Government disturbed over comments made by UN office in Colombo

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By Sunil Jayasiri The government yesterday said it was disturbed over comments made by the UN office in Colombo regarding the attacks which reportedly took place in the Safe Zone over the weekend. “We have raised the issue with the UN office in Colombo as it is damaging the image of Sri Lanka,” Foreign Secretary Dr. Palitha Kohona told reporters at a news conference yesterday.
He was referring to a statement UN spokesman in Colombo Gordon Weiss made claiming a ‘bloodbath” in the battle filed as large-scale killings of civilians are taking place. Dr. Kohona said he contacted the acting head of the UN in Colombo and asked about the role of the UN. “It is not the role of the UN to issue such statements embarrassing the respective governments, and in this case, Mr. Gordon had released to the media what he got without considering the damage to the Sri Lanka government,” Dr. Kohona said. He said this was not the first time that he came out with such damaging statements against the government. “He (Weiss) is using the ‘UN Spokesman’ to make such kind of statements,” Dr. Kohona charged.

Meanwhile, speaking at the news conference, Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe accused the LTTE of trying to tarnish the image of Sri Lanka at international level as their last step. Referring to a statement issued by a government doctor, believed to be in the ‘Safe zone’ that several hundreds of civilians were killed, the Minister questioned the authenticity of the story as there was no independent report about it. “We are not using any heavy weapons to attack as the there were some considerable number of civilians still in this area, so how can we kill such a large number of civilians,” the minister said adding that “there is no truth about the incident.” Doctor Eeshara Kottage of the Health Ministry said there was no person called Dr. Subramanian working in a government hospital in this area, as mentioned by some reports. The Minister also said some parties at the UN Human Rights Council was trying to have a session on Sri Lanka’s situation and were currently collecting signatures from parties of the Council. “But if they able to have a separate session on Sri Lanka, as a country we are not ready to negotiate the outcome of that session as we know what we are doing,” the minister claimed.Courtesy: Dailymirror.lk