



විදේශ කටයුතු අමාත්‍යාංශය
வெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள் அமைச்சு
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ජනරජ ගෞරවනීය ශිල්ප, කොළඹ 1, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව

'குடியரசுக் கட்டிடம்', கொழும்பு 1, இலங்கை

Republic Building, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

MEDIA RELEASE

GOSL welcomes European Union's call to the LTTE to lay down arms

The Government of Sri Lanka welcomes the European Union's (EU) call to the LTTE to lay down its arms and renounce terrorism and violence once and for all, as contained in the European Union's Council Conclusions on Sri Lanka of 23 February 2009. In this context, if the LTTE heeds this call, the requirement of an immediate ceasefire as urged by the EU will not arise. It may be noted that the Government of Sri Lanka did suspend hostilities for a 48 hour period and designated no-fire zones, to allow safe passage of the civilian population fleeing the conflict areas. The LTTE's only response was to continue with its armed hostilities, endangering the lives of civilians. It should be emphasized that the objective of the present military engagement is to defeat terrorism and create an environment conducive for democratic pluralism. In this regard President Mahinda Rajapaksa has consistently reiterated his firm commitment to a negotiated settlement through an inclusive political process to address the legitimate concerns of all communities, which has already been initiated.

The Government of Sri Lanka is deeply committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of the innocent civilians who are being used as human shields by the LTTE in the rapidly shrinking uncleared area in the Mullaitivu district. Amidst extremely hazardous circumstances, the Government is continuing to keep the civilians supplied with food, medicine, and other essential services, which underscores the duty and concern towards its own citizens, thus also fulfilling its obligations under International Humanitarian Law and the principles of the laws of war.

The Government of Sri Lanka considers it important to be closely engaged with the EU in its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilians displaced in the conflict. In this context, the Government looks forward to a visit of the EU-TROIKA at an early date, the modalities for which are being discussed.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Colombo.

24 February 2009