

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:54  
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2000  
SRI LANKAN ETHNIC PROBLEM  
LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY;MADHAVRAO SCINDIA

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the US Under Secretary of State visited New Delhi in May to discuss the situation in Sri Lanka and the role that the two countries could play in ending militancy and restoring peace there;
- (b) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken in pursuance of the decisions taken during the visit;
- (c) the steps taken by the Union Government to evolve a consensus on India's role in the ongoing ethnic strife;
- (d) the details thereof;
- (e) the number of Tamil refugees who reached India following the outbreak of the conflict;
- (f) the steps taken to rehabilitate them including the number, location and capacity of the camps, if any, set up for the purpose;
- (g) the total expenditure incurred on them; and
- (h) the steps taken to check the exodus of Tamil refugees?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a) to (h) A statement is placed on the table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE PLACED ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE IN RESPONSE TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 54 TO BE ANSWERED ON JULY 26, 2000

(a) & (b) Mr. Thomas Pickering, the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, visited New Delhi on May 24-25, 2000 for Foreign Office Consultations and the Asian Security Dialogue with the Foreign Secretary. As part of discussions on regional and international issues, the two sides also reviewed the situation in Sri Lanka.

The two sides expressed their support for the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. They called for a lasting peace and for a political solution by which all communities in Sri Lanka could realise their aspirations.

(c) & (d) The Govt. has been in close consultation with all concerned in this connection. The Prime Minister chaired an inter-party meeting on May 8, 2000.

(e) to (h) Available figures indicate that since the current phase of hostilities broke out in April 2000, 686 refugees have entered India as of June 2000. Most of the refugees have been accommodated in camps, of which there are 129 in Tamil Nadu and one in Orissa.

Facilities provided to the Sri Lankan refugees include shelter in camps, cash doles, clothing, subsidised rations, utensils, educational assistance and medical care. Since July 1983 till March 2000, Government has spent approximately Rs.229 crores for the relief of Sri Lankan refugees.

The movement of refugees from Sri Lanka is reflective of disturbed conditions there resulting in the displacement of people both internally and into India. Government of India have conveyed to the Sri Lankan Government their commitment to the establishment of a lasting peace in Sri Lanka through a peaceful, political settlement which would enable Sri Lankan Tamils and other communities to realize their aspirations in Sri Lanka.