

PRESS RELEASE

SLMM HQ
Colombo
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Subject: The Cease Fire Agreement and the Peace Process in Jeopardy

The 27th December attack on the Security Forces on Jaffna Peninsula was yet another attack, not only on the Security Forces, but also on the Cease Fire Agreement and the Peace Process as a whole. I condemn this attack as well as all other attacks in a long line that has left no ethnic, political or religious group unaffected. These attacks, and the violence erupting in connection to various demonstrations, must come to an immediate end.

To say the least, this spiral of violence is not conducive to a badly needed high-level meeting between the Parties. Such talks require a stable situation on the ground, which at the moment is eroded by powers working against peace. In not so many words, if this trend of violence is allowed to continue, war may not be far away. It is now imperative that the Parties join hands to arrest the violence prevailing in the north and in the east.

With regards to the SLMM, we are still operating in Jaffna-, Mannar-, Vavuniya-, Trincomalee-, Batticaloa- and Ampara districts. However, it must be said that the volatile situation has made SLMM's work increasingly difficult as we are frequently hampered, even threatened, in our work. This makes the whole situation even more frustrating as the five Nordic countries all have sent monitors to Sri Lanka who voluntarily have decided that they want to contribute to a better future for this country. The SLMM cannot operate in an insecure environment.

However, there is a way forward: Direct Dialogue. Both Parties have officially declared that they are prepared to hold high-level talks. The SLMM is prepared to contribute to such a meeting as well as to all other attempts to have a direct dialogue between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Only then can Peace eventually come to this island.

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