



## Kohona: 'Victorious soldiers could have raped every single woman'

[TamilNet, Friday, 03 July 2009, 02:20 GMT]

**Sri Lankan government officials are running a prostitution racket using Tamil women interned in at least one of the militarised camps for displaced people, The Australian newspaper reported Thursday. "It's been brought to the attention of senior government officials but no one seems to be doing anything about it," an aid worker, who requested anonymity for fear of reprisal, told the paper. In response to the accusations, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Palitha Kohona told the paper: "These (the military) are the guys who were winning the war - they could have raped every single woman on the way if they wanted to. Not one single woman was raped."**

Aid workers told The Australian that officials at the internally displaced people's camp in Pulmoddai, a remote northeast region, are running the prostitution ring using women kept in the camp.



Dr. Palitha  
Kohona

"It's hard to know whether it's coercive or not, but there is an average of three families living to a tent and it can be extremely difficult trying to get privacy. You can imagine the military coming in and asking for something in return for more space or more favours," the aid worker said.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Palitha Kohona described the claims as "absolute rubbish", but confirmed the government was investigating the reports, the paper said.

"These (the military) are the guys who were winning the war - they could have raped every single woman on the way if they wanted to. Not one single woman was raped," Kohona told The Australian.

"I am sure in a mass of people there may be individuals who want to make a quick buck one way or another, but you have to remember the tents are so close together you can't do anything without the entire neighbourhood knowing. If you had a racket going, thousands of people would know about it."

A UN official said yesterday many families remained separated in the camps and that men and women believed to be Tamil Tiger fighters were being removed with "no due process or proper documentation, like arrest receipts, given to parents or guardians".

"These issues are of huge concern for us," the official said. "The lack of freedom of movement is a violation of human rights under Sri Lanka's own constitution."

The restrictions have heightened tensions in the camps, including a mass protest in the Ramanathan camp in the northern town of Vavuniya on Sunday in which IDPs tried to break down barbed-wire fences separating one camp zone - and many relatives - from another.

UN Sri Lanka co-ordinator Neil Buhne said camp conditions were slowly improving, thanks to better water and sanitation facilities.

"But the main thing is people are still inside these camps and they can't go anywhere. The government has made public commitments to get 80 per cent of people back to their homes by the end of the year (after separating civilians from the fighters) but that's going to be a difficult target to meet."

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=29705>

Reproduction of this news item is allowed when used without any alterations to the contents and the source, TamilNet, is mentioned

[News](#) | [Features](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Palaka'ni](#) | [Photo Features](#) | [TN Transcription](#)  
[Web feeds](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Home](#) | [About us](#)