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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Adam Bielan, Inese Vaidere, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Jan Tadeusz Masiel, Ryszard Czarnecki, Ewa Tomaszewska, Konrad Szymański

on behalf of the UEN Group

on Sri Lanka

European Parliament resolution on Sri Lanka

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Sri Lanka of 18 May 2000, 14 March 2002 and 20 November 2003, its resolution of 13 January 2005 on the tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean and its resolution of 18 May 2006 on the situation in Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to the decision of the Council of the European Union of 29 May 2006 to formally proscribe the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE),
 - having regard to the statement of the Presidency of the European Union of 17 August 2006 on Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to the Tokyo Declaration on the Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka of 10 June 2003, which linked donor support to progress in the peace process,
 - having regard to the Ceasefire Agreement signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE which entered into force on 23 February 2002,
 - having regard to the Oslo Declaration of December 2002, in which the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE agreed to explore a solution based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the intense fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the separatist LTTE has caught an estimated 250,000 civilians in deadly crossfire, and in the past week civilian casualties have risen dramatically,
- B. whereas people displaced by the conflict are experiencing acute shortages of humanitarian aid, especially food, shelter and medical care; there has been no food convoy in the area since 16 January according to Amnesty International's Sri Lanka researcher,
- C. whereas the Government of Sri Lanka is carrying out military operations in areas with a civilian population and whereas the aerial and artillery bombardment has reportedly led to civilian deaths, injuries, the destruction of property and mass displacement,
- D. whereas, more than 300,000 civilians who have fled the oncoming government troops are also trapped in this small area and whereas they have been displaced multiple times and are increasingly vulnerable as fighting moves closer,
- E. whereas the government had declared "safe zones" to allow civilians to seek shelter, but information made available to Amnesty International indicates that several civilians in

the so-called safe zone have been killed or sustained injuries as a result of artillery bombardment,

- F. whereas a convoy of 24 vehicles arranged by the Red Cross and the UN to transport up to 300 wounded people, including 50 children, was stopped from leaving the area by the LTTE,
1. Condemns a "culture of impunity and indifference" over killings and attacks on journalists in Sri Lanka. Since the beginning of the New Year, both the killing of a senior editor and the attack on the facilities of a popular independent TV channel has led to a total paralysis of the media community;
 2. Calls for respect for human rights and a fair trial of Mr J.S. Tissainayagam, a journalist and Mr N. Jashiharan, a publisher and his wife, Mrs V. Valamathy who have been in detention since March 2008,
 3. Deeply concerns by the assassination of the chief editor of the Sri Lanka Sunday Leader newspaper, Lasantha Wickrematunga, who was shot;
 4. Calls on government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to take urgent action to prevent large-scale civilian death;
 5. Notes the government-ordered September 2008 withdrawal of all UN and nongovernmental humanitarian organisations (with the exception of the ICRC and Caritas) from the Vanni plunged the region into a serious humanitarian crisis with acute shortages of food, shelter, medicine and other humanitarian supplies;
 6. Notes that the Sri Lankan military's blanket rejection of any civilian deaths in the latest fighting raised serious concerns about its genuine willingness to minimize civilian casualties;
 7. Calls on both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE to abide by the laws of war, including taking all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians during military operations and ensuring that civilians have access to humanitarian assistance,
 8. Expresses its concern that the government's near-total news from the war zone prevents Sri Lanka and the rest of the world from knowing the full extent of the humanitarian crisis in the Vanni;
 9. Supports the current action plan of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the benefit of the displaced population;
 10. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Governments of the Member States to redouble their efforts to help bring a stable and just peace to Sri Lanka and restore security and prosperity;
 11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President and Government of Sri Lanka and other parties to the conflict.