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## Commitment to free my people remain - President

Monday, 04 May 2009

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President Rajapaksa meets special Envoy of Japan, Mr. Yasushi Akashi. President Mahinda Rajapaksa told the visiting Special Envoy from Japan, Yasushi Akashi, that he was firm in his own commitment and that of his Government to free the Sri Lankan Tamil citizens who remained being held as hostages by the LTTE.

At a breakfast meeting at Janadhipathi Mandiraya on Saturday, there was a wide ranging discussion of the humanitarian situation in the North, especially regarding the continuing presence of Tamil civilians held as hostages by the LTTE in the No Fire Zone, and the many thousands of civilians who had escaped from the LTTE to the cleared areas of the Government. The President also stressed the need to defeat the LTTE and its leader Prabhakaran and bring terrorism to an end in the country. The arrangements made for these IDPs who had already come over were discussed, with Akashi appreciating the measures taken by the Government to provide food, shelter, medicine and other essentials under trying circumstances due to the sudden influx of such a large number of people. President Rajapaksa reiterated the Government's duty to free the Tamil civilians -all of them Sri Lankan citizens- still being held by the LTTE, and said he would carry out this responsibility on behalf of these people. He welcomed assistance from friendly countries that appreciated the need to eradicate terrorism from Sri Lanka, for infrastructure development and other such needs to resettle these people, which he said would be done in the shortest possible time. Among the constraints on speedy resettlement was the need for the clearing of mines laid by the LTTE, and the provision of resettlement facilities in keeping with international standards. The Japanese envoy assured the President of his country's assistance in this regard. Norway, one of the Co-Chairs, was told by Sri Lanka that its role as facilitator of the peace process was not necessary, after pro-LTTE groups attacked the Sri Lanka Embassy in Oslo last month, with no protection provided to the embassy by the Norwegian authorities. Courtesy: Dailynews.lk