
Navy on Alert for Illegal Aid Ship

Thursday, 02 April 2009

Last Updated Thursday, 02 April 2009

By Jamila Najmuddin The Sri Lanka Navy has been put on alert for unauthorized ships preparing to transport food and medical supplies to the Wannu bypassing the Government, Navy sources said yesterday. This follows a global appeal being launched in Britain yesterday where supplies are being collected to be loaded on a vessel which will leave for Sri Lanka this month.

Many Tamil charities in Great Britain along with the UK-based organization 'ACT NOW' are preparing to send food and medicines on a ship named 'Mercy Mission' to the Tamil civilians trapped in the Wannu in the coming days in an attempt get more food and medicines across to the area. An organizer for the event said the ship would set sail for Sri Lanka only after they obtained the consent from the Sri Lankan Government. 'The ship will hopefully set sail for Sri Lanka in the coming days. Although we are yet to get the consent of the Sri Lankan Government, we are hopeful that agreement will be reached and the supplies reach the civilians in the Wannu,' Arjunan Ethirveerasingam, an organizer for the event said. He added that while the global appeal programme for Tamil civilians was launched on Tuesday, a launch would also take place in the coming days when the ship sets sail for Sri Lanka. 'This Mission will bring desperately needed humanitarian relief to the civilians enduring great hardship and suffering behind a humanitarian blockade and a media blackout,' a posting on the event's website said. Meanwhile an official from the Navy said that the Navy had been alerted by the authorities of a ship carrying more than 2000 metric tonnes of food for the LTTE in the guise of aid for civilians, about to sail from Britain. The official who spoke to the Daily Mirror on condition of anonymity said that the Navy would open fire on the ship if it came into Sri Lankan waters without obtaining the approval of the Sri Lankan Government. He said the Navy would be on high alert in the coming days in order to prevent any ship carrying food for the LTTE to cross into Sri Lankan waters. Meanwhile US-based Sri Lankan Tamil songstress Mathangi Maya Arulpragasam a.k.a. M.I.A, is also backing the mission to send food and aid to the civilians in the Wannu. Mother of a newborn, M.I.A has issued a statement saying that while her baby will grow up with healthcare, food, free education, freedom of speech and religion and liberties that people in democracies take for granted, babies born in the Tamil-speaking war zone of Wannu, are being deprived of all these things. She added, 'The Mercy Mission will carry dry food and medicines for Tamil civilians in the Wannu within the Sri Lankan Government's 'safe zone'. Many have already perished from starvation and preventable disease. We cannot ignore these genocidal conditions, and if the aim of the SL Government is to protect the lives of the civilians, then this ship will reach its destination and lives will be saved.' Courtesy: Dailymirror.lk