



TV

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UN HELPS ENSURE VOLUNTARY RETURN OF IDPs IN EASTERN SRI LANKA

VIDEO

BUS WITH SRI LANKAN IDPs
RETURNING HOME

REFUGEES INSIDE THE BUS

PHOTOS OF REFUGEES
FLEEING AND RETURNING

PHOTOS OF REFUGES,
HOUSES RIDDLED WITH
BULLETS

AUDIO

NARRATION

People uprooted by civil war in Eastern Sri Lanka are finally going home, even as thousands flee new fighting in the north.

Some of those displaced 2 years ago are visiting their former villages to see for themselves whether it is safe to return.

The United Nations and humanitarian groups are working to make sure resettlement is voluntary, safe and beneficial. (23")

Over 200,000 Sri Lankans have abandoned their homes since August as government troops closed in on the last territory controlled by the Tamil Tigers. Relief agencies are scrambling to provide food and shelter. (13")

Batticaloa in the east saw a similar exodus in 2006, when the army attacked Tiger-held areas. Fifteen thousand people are still homeless; half live in camps. (12")

DAMAGED HOUSES
ALONGSIDE OF THE ROAD

In the former battle zone, mines have now been cleared. The government, now in control, wants most of the displaced to go back to their villages. (8.2")

REFUGEES DISEMBARK FROM
THE BUS

UN REFUGEE AGENCY STAFF
TALKS TO IDPs

Jens Hessemann heads the UN refugee agency's office in Batticaloa. (4.3")

JENS HESEMANN, HEAD, UN
REFUGEE AGENCY OFFICE IN
BATTICALOA, ON CAMERA

JENS HESEMANN: (English) **M**
"We facilitate that the displaced can go back to their home areas for a day, have a look at what the conditions are, see their houses and the security situation and then come back the same day and tell the others. Then they can take a well-informed and free choice whether to return or not." (15")

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, UN
REFUGEE AGENCY STAFF,
MEET WITH IDPs

NARRATION

Outside a wrecked schoolhouse, officials meet the group to answer questions. Staffs from the UN refugee agency observe the discussion. The visitors are wary. (11")

SELVARASA AMODANI, A
SCHOOL TEACHER, IN FRONT
OF ACAMERA.

Selvarasa Amodani, a teacher, worries that the soldiers might punish people suspected of supporting the rebels. She asks what protection her family will have. The local commander tells the refugees that they will be safe, and says that they can come to him if they have any problems. Selvarasa seems slightly reassured. (19.2")

PAN TO OTHER REFUGEES
AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

SELVARASA ON CAMERA

SELVARASA AMODANI: (Sri Lankan) **F**
“As a mother, my greatest concern is for my children’s safety, bu, I have decided to move back.” (5.4”)

JENS HESEMANN ON CAMERA

JENS HESEMANN: (English) **M**
“We always make sure that it’s 50 percent man-woman participating in looking at the return areas because they often looked at the issues differently. Man and woman have different needs.” (13”)

SELVARASA VISITS HER
DAMAGED HOUSE

NARRATION
Looters stripped the doors from Selvarasa’s house, but it still has a roof. Some of her neighbours are not so fortunate; they will have to move into temporary housing while they rebuild. (10.5”)

REFUGEES RECEIVING RELIEF
GOODS

The Refugee Agency will provide shelters and household items. Other agencies have long-term plans to help restore services and livelihoods. The UN continues to listen to the concerns of displaced people who haven’t gone home. (14”)

JENS HESEMANN LISTENING
TO THE CONCERNS OF THE
IDPs

This camp on a beach outside Batticaloa town is gradually shrinking as residents moved out. (6)

VAR. SHOTS OF WOMEN
REFUGEES AT THE CAMP

In their work with the displaced, UN agencies are making an effort to include women and address their particular concerns. (6.8”)

JENS HESEMANN ON CAMERA

JENS HESEMANN: (English) **M**

"We have a camp management system in place where there are committees with participation of women. So, there's a camp committee which is comprised of displaced themselves to make sure that both men and women are represented. The concerns, especially of pregnant mothers, or of women's privacy needs sometimes are well respected." (21")

WOMAN REFUGEE GRINDS
COCONUT MEAT OUT OF ITS
HUSK

NARRATION

The displaced who cannot go home pose a special challenge. The 500 residents of this camp came from an area overlooking a naval base. The government will not let them return for security reasons. (12")

VAR. SHOTS OF REFUGEES AT
THE CAMP

By day, the shelters are very hot and after dark, the people are afraid to go out as there is no electricity. But no one is leaving. (7.2")

WOMAN REFUGEE ON
CAMERA

WOMAN REFUGEE: (Sri Lankan) **F**

"They want us to resettle in a new place, but we will stay here until we can go back in our hometown. I have no idea how long that will take." (8")

REFUGEES COOLING OFF
OUTSIDE THEIR HUTS

NARRATION

Humanitarian agencies are striving to help people get out of the camps and back on their lands where they will no longer have to depend on the system... But the displacement

CLOTHES BEING DRIED

problem is not likely to be solved completely until peace comes to Sri Lanka. (14.5")

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by William A. Ryan and Marc Westhof for the United Nations.