## New life after LTTE rout

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Mohammed Rasooldeen Foreign Employment Promotion and Labour Welfare Minister Keheliya Rambukwella sat down with Arab News recently to talk about Government priorities following the defeat of the Tigers. "We want to give the members of the Tamil community jobs both inside and outside Sri Lanka since they have been victims of the war and they were practically immobilized in rebel-held territories in the North and East for a considerable period of time," he said. "The LTTE perpetrated these heinous acts of carnage spanning well over three decades against peace-loving citizens." He said that the Government is in the process of opening migrant training centres in the recently freed areas. "Two such centres have been already opened in Jaffna, and Trincomalee," he said. These centres would train Tamil youths in a wide range of skills according to their aptitudes. "They can come out as white-collar workers, skilled labourers - such as masons, painters, welders, electricians and auto technicians - according to the needs of the local and international labour markets," he added. Following the training, the Minister said the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) will consider them for placement in overseas stations and the local, private and the public sectors will also harness their talents for the country's development. Speaking about the assassinated LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, Rambukwella did not mince words. "He made life extremely dangerous for ordinary people," he said. "He killed tens of thousands of people and he shouldn't expect a happy end for his life... should the masses trade their lives, democratic values and their right to live in a peaceful society with an irredeemable terrorist who habitually prowls behind?... If someone attributes a certain degree of respectability to such a criminal, it may seem ridiculous to ordinary masses. Everyone knows that criminals are not revered. And, with terrorism, the most important thing is not just the number you killed, but the number you frighten... The LTTE terrorized a whole nation, and, when the threats are as grave as these, it does not pay for any Government to wait and see. He always posed the threat of blowing up of bombs in key positions, and, we had the firmness to do the right thing. That's how they ended their grisly campaign... We have made arrangements to rehabilitate the rebels who have surrendered during the war against the rebels. They are a bunch of misguided youths, it is our responsibility to help them turn over a new leaf," Rambukwella said, assuring that the Government will help them get into the mainstream of the society. "Sri Lankan citizens will be treated equally irrespective of race, religion or caste." Answering a question about the celebrations following the Government's victory, the Minister said it is nothing but fair for people of all communities including the Tamils in other parts of the island to celebrate an occasion that brought an end to 30-year reign of terror in the rebel-held areas. "People could not walk freely, not only in Tamil areas but in other Sinhalese and Muslim areas, too. However, resp-ecting the sentiments of the people, he said that President Mahinda Rajapaksa has instructed the Government to put a stop to victory celebrations and embark on programs to develop the country by turning the crisis into an endeavour. Courtesy: dailynews.lk

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