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10 February 2005

LKA43382.E

Sri Lanka: Update to LKA43365.E of 3 February 2005, LKA43351.E of 27 January 2005, LKA43328.E of 20 January 2005, LKA43303.E of 13 January 2005 and LKA43290.E of 7 January 2005 on the impact of the 26 December 2004 tsunami on human rights conditions in Sri Lanka (3 February 2005 - 9 February 2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

The Peace Process After the Tsunami

During the period covered by this Response, E. Kaushalyan, a senior member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), along with five other LTTE members, was killed (BBC 8 Feb. 2005; AFP 8 Feb. 2005). The government condemned the attack (BBC 8 Feb. 2005), which the military suspected had been carried out by a "breakaway faction" led by a person known as Colonel Karuna, a former senior member of the LTTE (AFP 8 Feb. 2005; BBC 8 Feb. 2005). The rebels however, claimed that paramilitaries within the army had carried out the attack (BBC 8 Feb. 2005). The army denied responsibility (ibid.). Kaushalyan is the most senior LTTE member to be killed since the start of the February 2002 ceasefire mediated by Norway (AFP 8 Feb. 2005). There are concerns that the killing of Kaushalyan has increased the risk of a return to conflict (ibid.; BBC 8 Feb. 2005).

As at 6 February 2005, "a final decision ha[d] not been reached on joint relief work [between the LTTE and the government] in the North-East" (*Sunday Observer* 6 Feb. 2005).

Relations Between Ethnic Groups After the Tsunami

No reports of developments affecting the relations between ethnic groups during the period covered by this Response could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The Situation of Women and Children After the Tsunami

According to 8 February 2005 statistics compiled by the Sri Lankan Probation and Child Care Services Department, the tsunami orphaned 995 children, while 3,409 children lost one parent (*Daily News* 8 Feb. 2005).

Between 26 December 2004 and 8 February 2005, the Children and Women's Bureau received 106 reports of missing children (ibid.). World Vision

reported that children had gone missing from hospitals and emergency shelters, and said that some experts "fear[ed] that some children [were] being trafficked for work or for sexual exploitation" (7 Jan. 2005). No additional information on child trafficking could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF), the LTTE had recruited 40 children between 26 December 2004 and 3 February 2005 (*International Herald Tribune* 3 Feb. 2005), which the LTTE denied (*ibid.*). On 4 February 2005, however, the LTTE released 23 child soldiers, who had been recruited following the tsunami (*Daily News* 5 Feb. 2005; *Voice of America* 4 Feb. 2005). The children were released to the Northeast Secretariat on Human Rights (NESOHR) (*ibid.*; *Daily News* 5 Feb. 2005), an organization supported by the LTTE.

There were no other developments relating to the situation of women and children during the period covered by this Response.

Corruption

During the period covered by this Response, three village officials were suspended for "mishandling aid to tsunami survivors," while investigations into similar allegations against another 10 officials were initiated (AP 4 Feb. 2005). According to one government administrator, "[s]evere disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found guilty" (*ibid.*).

Security

Information on the security situation during the period covered by this Response could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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

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