



தமிழீழ விடுதலைப்புலிகளின் சமாதானச் செயலகம் Peace Secretariat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

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Press release

The Child Protection Authority of LTTE Peace Secretariat is releasing the a report entitled “Children and Armed Conflict in the Northeastern Part of the Island of Sri Lanka” for the benefit of the UN Security Council’s Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict and in memory of all those who lost their lives in the Black July 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom which ignited the island’s war.

The report discusses some of the major violations of children's rights relating to armed conflict. Most notable and serious is the rapid rise in the killing, disappearance and injury of children since the beginning of this year. According to the LTTE’s count, 26 children were killed by the Sri Lankan armed forces and their paramilitaries, at least 45 were abducted/disappeared and 102 were injured in the period between December 7, 2005 and June 28, 2006.

We urge the Working Group to take note of these deaths of children and to take action to prevent any further occurrence of this ultimate violation of a child's rights – the right to life itself. We urge the Working Group to consider some serious restraint on the actions of the Sri Lankan armed forces against those least able to resist.

The report discusses in detail our ongoing dialogue with UNICEF concerning the list of those underage recruits UNICEF believes to be in the LTTE’s ranks.

The June 26, 2006 version of UNICEF's list of those children it believes in LTTE ranks has 1387 names. Of these, 890 have either been previously released by the LTTE or have reached adulthood. To check on the remaining 497 names, the LTTE has asked UNICEF for identifying details to be able to further reduce this number. The LTTE believes that a high percentage of those remaining on the list never joined their armed forces in the first place and hopes to work with UNICEF on taking them off the list. Those identified as being members of the LTTE will be released through NESOHR to their parents, or, if they refuse this option, to the ESDC, a school and vocational training center.

The report also lists the 65 hospitals and 471 schools damaged and destroyed, primarily by shelling and bombing by the armed forces, during the long years of war, most of which have not been rebuilt. The obligations of the LTTE under international law are reviewed. Also described are the extensive efforts by the LTTE and indigenous NGOs to care for at risk children in the areas governed by the LTTE.

The LTTE appreciates the concern of the Security Council’s Working Group and of the UN bodies such as UNICEF and the Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict for NorthEast children affected by the terrible war. The LTTE trusts that this interest will be sustained until all children there can live in a secure environment, have enough to eat, have access to good health care and good schools and can look forward to a brighter future than seems possible today.

For a copy of the full report, please visit www.ltteps.org or e-mail mail.ltteps@gmail.com