

## Weekly Country Report Sri Lanka 25-31 August 2008

This week the air wing of the LTTE conducted an air raid against the base of the Sri Lankan Navy in Trincomalee, eastern Sri Lanka. The Trincomalee base is the main Naval base in the eastern province, and acts as an important point in the supply route to the northern Jaffna peninsula, as the main road supply route has been closed. According to reports, two craft of LTTE's air wing dropped improvised bombs at the Trincomalee naval base at about 9.15p.m. on 26 August 2008.<sup>1</sup> The Sri Lanka Navy website stated that the attack was an abortive one and further stated that the approaching craft had been detected and fired at. However, none of the craft were shot down or intercepted. The website further stated that no damage had been done to any of the naval craft<sup>2</sup> although the bombs are believed to have fallen near the dockyard. The exact casualty figures remain unclear. Several press reports have stated four sailors were killed in the attack while 35 were injured.<sup>3</sup> However the Ministry of Defence has claimed that four sailors were wounded. It is believed that the target of the attack was the Navy's largest troop carrier, Jet Liner, which had come under attack on several occasions in the past. Although initial reports stated two bombs had been dropped, it was later revealed that four had been dropped and that three of the bombs had exploded.<sup>4</sup>

Also this week, a bomb exploded in the capital of Colombo on 30 August. The attack took place in Pettah, a highly populated commercial hub. The bomb is believed to have been concealed in a red satin-covered roadside stall. In total 48 people, including seven women and two children were injured in the attack. The Sri Lankan government accused the LTTE of carrying out the attack. However the group has not claimed responsibility or responded to the allegation.<sup>5</sup>

On 27 August, the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) carried out an air raid against LTTE targets in northern Sri Lanka. According to the Media Centre for National Security, the SLAF carried out two attacks against an LTTE bunker line in Kilinochchi. The attacks were carried out in support of ground troops advancing into LTTE controlled territory.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Sri Lanka's Tiger rebels stage air attack against navy: military" *AFP* 27 August 2008.

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iWAJdVn-SqBwGtHfpYxJSK76AbGA>

<sup>2</sup> "LTTE launches an abortive air attack on the naval dockyard Trincomalee" *Sri Lanka Navy* 26 August 2008. <http://www.navy.lk/index.php?id=955>

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tighe "Sri Lanka Attacks Tamil Tiger base after rebels stage air raid" *Bloomberg* 28 August 2008. [http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601080&sid=a12a\\_L.hKlzk&refer=asia](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601080&sid=a12a_L.hKlzk&refer=asia)

<sup>4</sup> Sunil Jayasiri "Saving Jetliner: Navy's battle to save the troop carrier" *Daily Mirror* 29 August 2008. [http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM\\_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=24677](http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=24677)

<sup>5</sup> "Bomb blast in Sri Lanka capital wounds nearly 50" *AFP* 30 August 2008. [http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5g4eRtceFm2\\_oajJRdKvgLsLISjuw](http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5g4eRtceFm2_oajJRdKvgLsLISjuw)

<sup>6</sup> Paul Tighe "Sri Lanka Attacks Tamil Tiger base after rebels stage air raid" *Bloomberg* 28 August 2008. [http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601080&sid=a12a\\_L.hKlzk&refer=asia](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601080&sid=a12a_L.hKlzk&refer=asia)

Fighting continued in the northern battlefields between security forces and the LTTE. The most significant development in this regard was the security forces advance into LTTE territory in northern Sri Lanka. On 31 August troops of the 57 Division was able to overrun LTTE forward defences in the general area of Mallavi, in the Mullaitivu district. According to the Sri Lankan military, troops have strategically positioned themselves to capture the town of Mallavi. The town which is located along the Vellankulama-Mankulama road linking the Mannar-Pooneryn road and the Kandy-Jaffna road is considered a strategic location for the LTTE. It is also believed that the area had been used to house administrative and logistics activities of the group.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>“Sri Lankan troops enter strategic LTTE town of Mallavi” *Colombo Page* 1 September 2008.  
[http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_08/September152934CH.html](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_08/September152934CH.html)