

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:541

ANSWERED ON:03.08.2011

CONDITIONS OF TAMIL REFUGEES IN SRI LANKA

Lingam Shri P.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that thousands of Tamil refugees still staying in refugee camps in Sri Lanka waiting for their rehabilitation;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Union Government has taken up the matter with Sri Lankan Government requesting for proper rehabilitation of the refugees;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Sri Lankan Government thereto;
- (e) whether the Union Government has extended any financial help to the Sri Lankan Government for the rehabilitation of the Tamil Refugees; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the mechanism devised to ensure that this help is used for the above purpose?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) The conclusion of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka left around 3,00,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in camps in Northern Sri Lanka. According to Government of Sri Lanka figures, as of July 2011 around 2,90,000 IDPs had been resettled and around 10,000 IDPs are still in the camps.

(c) & (d) Government of India accords highest priority to the welfare and rehabilitation of IDPs in Northern Sri Lanka. It has held regular discussions with the Government of Sri Lanka, including at the highest levels, on the issue of resettlement of IDPs. In a Joint Press Statement issued on 17 May, 2011 during the visit of Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister to India, the External Affairs Minister of India "urged the expeditious implementation of measures by the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure resettlement and genuine reconciliation, including early return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to their respective homes".

(e) & (f) Government of India has provided extensive assistance to people affected by the conflict. In June, 2009 India announced Rs 500 crores for relief, rehabilitation and resettlement in Sri Lanka. As humanitarian relief assistance, India had dispatched 2.5 lakh family relief packs which were mobilised by the Tamil Nadu Government and deployed an emergency field hospital for six months. India has deployed seven demining teams in Northern Sri Lanka; sent more than 10,400 MT of shelter material; distributed 95,000 agricultural starters packs, gifted seeds and 500 tractors to revive agricultural activities in Northern Sri Lanka; gifted 55 buses to the Northern, Eastern and Central Provinces; conducted an artificial limb fitment camp in Northern Sri Lanka for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and gifted 4 lakh cement bags for resettling IDP families. India has also announced construction of 50,000 houses for the IDPs in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. During his visit to Sri Lanka in November 2010, EAM inaugurated a pilot project for construction of 1000 houses at Ariyalai in Jaffna and also carried out the ground breaking of Medawachchiya railway line restoration project in Northern Sri Lanka, which is being carried out under a Government of India Line of Credit about US \$ 800 million. India is also assisting in the rehabilitation of the Kankesanturai harbour, restoration of Duraiappa stadium, and construction of Cultural Centre at Jaffna and vocational training centre at Batticaloa and Nuwara Eliya.