



**UNITED NATIONS**

**NATIONS UNIES**

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

**UNITED NATIONS CONCERNED BY CIVILIAN DEATHS IN SRI LANKA**

(New York: 2 January 2007): At least 14 civilians, including children, were killed this morning in north-western Sri Lanka during the aerial bombardment of the coastal village of Illupaikadavai, in Mannar District by the Sri Lankan Air Force. At least 35 additional civilian casualties have also been reported.

Some 3,000 civilians have been killed in the conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) since the resumption of armed hostilities in 2006, bringing the total number killed since the start of the conflict to 67,000.

“Sri Lankans continue to suffer deeply due to this conflict, and today’s loss of life is a source of deepest concern,” said Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator. “It is imperative that both sides to the conflict take all measures to fulfil their obligations under international law to protect civilians in this conflict; we have too often seen them fall short in this duty.”

The village of Illupaikadavai is in Manthai West, an area of Mannar District controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and in which more than 4,000 displaced Sri Lankans have sought shelter from the conflict since early 2006.

More than half a million Sri Lankans are displaced throughout the country -- nearly 213,000 of them newly displaced since the resumption of armed conflict in 2006. Additionally, 120,000 to 140,000 people remain displaced following the devastating 26 December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which ravaged northern and western coastal areas of Sri Lanka, and nearly 315,000 remain displaced since previous stages of the conflict.

The United Nations calls once more for a cessation of hostilities between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and resumption of the peace process, and recalls the responsibility of all parties to the conflict to protect civilians and uphold international human rights and humanitarian law.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also remains concerned about deteriorating livelihoods on the Jaffna Peninsula in northern Sri Lanka -- home to more than 500,000 civilians -- as well as all those who have been displaced in the country. Limited access by land to the peninsula has impeded the population from receiving sufficient food, medicine and other essential supplies since August 2006. The Government of Sri Lanka has recently committed to improve the supply by sea and local distribution networks.

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