

## US to quiz Sri Lankan army chief over 'war-crimes'

Sri Lanka's army chief faces questioning by the US government over alleged war crimes committed during the country's war with the Tamil Tigers.

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The Colombo government held "very high-level" talks to prevent General Sarath Fonseka, currently visiting Oklahoma, from being quizzed over his conduct during the conflict against the Tamil Tigers, an official said on Sunday.

But the privately-run Sunday Times newspaper in the Sri Lankan capital said Gen Fonseka had been asked to present himself for an interview with the Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday. The UN has previously said that an inquiry was needed to determine culpability.

The move "prompted fears in Colombo that Washington is asserting its legal authority over the 'war crimes' report" released last month, the paper said, referring to a US State Department dossier on alleged war crimes.

The report outlined excesses by security forces and Tiger rebels during the final stages of fighting earlier this year. The report, submitted to the US Congress, refers to Gen Fonseka's having overstepped his brief.

Gen Fonseka is a US Green Card holder and travelled to the US last week to visit his two daughters. He also addressed a group of Sri Lankans in Washington last week, where he took credit for leading the battle to crush the Tigers.

The US embassy in Colombo declined comment.

The State Department report cited allegations that Tamil rebels recruited children and that government forces broke a ceasefire as well as killed rebels who surrendered.



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