

EDSG  
Sri Lanka

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

16 April 2009

Excellency,

Since we spoke on the telephone on 9 April 2009, I was pleased that you declared a much needed pause in offensive operations in the fighting in Northern Sri Lanka. You will be aware that I welcomed this important step made by the Government of Sri Lanka, but also made clear that I would have liked a longer pause, as we discussed.

It is with great concern that I have received reports of renewed fighting since the pause ended. I remain deeply concerned about the fate of tens of thousands of civilians trapped in the Vanni pocket. The renewed fighting will no doubt result in a large and unacceptable number of additional civilian casualties.

I recognize that the LTTE continues to prevent the civilians from leaving and I will continue to support efforts for this situation to change. Under-Secretary-General John Holmes made this very clear to the press yesterday.

However, the Government of Sri Lanka must also do more to avoid civilian casualties. In particular, I hope very strongly that you will agree to a renewal of the pause for a longer period. I also urge again the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that heavy weapons are not used in the vicinity of civilians and to increase its efforts to deliver relief items through the sea route.

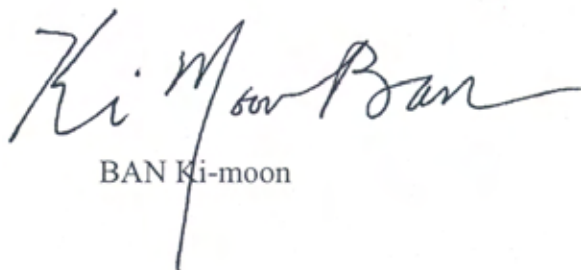
His Excellency  
Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa  
President of the Democratic Socialist  
Republic of Sri Lanka  
Colombo

29-04036

As you know, I have asked my Chief of Staff, Mr. Vijay Nambiar, to travel to Sri Lanka to meet you and other senior members of the Government to discuss ways forward to prevent further unacceptable suffering. I urge you to discuss these issues with him with an open mind, bearing in mind our common desire to avoid further bloodshed and to find a peaceful and orderly end to the conflict if at all possible. We are ready to assist in any way possible, including through further contacts with the LTTE if that would help.

Meanwhile, let me assure you of the continued commitment of the United Nations to work with you to address the dire situation in the Vanni, to ensure that those who have managed to escape are treated in accordance with international principles and standards, and to tackle the fundamental requirement for rapid political progress with the Tamil community on their future place in Sri Lanka.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ban Ki-moon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ban" being more prominent and the last name "Ki-moon" written in a more connected, flowing style. The signature is positioned above the printed name "BAN Ki-moon".

BAN Ki-moon

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REFERENCE:

16 April 2009

Excellency,

The Secretary-General would be grateful if you could kindly forward the enclosed letter to His Excellency Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

A copy of the letter is attached for your information.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Won-soo'.

KIM Won-soo  
Deputy Chef de Cabinet

His Excellency  
Mr. H. M. G. S. Palihakkara  
Permanent Representative of the Democratic  
Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka  
to the United Nations  
New York

APR 16 2009

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