



# ICRC

MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT  
International Committee of the Red Cross  
19, avenue de la Paix  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Phone: +41 22 730 3443  
Fax: +41 22 734 8280  
press.gva@icrc.org  
<http://www.icrc.org>

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### **Sri Lanka: Humanitarian convoy reaches Vakarai**

Colombo/Geneva (ICRC) – A convoy of 35 trucks, organized by the Sri Lankan Department of Essential Services in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations, reached the town of Vakarai in the Batticaloa district of eastern Sri Lanka in the early afternoon (local time) today. The convoy brought 250 MT of food, water and items such as tents, hygiene kits and medicines for distribution to more than 30,000 displaced people who have fled the fighting in the northern part of the district.

"Many difficulties had to be overcome to organize this convoy", said Toon Vandenhove, head of the ICRC delegation in Colombo, "but thanks to meticulous preparation, the security guarantees provided by both parties to the conflict and the active involvement of many people, we finally succeeded in reaching the thousands of displaced people, who are primarily in urgent need of food".

The relief operation received support from volunteers of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society and an Italian Red Cross team, and also from other humanitarian organizations currently operating in the country, including the World Food Programme, UNICEF, UNHCR and World Vision.

The ICRC also provided medical supplies and diesel for the Vakarai hospital's generator, while the Italian Red Cross set up a mobile clinic to treat displaced people spread over several sites.

The ICRC has been working in Sri Lanka since 1989, in particular in the north-east of the country. Its activities include acting as a neutral intermediary, protecting and assisting the civilian population, visiting detainees, restoring contact between members of separated families and promoting international humanitarian law.

**For further information, please contact:**

**Davide Vignati, ICRC Colombo, tel. +94 11 250 33 46 or +94 77 728 96 82**

**Carla Haddad, ICRC Geneva, tel. +41 22 730 24 05 or +41 79 217 32 26**

**or visit our website**