

War dead remembered

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COLOMBO, SRI LANKA -- Christians in Colombo organized a prayer vigil for "innocent civilians" who died in the country's decades-long civil war between the government and tamil tiger rebels. hundreds of Catholics, Methodists and Anglicans, including clergy and nuns, took part in the May 17 event organized by the christian solidarity movement.

The government declared the 26-year-long civil war over in May 2009, and anniversary celebrations are being held all over the island by the government and some civil groups.

"The government is celebrating its war victory " but it is not concerned about the thousands of innocent Tamils who died," Christian Solidarity Movement member Mahinda Namal told vigil participants.

"That's why we organized this vigil to remember the innocent civilians. They are also our brothers and sisters," Namal said.

At the vigil, a documentary on the life of war victims was screened to help people be aware of the plight of "suffering civilians," said Fr. Bernard Reyhart, parish priest of St. Andrew's Church in the Colombo archdiocese.

The United Nations says it needs \$337 million this year to help people rebuild their homes and livelihoods, and clear areas affected by mines.

Figures recently released by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reveal that nearly 70,000 internally displaced persons from the north still remain in welfare camps. However, over 200,000 have already been resettled.

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