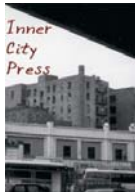


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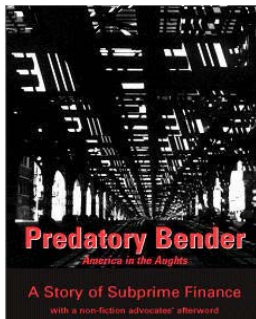
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On Sri Lanka, UN Notes Starvation, Believes No Heavy Artillery in Use, Defers to Council's Silence

Byline: Matthew Russell Lee of Inner City Press at the UN: *News Analysis*

UNITED NATIONS, March 5 -- Even on a day when the UN belatedly notes the starvation of Tamils trapped in the conflict zone in Sri Lanka, it undercut this report Thursday by declaring the expulsion of NGOs from Darfur "the important issue of the day." At the UN's noon briefing in New York, Ban Ki-moon's spokesperson shifted directly from a read-out of press releases, including the statement on Sri Lanka, to a Q&A on Darfur, without taking questions on what she had read. Later on Thursday, Inner City Press asked the UN's Radhika Coomaraswamy if she thinks the UN is doing enough about Sri Lanka, and how to allocate blame for the deaths there, including of children and by starvation. Video [here](#), from Minute 24:06.

Ms. Coomaraswamy said that the UN's focus is humanitarian, on the "ways and means of evacuation." She recited that the government of Sri Lanka has made a commitment not to use long range artillery, while noting that there are reports the continued use. For example, in Maaththa'lan on March 3. Still she called it a step forward, and said it was up to the Security Council to consider the "larger political issues" such as "whether to call for a ceasefire."

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UN's Coomaraswamy, has Sri Lankan Army stopped heavy artillery?

Ban has called, twice now, for a suspension of fighting. The Security Council held a single briefing -- explicitly on humanitarian and not political issues -- and now Sri Lanka is not on the Council's agenda for the month of March.

While the UN raises its voice, correctly, about the expulsion of NGOs from Darfur, it is more muted about the Northern Sri Lanka conflict zone where there are no international NGOs or journalists allowed at all.

Click [here](#) for [Feb. 12 debate on Sri Lanka](#)
<http://bloggingheads.tv/diavlogs/17772?in=11:33&out=32:56>

Click [here](#) for [Inner City Press' Jan. 16, 2009 debate about Gaza](#)

Click here for [Inner City Press' review-of-2008 UN Top Ten debate](#)

Click here for [Inner City Press' December 24 debate on UN budget, Niger](#)

Click here from [Inner City Press' December 12 debate on UN double standards](#)

Click here for [Inner City Press' November 25 debate on Somalia, politics](#)

Click here for [Inner City Press Nov. 7 debate on the war in Congo](#)

Watch this site, and [this Oct. 2 debate, on UN, bailout, MDGs](#)

and this [October 17 debate, on Security Council and Obama and the UN.](#)

* * *

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Click [here](#) for a [Reuters AlertNet](#) piece by this correspondent about Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army. Click [here](#) for an earlier [Reuters AlertNet](#) piece about the Somali National Reconciliation Congress, and the UN's \$200,000 contribution from an

undefined trust fund. [Video Analysis here](#)

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