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Sri Lanka

For an immediate ceasefire in Sri Lanka and recognition of the Tamil right to self-determination

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For several months now, the Sri Lankan government has been waging a broad offensive against the forces of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) – an offensive that has been particularly murderous for people living in the combat zones. Several hundred thousand people have lost their homes and been forced into refugee camps, where they live in extremely precarious conditions.

The government's present objective is to crush the LTTE, but there cannot be a lasting military solution for a conflict whose origins are fundamentally political. Even if the army were to win a major victory on the battlefield, the national question would remain unresolved in a context where Sinhala chauvinist forces and the Sinhala Buddhist far-Right have been continuously growing in strength in recent years.

The Sri Lankan state bears a major historic responsibility for the creation of a situation of endless war, given the consistent denial of the linguistic, cultural, political and national rights of the Tamils. These are the rights that must finally be recognized if there is to be a way out of the crisis.

The NPA calls for:

• The recognition of the Tamil people's right to self-determination by the Sri Lankan government and, in particular, by the French government and the European Union.

• The protection of the civilian population in combat zones.

• Assistance to refugees and, especially, for women and children who live in conditions of tremendous insecurity in the camps.

• An immediate ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations between the government and the LTTE in order to find a political solution to the conflict.