



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

13 January 2005

LKA43303.E

Sri Lanka: Update to LKA43290.E of 7 January 2005 on the impact of the 26 December 2004 tsunami on human rights conditions in Sri Lanka (7-13 January 2005)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

The overall situation in Sri Lanka between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) between 7 and 13 January 2005 appears to have worsened (BBC 7 Jan. 2005a; *ibid.* 7 Jan. 2005c; *ibid.* 11 Jan. 2005; AFP 13 Jan. 2005; AI n.d.), although there are some signs that the country is returning to some normality after the tsunami (BBC 13 Jan. 2005a; BBC 10 Jan. 2005; *The Christian Science Monitor* 10 Jan. 2005).

The Peace Process After the Tsunami

Since 7 January 2005, the LTTE has continued to express its opposition to military control of welfare and relief camps in LTTE-controlled areas in the northeast areas of the country (BBC 7 Jan. 2005c; *ibid.* 9 Jan. 2005; DPA 8 Jan. 2005). The LTTE also warned the government that any failure to withdraw soldiers from these camps would result in "trouble" (BBC 7 Jan. 2005c). The LTTE also continued to claim that LTTE-controlled areas have received little aid from the government (BBC 7 Jan. 2005c; *ibid.* 7 Jan. 2005b; *ibid.* 9 Jan. 2005). A political scientist quoted by the BBC stated that there exists "a lot of distrust" in the current relationship between the government and the LTTE (7 Jan. 2005b). According to an LTTE leader, "the tsunami has caused 'irreparable damage' in relations between the two sides" and "widened" the "rift" between the LTTE and the government (BBC 11 Jan. 2005). On 13 January 2005, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported that international lenders had held talks with the LTTE "amid tensions" between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government concerning relief efforts.

On 9 January 2005, reports indicated that the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, had concluded his tour of Sri Lanka without having visited LTTE-controlled areas (BBC 9 Jan. 2005; DPA 9 Jan. 2005). According to Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), local media reports claimed that the government had prevented Annan from visiting LTTE-controlled areas, but the government denied this claim despite reports that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Colombo had proposed that Annan visit LTTE-controlled areas (9 Jan. 2005). According to the BBC, an LTTE leader indicated that such a restriction imposed on Annan "may have negative consequences for peace" (BBC 9 Jan. 2005). According to the AFP, relations between the two sides "worsened" after the Sri Lankan president, Chandrika Kumaratunga, "barred" Annan from visiting LTTE-

controlled areas (AFP 13 Jan. 2005; see also AI n.d.).

Relations Between Ethnic Groups After the Tsunami

Relations between ethnic groups in Sri Lanka are becoming tense again, as was the case prior to the tsunami (BBC 7 Jan. 2005a; *ibid.* 10 Jan. 2005). For example, according to the BBC, initially the military (mainly Sinhalese) were distributing aid to the displaced local people (mainly Tamils) in Jaffna without problems (BBC 7 Jan. 2005a). However, following "the immediate danger, everyone reverted to their original positions" (*ibid.*). The BBC also reported that "viral fever and skin diseases are spreading" in the Jaffna area (*ibid.*).

On 9 January 2005, a grenade attack at a funeral killed 3 people and wounded 34 others as a result of, according to police suspicions, "religious tensions between Hindus and Christians" (CNN 9 Jan. 2005). Additional information on the relations between the ethnic groups following the tsunami could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The Situation of Women and Children After the Tsunami

Recently, Amnesty International (AI) expressed its concern over "emerging reports of sexual violence against women in camps for the displaced" (n.d.). However, additional reports of such violence during the period covered by this Response could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Amnesty International also expressed its concern over reports that the LTTE had been recruiting children orphaned by the tsunami (AI n.d.). The BBC reported that the LTTE was "recruiting child soldiers from relief camps set up after December's tsunami" and that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been "monitoring the cases of three girls who had been recruited by the rebels" (13 Jan. 2005b). Meanwhile, the LTTE has not responded to these allegations (BBC 13 Jan. 2005). According to Amnesty International (AI), "[r]ecruitment of children by the LTTE has been a longstanding concern" (n.d.).

