
Warnings of blood bath unreal - Sri Lanka Foreign Minister

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Colombo, (Asiantribune.com):“As you all know we are poised on the threshold of defeating terrorism and embarking on an era of lasting peace and security for all our people…The dire warnings by some of our friends in the international community of a blood bath, if the security forces entered the NFZ, did not come to pass.”

So said Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama making a presentation on the progress of operations to rescue civilian hostages and the related humanitarian situation, to visiting British Foreign Secretary David Miliband and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, in Colombo this morning. Minister Bogollagama said what has unfolded before our eyes are by far, the largest hostage rescue operation that has been undertaken by any military in the world. This massive movement of human beings braving bullets to reach the safety of the cleared areas is testimony of the total rejection of the LTTE by the civilians and their endorsement of the humanitarian objective of the mission of the armed forces. He also said the government is faced with the huge task of providing humanitarian assistance to these civilians who have fled the LTTE…The humanitarian challenge in this respect is acute but the Government is delivering the required essentials together with the WFP, ZOA and CHA. The government is always ready to work with partners in consciously addressing the shortcomings that have been pointed out by the humanitarian agencies that we are working with. It is with this intention of constructivism that this Joint Meeting with experts from the various field of assistance has been organized today, minister Bogollagama said. Both Mr. David Miliband and Mr. Bernard Kouchner said their presence here was to ensure the safety of civilians caught in the final stage of the battle to defeat the LTTE. They sought more access to UN and other personnel to the NFZ. Mr. Kouchner said they knew the government was fighting with the LTTE and not with the Tamil people. However, they had come to address the government on the disastrous realities in the final stage of the battle. Attorney General Mr. Mohan Pieris explained the need for countries concerned with the humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka to bring sufficient pressure on the pro-LTTE activists in their countries and for them to pressure the LTTE to release the civilians it was holding hostage. This would resolve the entire issue, he said. Foreign Minister Kouchner suggested that consideration should be given to a Third Party to mediate even at this stage to facilitate communication between the LTTE and the government. Foreign Minister Bogollagama and Foreign Secretary Dr. Palitha Kohona explained that although the LTTE has enough means of communications and in fact does communicate with the whole world, including the media, consistently refused to communicate with the government of Sri Lanka. In these circumstances there appeared to be no need for any Third Party intervention. Minister Bogollagama also explained that when most voices from abroad were calling for a ceasefire and a pause, two pauses offered by the government did not bring the people out. The people started coming out in their thousands only due to the success of tactical humanitarian military operations carried out by the government. - Asian Tribune - Courtesy: asiantribune.com