

Rebels ready to implement cease-fire terms

by UPI

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka Tamil Tiger rebels Thursday announced they are ready to implement fully the 2002 cease-fire, although the government has said it will pull out of it. The announcement, available on the group's Web site TamilNet, comes as the Indian Ocean island nation has seen a sharp increase in violence, with the government claiming one major victory after another in its relentless campaign in the Tiger stronghold in the north. A statement issued by B. Nadesan, head of the political wing of the rebels officially known as the LTTE, said the group "wishes to state that even at this juncture, it is ready to implement every clause of the CFA (cease-fire agreement) and respect it 100 percent." The truce was brokered by Norway in February 2002, but both the government and the rebels have been accused of disregarding it several times. Last week, the Sri Lankan government announced it plans to withdraw officially from the agreement in two weeks, after an army bus was reportedly attacked by suspected Tiger rebels. Nadesan's statement accused the Sri Lankan government of "unilaterally" withdrawing from the deal "without any justification." He urged Norway to "continue with its facilitation role with the support of the international community."

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