

දුරකථන) 2698475
දුරකථන) 2698490
Telephone) 2698507

ෆැක්ස්) 2692913
ෆැක්ස්) 2694860
Fax)

විද්‍යුත් තැපෑල)
மின்துறைமுகம்) postmaster@health.gov.lk
e-mail)

වෙබ් අඩවිය)
இணையத்தளம்) www.health.gov.lk
website)



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சுவசிரிபாய
SUWASIRIPAYA

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எனது இல) SH/Misc-25/2009
My No.)

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Your No. :)

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திகதி) 27/01/2009
Date)

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சுகாதார பராமரிப்பு மற்றும் போசண அமைச்சு
Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition

Re: Human Catastrophe & Medical Emergency in the Vanni

Your kind attention is drawn to an appeal dated 26/01/2009, which has been circulated widely including to diplomatic circles and the media, purported to have been published by Dr. Varatharaja, Regional Director of Health Services (RDHS), Mullathivu calling for the attention of the Government, Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka, ICRC, UN Agencies and International community to the alleged 300 deaths and 1000 injured of civilians living in the un-cleared areas of the Mullathivu district as a result of continuous multi-barrel artillery shelling during heavy fighting in those areas of the Mullativu district.

It also says that there is an acute shortage of essential drugs and medical personnel in the hospitals in the Mullativu district and has given a list of drugs that are in short supply and appealed for immediate supply of these and additional medical personnel.

As Secretary of Healthcare & Nutrition, I feel it is my duty to share with you the following. I am in contact with Dr. Varatharaja, RDHS Mullativu and with Dr. Sathyamoorthy, RDHS, Kilinochchi regularly and at present on a daily basis by telephone. The Advisor for North & East to the Hon. Minister of Healthcare & Nutrition, Dr. V. Jeganathan is in constant contact with these Directors. Dr. V. Jeganathan has been appointed specially to coordinate and provide required supplies and assistance to maintain the Health Services in the North & East. All the drugs and supplies requested by the un-cleared areas even before the humanitarian operations were started in Vanni were supplied without a break, up to now. The 2009 first quarter of drugs to Mullativu and Kilinochchi has been sent. The Mullativu supplies are awaiting road clearance and will be delivered soon. Action is being taken by the Ministry to expedite the process.

I must mention here that the first quarter drugs to these two districts have been dispatched by the Ministry on priority even before the other districts were supplied. Furthermore, I wish to state with utmost responsibility that I have been contacted by Dr. Vartharaja twice today, 27/1/2009 and he

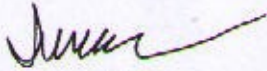
has categorically denied that the above mentioned public appeal has been made by him or originated from his office and he further stated that he does not agree with the contents of this appeal and that its contents are false and exaggerated in order to embarrass him. However, he requested me to expedite the delivery of the first quarter drugs from Vavuniya as the stocks were getting depleted.

He further said that he does not have access to e-mail or fax facility to release such a statement and expressed his dismay and concern about it. It is therefore obvious that this has been done by destructive elements with sinister motives who want to embarrass the government and implicate Dr. Varatharaja with false propaganda. He also sought advice from me as to what he should do when the troops advanced towards the Puddikkudiyiruppu hospital. I advised him to move into the cleared areas with the patients to which request he very clearly replied that the LTTE has not given him permission to do so and that he feared to do it without their permission.

He also said that there had been only six deaths and 15 wounded following a shell falling into the Puddikkudiyiruppu hospital last week and on further inquiry, he said he was not sure whether it was fired by the government forces or LTTE. He also said that there were about 300 injured admitted to Puddikkudiyiruppu hospital during the last few days.

Gathering from what was revealed, I am of the opinion that so many civilians have not been wounded as claimed by the above release. It has been found that the terrorists fight in civil clothes and when they get wounded they can be mistakenly considered as civilians. Furthermore, the terrorists forcibly keeping the civilians as a human shield may result in civilians getting wounded by accident.

I would appeal to the UN agencies and other influential groups to persuade the terrorists to release the civilians from their custody and allow them to get to cleared areas where we have arranged medical services to treat them.



Dr. H.A.P. Kahandaliyanage
Secretary / Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition