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WHILE CONTINUING TO KILL CIVILIANS:

LTTE daydreams

Shanika SRIYANANDA



Civilians, who escaped from the clutches of the LTTE, in the safe hands of the Security Forces. Pictures courtesy: Internet

The final days of the decade long battle of the LTTE to survive seems to be bloody and tough. Losing territory and man power in every passing way the LTTE terrorists, who dominated over 15,000 sqm before the hostilities broke out, still have no idea to open the gates for civilians. Instead, the terrorists are becoming very harsh on people who try to escape to liberated areas.

fodder to make the Tiger leader - Prabhakaran, who is on the run, happy. With no change of Tiger tactics, they have now added an additional hope - intervention from Tamil Nadu at the last minute to save them before they are pushed into the deep blue sea of the Puthumathalan.

Still the innocent civilians are being used as canon

Deaf ears

All the pleas - local and international to the Tigers to lay down arms to save thousands of lives have fallen on deaf ears.

While over 40,000 soldiers have circled the LTTE to death in a land less than 24 skms, the Tigers have sought assistance from the civilians to hold the ground until the elections in Tamil Nadu are over.

Civilians, who have entered from Vattapallei, a location four kms to the safe zone, have said that the LTTE had ordered the civilians not to flee as the LTTE still have the capabilities of regaining the lost lands with the support of Tamil Nadu. They have said that the LTTE was hopeful that the next government of Tamil Nadu would give a fresh breath to the LTTE.

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According to these civilians who escaped in a boat, the LTTE leadership has requested the people to support them to drag the battle until April when the Lok Sabha elections in India are over.

Military sources said that the LTTE would have sunk to zero days ago but for civilians with them which had slowed down the speedy military thrust into the small patch of land where the terrorists are located.

The estimated number of civilians padlocked in the LTTE dominated areas was debated with the LTTE claiming that there were over 300,000 civilians and the international aid agencies and the Government Agents throwing a figure around 200,000 people.

But the government predicted a number less than 100,000 which is now going to be correct. So far, according to statistics, over 46,000 civilians have fled to liberated areas.

"Now most of the families still mingling with the LTTE cadres are maha weeran

Three puzzle pieces

Marriage Proposals

Banyan Villas

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LP

Peace Process of

DEFENDERS OF THE NATION

Department of Government Information

Ministry of Defence public security, law and order

SRI LANKA

Image of a soldier and a child

families. They do not want to leave their children who are fighting with the security forces and come", they said.

The civilians have been given a bogus warning by the LTTE terrorists that if they go to the liberated areas, the soldiers would kill them and the young girls would be raped.

According to these civilians, organised boat operators in the safe zone, have started organizing secret 'trips' to bring civilians who are affordable to pay the fee in cash or in 'gold', to liberated areas.

Chased away

"Sometimes the LTTE cadres, who want to send their families to safe locations have started organising these trips. There is a severe shortage of food in these areas. Only the LTTE is distributing food and no others are allowed.

They give priority to their families and others are chased away", they said.

The civilians sources said that another group of civilians, who were arrested after an failed attempt to escape yesterday, had been tied to ropes and displayed under hot sun as a punishment for disregarding orders of the LTTE terrorists.

The LTTE had threatened a pastor, who had kept over 600 youth - girls and boys to save them from the LTTE - and had abducted 300 of them.

The group, refused to undergo crash combat training, had a fight with the Tigers, but according to civilians they were forcibly deployed to guard the coastal stretch of Puthumathalan. They have said that the Tigers have intensified abducting civilians, whoever who can be watchful about military movements, throw a grenade and shoot. The LTTE had no sympathy for aged men and women and they were also given combat training forcibly.

According to civilians, these ill-trained aged men and women will be sent to forward defence lines to mislead the troops and the few hard core LTTE fighters would be in the second and third lines of defence to prevent the troops advancing beyond the Tiger defence.

Provoke

They said that the LTTE terrorists, who have fixed their heavy weapons among the civilians always try to provoke the military by firing continuously. The civilians, found guilty for abandoning the LTTE, were put forward to 'experience' the cross firing.

"We are just two km to No Fire Zone (NFZ). The LTTE is firing with heavy guns from the NFZ. Our military offensives to capture Puthumathalan is a little slow as we do not want to inflict damage to the civilians. We try our best not to have a single civilian casualty in



Fleeing civilians find the comfort of the Security Forces.



An elderly man being helped by soldiers.

our military march to the NFZ. Civilians also escape the LTTE every night. Boats come here every night from NFZ", said the GOC of the 55 Division Brigadier Prasanna Silva adding that after an initial screening and medication for the needy, the civilians will be sent to IDP centres safety.

Civilians, who escaped in four boats and landed into Vethalakerni shores of the 55 Division ending their difficult journey, have said that over 5,000 civilians tried to escape and after a heated argument with the LTTE, the Tigers had started firing and five people died on the spot and hundreds of people got injured. In this incident several were terrorists who got injured and civilians had burnt their vehicles.

They have said that the boats full of civilians had been sunk in the sea by the LTTE and on some occasions the LTTE, which chased after them, had removed the engine and drowned the boats with people, including infants and elders. "The LTTE shoot the boats and sometimes boats which were full of civilians will come with few of them", 48-year-old Velupillai Velayudan, who saw how the LTTE was shooting the fleeing civilians, said. According to military officials of the 55 Division, when five boats are visible in the seas only two will reach the destination safety and the rest are sunk by the LTTE. Informed sources said that the LTTE lose many of their cadres and suffer heavy casualties daily.

"It is found that they bring a coffin covered with the Tiger flag in every minute and after a brief ceremony they bury them. Seven such coffins were now buried together under one tombstone. Two weeks back there were 200 tombstones in that particular burial ground in Puthumathalan, but now there are over 900.

It was also found that the terrorists are transporting their casualties in tractors full of injured cadres", the sources revealed. In a desperate attempt to keep their fighting capacity to the maximum, the LTTE had started deploying their disabled former cadres now in the battle front.

"There are over 7,000 disabled cadres with the LTTE", they said adding that according to information the LTTE leadership does not want the disabled terrorists to be freed. Meanwhile, over 5,539 civilians have reported to the Navy Marshalling Points in Point Pedro and Pullmudai with the help of government chartered Green Ocean and Seruwillia II during the past three months.

"Over 8,703 civilians have come to these points from April 2007 to March 2009", said Navy spokesman Commander Mahesh Karunaratne. He said that after an initial screening the patients among the civilians were treated by the Navy doctors at the field hospital in Pulmodai and then rushed to the Padaviya Hospital.

Sources said that over 337 civilians including 165 children, 98 females and 94 men have crossed to the liberated areas to Ampalavanpokkanai, by Saturday morning. They said that the Tigers had continued firing at the people who were trying to flee and the mortar and artillery gun points were located in the NFZ.

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