On 11 January 2005, a man was arrested near the southern town of Balapitiya after attempting to sell two young boys orphaned by the tsunami for 100,000 rupees [CDN \$1223 (Bank of Canada 12 Jan. 2004)] (BBC 12 Jan. 2005; see also AP 12 Jan. 2005). The man was eventually released on bail (BBC 12 Jan. 2005), but the investigation is ongoing (AP 12 Jan. 2005).

It is relevant to note that on 10 January 2005, many children returned to undamaged schools in government- and LTTE-controlled areas (BBC 10 Jan. 2005; see also *The Christian Science Monitor* 10 Jan. 2005). According to the DPA, "[a]s many as 450 schools in the northern, eastern, southern and south eastern coastal areas could not be opened on Monday as some of them are completely or partially damaged and others are accommodating displaced people" (10 Jan. 2005). Many businesses along the coasts of Sri Lanka also reopened on 10 January 2005 (DPA 10 Jan. 2005).

Corruption

On 12 January 2005, the Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights

Commission (AHRC) encouraged Sri Lanka to "ensure accountability and transparency in managing all donations for the relief and reconstruction work in the tsunami-hit nation" (12 Jan. 2005). The Commission warned that "[c]orruption could breed and resources might be wasted if there are no mechanisms for the public to check on the activities to rebuild the country" (AHRC 512 Jan. 2005).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection.

References

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 13 January 2005. Jay Deshmukh. "Lenders in Talks with Sri Lankan Rebels Amid Tensions Over Tsunami Relief." <<http://www.reliefweb.int>> [Accessed 13 Jan. 2005]

Amnesty International (AI). n.d. "Indian Ocean Earthquake & Tsunami: Human Rights at Risk in the Aftermath." <<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/tsunami2-eng>> [Accessed 13 Jan. 2005]

Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). 12 January 2005. "AHRC Calls for Accountability in Running Aid Funds in Sri Lanka." <<http://www.reliefweb.int>> [Accessed 12 Jan. 2005]

The Associated Press (AP). 12 January 2005. "Sri Lanka Investigates Alleged Case of Tsunami Child Sale." (Dialog)

Bank of Canada. 12 January 2005. "Currency Converter." <<http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/exchange.htm>> [Accessed 12 Jan. 2005]

BBC. 13 January 2005a. Soutik Biswas. "Tsunami Fishermen Begin to Set Sail." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4167583.stm> [Accessed 13 Jan. 2005]

_____. 13 January 2005b. "Tamil Tigers 'Drafting Children'." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4171251.stm> [Accessed 13 Jan. 2005]

_____. 12 January 2005. "'Tsunami Child Sale Bid Foiled'." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4167537.stm> [Accessed 12 Jan. 2005]

_____. 11 January 2005. "Sri Lanka President Adoption Bid." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4164653.stm> [Accessed 11 Jan. 2005]

_____. 10 January 2005. "Sri Lanka Children Back At School." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4160227.stm> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

_____. 9 January 2005. "Tigers' Fury at Annan Travel Ban." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4158667.stm> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

_____. 7 January 2005a. Frances Harrison. "Ethnic Divisions Quick to Reappear." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4155577.stm> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

_____. 7 January 2005b. Soutik Biswas. "Sri Lanka Peace Chance Fading."
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4155003.stm> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

_____. 7 January 2005c. "Tensions Flare in Quake Countries."
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4153769.stm> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

The Christian Science Monitor [Boston]. 10 January 2005. Robert Marquand. "Sir Lanka's Schools and Factories Start to Hum Once Again."
<<http://www.reliefweb.int>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

CNN. 9 January 2005. "Deadly Blast in Sri Lanka."
<<http://cnn.worldnews.printthis.clickability.com>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA). 10 January 2005. "Alternative Schools Sought in Tsunami-Hit Areas in Sri Lanka." <<http://www.reliefweb.int>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

_____. 9 January 2005. "U.N. Secretary General Ends Visit to Tsunami-Hit Sri Lanka." <<http://www.reliefweb.int>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

_____. 8 January 2005. "Sri Lanka: Tamil Rebels Oppose Army Taking Over Welfare of Tsunami Victims." <<http://www.reliefweb.int>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2005]

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.