

# NO! TO WAR: ACADEMICS APPEAL

**W**e, the undersigned are profoundly disappointed by the breakdown of the cessation of hostilities (COH) between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. We saw the major initiative taken by the People's Alliance administration in meeting the voter's mandate and creating an atmosphere in which a lasting peace could be negotiated as an enormously welcome move. We were heartened by the initial response of the LTTE and also, importantly, all sections of the Sri Lankan polity. The Sri Lankan people made clear their desire for peace. It is then extremely unfortunate that the LTTE chose to unilaterally break the COH, leading in recent days to the loss of hundreds of lives, and the re-imposition of war's inevitable hardships on the people of the North-East.

We unequivocally condemn the indefensible military calculation that appears to have guided the LTTE decision to break the COH; we also condemn the unconvincing 'justifications' offered by the international apologists for the LTTE in defence of the LTTE's anti-democratic rejection of the people's aspirations for peace. The LTTE should not once again confuse short term military gains with the possibility of obtaining a military solution to the ethnic crisis. We urge the LTTE to recognize the urgent need to shift the debate from military strategy to the alternate political programs that can meet the just call of the Tamil people for inter-ethnic justice and democracy. As we have learnt bitterly from the past it is predominantly civilians who would end up as victims in a spiraling cycle of violence.

Similarly we condemn those political forces in the South who urge retaliation against the LTTE's military attack with full scale war against the Tamil people. There should be recognition again of a crucial ethical and political distinction between the LTTE's actions and the just struggles of the Tamil people. We urge also that the PA do everything possible to ensure that food and medical supplies reach the people of the North; surely, the right to humanitarian aid should not be contingent on the state of military relations between the LTTE and the Armed forces. Notwithstanding the LTTE's decision to resume hostilities, in the last few months the people of the North-East have clearly expressed their desire for peace. In this light we urge the PA to fulfill its electoral mandate for bringing about a just and democratic solution to the ethnic crisis by presenting its proposed political program to the people of Sri Lanka. We hope this will open the door to public debate and discussion among all three communities to collectively determine the institutional arrangements for peace with democracy. We urge moreover, that the LTTE respect the wishes of the Tamil people and participate in the national discussion of a political solution.

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