

# Risk Professional: Tamil Tigers call for ceasefire

In the face of being over-run by government troops (at least, that's what the government says) the Tamil Tigers have decided a truce but not surrender is a good plan. Not everyone agrees.

With everyone from the United Nations down saying that the situation in Sri Lanka cannot go on - refugees are piling up at bottlenecks trying to get out of the warzone - the Tamil Tigers published a unilateral ceasefire yesterday. It asked the government to call off its offensive.

In a war of words, the government says that the Tamil Tigers are holding at least 50,000 Tamils hostage - the Tamil Tigers says it wants them to get out if the government will let them.

But the current view of the government is that it is close to victory and wants to press on. The UN says more than 6,500 civilians have been killed in the most recent fighting. The government is using naval vessels to bombard land positions and to take control of the waters around the northern coast; and it is also using aircraft and rocket attacks to destroy what it says are rebel positions.

But news coming out of Sri Lanka is rather one-sided with the major news agencies taking the Colombo line - in part because they have no access to the north and no reliable information from there.

Coupled with the fact that the Tamil Tigers are a proscribed organisation, it is impossible for journalists to "embed" with them leaving no opportunity for independent verification of either side's claims.