri Lanka finds objectionable, she added. Speaking further, she said "We do not need to be reminded of the responsibility towards our citizens nor of our commitments in the international arena. It is accepted by the UN Resident Coordinator in Colombo, that the figure of 2300 civilian deaths and 6500 injuries since late January this year attributed to unnamed 'credible sources' cannot be substantiated. These are the very same figures quoted by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Crisis Group and also stated in the LTTE website Tamilnet. These 'anecdotal' figures are stated as fact in the European Parliament's Resolution of 12 March". "To the contrary, we have at all times observed extreme caution in the operational area, conscious that civilians are being used by the LTTE as a human shield. It is the LTTE that abused the 48 hour no fire period declared by the Government to move heavy weaponry into safe zones, explode suicide bombs in welfare centres and on food convoys and continues to fire at civilians fleeing the uncleared areas. It is only last week that the LTTE targeted anti aircraft missiles on the SLAF engaged in evacuating civilians from their last strong hold in the Wannu. Despite this, more than 60,000 civilians to date have entered into welfare centres through the safe zones established by the Government", she said strongly rebutting the charge against the Government of indiscriminate shelling of civilians. Courtesy: Defence.lk