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Sri Lanka tells MEPs to influence diaspora

Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha has told Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) that some apologists among them are trying to save the LTTE by calling for a ceasefire and trying to stop the Sri Lankan Government from militarily defeating the terrorists.

He also told them that if the MEPs really want to help affected civilians in the uncleared areas in Sri Lanka, they should use whatever influence they have, particularly with Tamil diaspora communities they represent, to bring pressure on the LTTE to let go of the 50,000 people they are holding as human shields.

Sri Lanka's Belgium, Luxembourg and EU Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, made these observations in an intervention at a meeting of the South Asia Delegation of the European Parliament Chaired by MEP Robert Evans on March 31, 2009.

Commenting on remarks about a catastrophe by MEPs Aryasinha said that the catastrophe is in the North of Sri Lanka.

"It is that in the uncleared areas, the LTTE is holding as human shields some 50,000 civilians.

The catastrophe is that the LTTE is firing at civilians who are trying to escape from its clutches. The catastrophe is that the LTTE is firing heavy artillery out of the no fire zone.

Why the European Parliament, in particular in its last resolution, shied away from directly pointing this out, baffles me."

"You say international organizations have been denied access to the uncleared areas, but you well know that the ICRC is operating in the uncleared areas.

The UNHCR and WFP have been accompanying food, medicine and other supplies into the No Fire Zone," he added. "It is also alleged that no outsiders are allowed access to the Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs). That is not true.

UN Under Secretary General John Holmes visited these TACs in February, Colombo based Ambassadors including those representing EU countries, the EU delegation in Colombo and your Brussels based colleagues from the European Commission have visited these camps, in recent days.

Fourteen INGOs including Care, Caritas, Save the Children, I understand are providing meals to those in TACs in Vavuniya."

Finally, he drew attention to the recent appointment by the LTTE as head of its so-called Department of International Relations, one Selvaraja Pathmanathan, a long standing main arms procurer, better known as KP, who has a red corner notice from Interpol against him, in connection with the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Now the appointment of KP to this position, clearly reflects the cynicism with which the LTTE treats the international community.

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