



Maximise the use of artillery, air assets to finish off Tigers – UNP MP

by Shamindra Ferdinando

Amidst mounting international pressure to suspend the war against the LTTE, the UNP yesterday urged the government to maximize the use of all armaments at its disposal to finish off what is left of the group's conventional military power.

UNP MP Palitha Ranga Bandara told *The Island* that there shouldn't be any restrictions on the use of artillery, mortars, air and naval assets against the LTTE now trapped on the Mullaitivu coast. Responding to our queries, Bandara emphasized that deployment of armour and artillery should be the prerogative of ground commanders leading the offensive. Had they been denied the required gunfire support, the infantry would face unnecessary losses, he said.

The Puttalam District MP said that he fully backed an all out ground assault against LTTE cadres without further delay. He said that as government forces spearheaded by the army had confined the LTTE fighting formations to a mere 7 sq. km area there was absolutely no point in holding back the army.

He emphasised the importance of wiping out the top LTTE leadership including its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, his intelligence chief Pottu Amman and Sea Tiger leader Soosai. He urged the government not to give in to mounting international pressure to call off the offensive to facilitate talks between the government and the LTTE. The LTTE was on its knees and there was no point in hindering ground operations by imposing restrictions on the use of heavy weapons, he said.

He urged the government to turn a blind eye to international efforts to throw a lifeline to the beleaguered LTTE leadership.

The 58 and 53 Divisions are directing operations against the LTTE while the navy has thrown a large scale cordon off the no fire zone to intercept boats launched by the Sea Tigers.

During a media tour arranged by the army on Saturday, Brigadier Shavindra Silva, the General Officer Commanding the 58 Division said that they hadn't used artillery to engage targets in the no fire zone.



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