

UN report on Sri Lanka 'will have profound implications'

A damning report on UN failures at the end of Sri Lanka's civil war, when thousands of civilians lost their lives, will have "profound implications" for the global body, Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, has admitted.



Government soldiers inspecting the area inside the war zone near Mullaitivu, Sri Lanka, in 2009 Photo: AFP/GETTY

11:36PM GMT 14 Nov 2012

"This finding has profound implications for our work across the world, and I am determined that the United Nations draws the appropriate lessons and does its utmost to earn the confidence of the world's people, especially those caught in conflict who look to the organisation for help," Mr Ban said as the report was released.

The internal review criticised the UN secretariat, UN Security Council and staff in Sri Lanka.

The UN and its major members failed to act on warnings of the widespread deaths.

The UN, under intense pressure from Sri Lankan authorities, did not make public that "a large majority" of deaths in the closing months of war in 2009 were caused by government shelling, the report said.

UN experts have said tens of thousands of civilians were killed between January and May 2009 as government forces launched a final onslaught on Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) separatists in

the north of the country. Rights groups have given a toll of up to 40,000 dead.

Government forces and the Tamil Tigers have been accused of war crimes.

The UN estimates some 100,000 people perished during Sri Lanka's 37-year conflict which ended with the wiping out of the entire Tamil Tiger military leadership.

Source: AFP



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