Reporting to the world on Tamil Affairs

Sonobo Children's Home in Vaharai attacked, 12 children injured - TRO

[TamilNet, Wednesday, 08 November 2006, 11:07 GMT]
Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO), engaged in emergency rescue work at the IDP camp in Kathiraveli school Wednesday evening, said TRO's Sonobo Children's Home located close to the school was also attacked by SLA artillery. 12 children were wounded. Forty bodies have been recovered including 6 babies between the ages of 3 and 6 months, the TRO statement said. 76 persons have been admitted to the hospital.

Full text of the press statement issued by the TRO follows:

Over 100 Civilians dead and injured - School and Hospital hit by Sri Lanka Army Multi-Barrel rocket and artillery attack

Over 100 persons have been killed or injured in an artillery (multi-barrel rocket) attack by the Sri Lanka Armed Forces in Vaharai, Batticaloa District. Forty (40) bodies have been recovered including 6 babies between the ages of 3 and 6 months. 76 persons have been admitted to the hospital.

The multi-barrel rockets attack, which began at approximately 11:35 a.m. and lasted for over 30 minutes, struck a school, Kathiraveli Vikneswara Vidyalayam, Vaharai General Hospital and TRO's Sonobo Children's Home (12 children in the home were injured). There are over 5,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) families in the immediate area. Most of the dead and injured are IDPs from Muttur.

Sri Lanka Army personnel at the border checkpoint have refused to allow seriously injured civilians to be transported to Batticaloa. Vaharai General Hospital is the only functioning hospital in the area and patients and staff were forced to flee to safety.

The school has been functioning as an IDP camp managed by TRO. There is a lack of other appropriate shelter due to restrictions placed on the transportation of building materials to the area by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL). Since hostilities began in August, TRO has been caring for over 45,000 IDPs in the Vaharai area. These IDPs lack adequate shelter, food, fuel and other basic necessities.

TRO is the only NGO operating in the area due to GoSL restrictions on access by international NGO personnel to LTTE-controlled areas. The GoSL is requiring all international staff to apply for "work permits" (this is in addition to the "work visas" they already

possess). Thus far no work permits have been approved by the GoSL for the LTTE-controlled areas. The UN and the ICRC only have intermittent access to these areas.

TRO is providing medical assistance to the injured and traumatized civilians.

TRO urgently appeals to the UN and ICRC for assistance in transporting the injured to hospitals for treatment

TRO also appeals to the Government of Sri Lanka to allow access by the UN, ICRC, other humanitarian organizations and the SLMM. The restrictions on the transportation of fuel imposed by the GoSL are hampering relief operations and ambulance service.

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