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## Sri Lankan Envoy Rejects Calls for Humanitarian Pause

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GENEVA (AFP)--Sri Lanka's ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva on Friday rejected calls for a humanitarian pause in the Tamil conflict, saying temporary ceasefires didn't work. "The largest number of civilians who have come out (of the conflict zone) came out not during the humanitarian pause, not as a result of the humanitarian pause," said Dayan Jayatilleke. "They came out as a result of a military operation which ... blindsided the (Tamil) Tigers." The U.N. on April 17 made a fresh call for humanitarian pauses to allow civilians to flee.

Rajiva Wijesinha, who heads Sri Lanka's government Secretariat for Coordination of the Peace Process, said in Geneva that 110,000 people have fled the conflict zone since renewed hostilities. He added that 20,000 remain trapped in the area, while the U.N.'s estimate is around 50,000. Jayatilleke and Wijesinha spoke in a press conference as hundreds of Tamils streamed into the main square outside the U.N. building a kilometer away to demonstrate against hostilities in the north of Sri Lanka. Sheryl Mathavan, an organizer of the event, said "thousands are expected," including about 2,000 from Switzerland and many other Tamils from other European countries. "We are demonstrating against genocide and racial discrimination in Sri Lanka. We want an immediate ceasefire. We want the U.N. to intervene to stop the genocide," she said, as she joined demonstrators carrying the Tamil Tiger flag. Both Sri Lankan officials criticized the demonstration, with Wijesinha saying he was "deeply upset that countries which have banned the Tigers are not treating this as terrorism." "How can Western liberal society permit a movement that is clearly militarized to use and misuse western democratic space in this manner?" Jayatilleke said. Several thousands Tamils from all over Germany also demonstrated in Berlin on Friday in the latest of a series of protests worldwide against the ongoing violence in Sri Lanka.

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