
UN Security Council Tells LTTE: Lay Down Arms

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Strongly Condemns LTTE TerrorismThe LTTE is a terrorist organization and should be condemned for its use of civilians as a human shield. The LTTE should immediately lay down arms and renounce its terror tactics, said Ambassador Claude Heller, the President of the UN Security Council summing up the views expressed by the Members of the Security Council at an informal briefing on Wednesday.

The informal briefing to the Council was a follow-up to the visit of UN Under-Secretary General Vijey Nambiar to Sri Lanka recently. It is significant that the Council unanimously agreed that the LTTE's holding civilians hostage was unacceptable and welcomed the movement of large numbers of civilians out of harms way. They called on the international community to extend all assistance to the Sri Lankan Government to deal with the influx of civilians who are fleeing from the LTTE's hold. It was significant that the Security Council did not call for a ceasefire or a humanitarian pause believing that this would only provide a breathing space for the LTTE and prolong the civilian suffering. They concluded that the quickest way to end this conflict was for LTTE to lay down arms, surrender and let the political process proceed as there was no military solution. At this informal interactive session held in the basement of the UN building, the members also urged the Government to be cautious about the civilians when taking military action to secure a safe passage for civilians. They also called on the Government to work closely with the UN in providing humanitarian assistance to the displaced civilians including those in transit. Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to UN, Ambassador Palihakkara gave assurances to the Council Members that the military was not planning any final assault that could endanger the lives of civilians. He also recalled the assurances given by the Government that it was not firing heavy weapons into the safe zone declared by the Government and stated that if allegations of shelling by the Government were true, the civilians would not have left in such large numbers seeking safety from the Government. He gave a detailed account of the steps taken by the Government to address the humanitarian situation in close collaboration with the UN and other humanitarian agencies on the ground. Courtesy: dailynews.lk