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## 'LTTE using suicide bombs to prevent civilians from leaving'

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New Delhi: With its back firmly to the wall, the LTTE is using suicide bombings to prevent entrapped Tamil civilians from leaving the areas still under the control of the Tigers, Sri Lankan high commissioner to India C. R. Jayasinghe said on Wednesday. Speaking to TOI, he said that the LTTE through such activities was stonewalling all attempts in the island nation to cull out a political solution, the space for which has been created by the military action.

According to Sri Lankan government estimates, 50,000 civilians are still trapped in these areas in the north-eastern part of the country. Jayasinghe stated that despite the attempts being made by LTTE to forcibly confine and use them as human shields, almost 1,000 civilians are daily managing to sneak out of the custody of Tamil guerrillas.

'There was a suicide bombing recently to dissuade people from leaving the LTTE-controlled area which is now restricted to around no more than 25 square kilometres. They know that without these human shields, the remaining combatants would be really vulnerable,' stated Jayasinghe.

In reply to a question on refugees being forcibly confined to concentration camp-like areas by the Sri Lankan army, Jayasinghe said whatever action Colombo is taking is keeping in mind the safety and well-being of Tamil civilians caught in the war.

'This, in fact, is the foremost consideration for the government. We have created a no war zone and the people who are given shelter there will have to be rehabilitated. In the short term, there is a need for this facility. We know that LTTE has laid mines in several areas and we will have to demine these places before we allow the civilians to go back. This demining can be done only under certain norms laid down by the UN,' said Jayasinghe, adding that these were not concentration camps but short term dwelling places until the original homes are restored.

The Sri Lankan government has declared a 'no fire zone' within the pockets held by LTTE from Puttumattalam to Karaiyamudlivaikai and has urged civilians to move there. Courtesy: timesofindia.indiatime.com