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Headline Archives



A woman fighter of the Tamil Tigers takes a shooting position in Sri Lanka in July 2007. AP Photo.

TAMING THE TAMIL TIGERS

From Here in the U.S.

01/10/08

As terrorist groups go, it has quite a résumé:

- Perfected the use of suicide bombers;
- Invented the suicide belt;
- Pioneered the use of women in suicide attacks;
- Murdered some 4,000 people in the past two years alone; and
- Assassinated two world leaders—the only terrorist organization to do so.

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No, it's not al Qaeda or Hezbollah or even HAMAS. The group is called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) or the Tamil Tigers for short.

Needless to say, the Tamil Tigers are among the most dangerous and deadly extremists in the world. For more than three decades, the group has launched a campaign of violence and bloodshed in Sri Lanka, the island republic off the southern coast of India.



Its ultimate goal: to seize control of the country from the Sinhalese ethnic majority and create an independent Tamil state. Along the way, it has launched suicide attacks, assassinated politicians (including a government minister this week and even the Sri Lankan President), taken hostages, and committed all of kinds of crimes to finance its operations. The resulting civil war has taken the lives of nearly 70,000 Sri Lankans on both sides of the conflict since 1983 alone.

Why should you care? Certainly because of the suffering and bloodshed that the Tamil Tigers have caused. And because its ruthless tactics have

inspired terrorist networks worldwide, including al Qaeda in Iraq. But also because the group has placed operatives right here in our own backyard, discreetly raising money to fund its bloody terrorist campaign overseas, including purchases of weapons and explosives.

The U.S. government has designated the Tigers a foreign terrorist organization, so their activities here are illegal. And we're determined to stop them, using the full range of our investigative and intelligence capabilities.

In April, for example, we struck an important blow when our [Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York](#) arrested the alleged U.S. director of the Tigers. The man supposedly held several fundraising events at a church and various public schools in Queens and in northern New Jersey in 2004. He is also accused of arranging high-level meetings between the group's leaders and U.S. supporters.

We've also arrested another 11 Tamil Tiger-related suspects in the New York City region. And in Baltimore, following a multi-agency investigation, a pair of Indonesian men pled guilty and were sentenced recently for working with others to export surface to air missiles, state-of-the-art firearms, machine guns, and night vision goggles to the Tigers in Sri Lanka.

For More Information on Our Cases

- [January sentencing in Baltimore](#)
- [December sentencing in Baltimore](#)
- [April arrest in New York](#)
- [February Baltimore guilty plea](#)

You can help by being careful with your donations. Like other terrorists, the Tigers have raised funds under a variety of cover organizations, often by posing as charities. A great deal of money, for example, was raised for the Tigers following the 2004 tsunami that devastated Sri Lanka and many other countries.

And please report any suspicious activities to [your local field office](#) or [anonymously through this website](#).

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