Resolution on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka

2009/2559(RSP) - 12/03/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka. It notes that an estimated 170 000 civilians find themselves in an emergency situation, trapped in the battle zone between the Sri Lankan army and the forces of the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) without access to the most basic aid. UN agencies have documented more than 2300 civilian deaths and at least 6500 injuries since late January 2009.

Parliament calls for an immediate ceasefire by the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE in order to allow the civilian population to leave the combat zone. It condemns all acts of violence and intimidation which are preventing civilians from leaving the conflict area, and condemns the attacks on civilians as documented by the International Crisis Group. Parliament calls on both sides to respect international humanitarian law and to protect and assist the civilian population in the combat zone, as well as in the safe zone.

Members are concerned about reports of serious overcrowding and poor conditions in the refugee camps established by the Sri Lankan Government. They demand that international and national humanitarian organisations, as well as journalists, be granted full and unhindered access to the combat zone and to the refugee camps.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Sri Lankan Government to cooperate with countries and aid organisations that are willing and able to evacuate civilians.