



**අපදා කළමනාකරණ හා මානව හිමිකම් අමාත්‍යාංශය**  
**இடர் முகாமைத்துவ மற்றும் மனித உரிமைகள் அமைச்சு**  
**MINISTRY OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

අංක 02, විජේරාම මාවත, කොළඹ 07, ශ්‍රී ලංකා  
இலக்கம் 02, விஜேராம மாவத்தை, கொழும்பு 07, இலங்கை.  
No:02, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07, SRI LANKA

අමාත්‍ය அமைச்சர் Minister	2681979	ෆැක්ස් பக்ஸ் Fax	2681978	ලේකම් செயலாளர் Secretary	2695012 2681982	ෆැක්ස් பக்ஸ் Fax	2681982	ප්‍රධාන කාර්යාලය பிரதான அலுவலகம் General Office	2695013 2681980	ෆැක්ස් பக்ஸ் Fax	2681980
---------------------------------	---------	------------------------	---------	--------------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	---------	---	--------------------	------------------------	---------

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Humanitarian efforts in the Vanni continue**

At Thursday's [16 October 2008] high level policy meeting of the Consultative Committee on Humanitarian Assistance [CCHA], chaired by Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights Mahinda Samarasinghe; the Government Agents of Vavuniya, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu were commended for their dedication and effort to ensure delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Vanni. Both the Commissioner General of Essential Services (CGES) Mr. S.B. Divaratne and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) Mr. Neil Buhne thanked the GA's for the assistance in making the food convoys to the Vanni a reality.

The GA's have been working round the clock to ensure that the alternative route used to deliver food to the Vanni was in working condition after reports of a culvert being damaged between the Nadunkerny and Oddusudan route. While damages to the culvert had been repaired overnight with the assistance of the GA's, a GA convoy of 28 lorries carrying 271MT of flour, sugar, dhal, oil and kerosene was sent to the Vanni on 16 October 2008.

Since 02 October 2008 to date, a total of 714MT of Government food including flour, dhal, sugar and oil with another 168,399l of kerosene have already been sent to Vanni in convoys. While the WFP food convoy was to proceed to the Vanni on 16 October, due to shelling on the A9, the convoy was re-scheduled for the next day and it had reached the Vanni safely.

Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, M.P. Senior Advisor to H.E. the President reiterated the commitment of H.E the President and the GoSL in providing humanitarian assistance to the people in the Vanni. Hon. Rajapaksa M.P. went on to state categorically that the Government would take the full responsibility for the welfare of the people in the Vanni and that the UN and other Non-Governmental agencies would be facilitated to complement the efforts of the Government in this direction.

Minister Samarasinghe said that the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Situation Report #147 which was quoted on the Daily Mirror on 14 October 2008, was not an accurate representation of the situation in the Vanni and was sensationalist. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and Chair of the IASC Mr. Neil Buhne regretted that inappropriate language was used in the report and had apologized to Minister Samarasinghe. At a subsequent meeting between the RC/HC and Minister Samarasinghe, it was decided that the issuance of the IASC Report will be reviewed.

**Background**

The CCHA, chaired by Hon. Mahinda Samarasinghe, Minister for Disaster Management and Human Rights, is a high-level committee appointed to deal with important policy issues concerning humanitarian assistance. The CCHA meets monthly and is attended by Mr Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, Secretary/Ministry of Defence; Mr Basil Rajapaksa, Advisor to the President, Secretaries of the ministries of: Foreign Affairs, Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure Development, Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Health; the Commissioner General of Essential Services (CGES); Secretary General of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process; Chairman of the Co-chairs and Ambassador to the United States of America – His Excellency Robert O. Blake; Representative of the Presidency of the European Union – Ambassador to France – His Excellency Michel Lummaux; Ambassador of Japan – H.E. Kiyoshi Araki; Head of Delegation of the European Union, Mr Neil Buhne the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN; heads of ICRC, UNHCR, UNOCHA; ECHO and the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA).

The co-chairs of sub-committees developed under the CCHA: Resettlement and Welfare, Logistics and Essential Services, Livelihoods, Health, and Education, represented by high-level Government officials and UN heads of agencies – UNHCR, WFP, ILO, UNICEF, and WHO, were also present to update members on progress made to date. The sub-committees address operational issues that fall within their respective areas. (*Ends.*)

W. A. S. Lalkumara  
Deputy Director Media

17 October 2008