Highlights

• On Easter Sunday, 21 April, 2019, eight coordinated explosions were reported in the capital city of Colombo and the cities of Negombo and Batticaloa, targeting churches and high-end hotels.

• The explosions in the morning hours targeted St. Antony’s Shrine, Colombo City; St. Sebastian’s Church in Katuwapitiya, Negombo city (Gampaha District); and Zion Church, in Batticaloa city (Batticaloa District); when worshippers had gathered for Easter services. Another three explosions targeted the Shangri-La, Kingsbury and Cinnamon Grand hotels in Colombo, detonated in restaurants during Easter breakfast. Initial reports indicate some blasts were carried out by suicide bombers. Later in the day, the police carried out two raids, one in Dehiwala, southern Colombo, and another at an apartment in Dematagoda, northern Colombo. Explosions occurred in both locations, resulting in the death of three officers. Security personnel identified a pipe bomb near the Bandaranaike International Airport of Colombo and detonated it in controlled manner.

• According to the latest available data, 321 people have been killed during the attacks, while more than 500 people injured, 375 of them still receiving treatment in Government hospitals. Scores of children were killed and injured as families gathered in churches and restaurants to celebrate Easter festivities. A total of 38 foreigners are reported among the dead.

• While data about children is still coming in, Government has confirmed 45 children were killed in the attacks. In Batticaloa alone, 13 children were killed, the youngest being just 18 months old. At least five children were foreign nationals, according to government reports. Data about children impacted in Colombo is still coming in.

• As of now, according to reports, 45 children have been admitted to hospitals with injuries; scores of them in intensive care units. There are reports of many children separated from their families. Some children have lost either both or one of the parents.

• In response, Government has closed all schools until 29 April; announced curfew restricting movement of civilians at night; declared partial state of emergency; and restricted access to major social media sites. Government announced cash assistance to all impacted families. Police arrested 40 individuals in connection with the attacks, but as yet no further information is available regarding the motive and identities of the individuals.

• The Government declared 23 April a National Day of Mourning.

April 23, 2019

321
Estimated number of people killed, including children (45 children).

500
Total number of people and children injured during the attacks and need assistance.

(Source: Government of Sri Lanka, April 23, 2019)
Situation Overview

The attacks come at a very sensitive time for Sri Lanka, during ongoing processes of national reconciliation and transitional justice in the aftermath of more than two decades long civil war, during which 70,000 to 80,000 people are reported to have been killed. Sunday’s attacks were the deadliest since the end of the civil war, in 2009. Some sporadic violence has occurred in the interim, in particular, in March 2018 when a state of emergency was declared after members of the majority Buddhist Sinhala community attacked mosques and Muslim-owned properties.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

The Government of Sri Lanka has not yet formally requested UN’s assistance, however local authorities have reported challenges in providing medical assistance to the injured and psycho-social support to families of dead and witnesses.

The Ministry of Health provides all medical assistance to the injured, while the Child Care Services Department provides services to separate and unaccompanied children. As of now, UNICEF has identified below needs:
- Many children have been admitted to hospitals in Batticaloa, Negombo and Colombo and local hospital staff have reported shortage of some essential medical supplies.
- Scores of children have been separated from parents and the probation services need support in identifying relatives and connecting children back to their families. Some children have lost their parents and will need permanent placements. Data is being generated for more detailed picture.
- Psychological first aid, psycho-social support and counselling have been identified as major needs; given the extremely limited capacity of government services, there is a need to obtain this service from third party organizations.

UNICEF Sri Lanka has already allocated USD 10,000 to meet immediate medical and child protection needs of the affected population. UNICEF provides support to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Ministry of Health in coordinating the data collection and response and to ensure that children and adolescents are prioritized in this response.

Funding Requirements

As of April 23, UNICEF Sri Lanka needs about $75,000 to immediately implement emergency response programme to respond to below identified immediate needs.
- $40,000 is urgently needed to meet the shortage of medical supplies as requested by the hospitals treating injured children and families.
- $10,000 is needed to support psychological first aid programme targeting adolescents and families who have lost a family member or witnessed violence.
- $20,000 is needed to provide long-term of psycho-social support and counselling services by Government and other service providers.
- $5,000 is needed to support Probation Services to identify and provide meaningful support to unaccompanied, separated children and children who have lost parents.

Next SitRep: 24/04/2019

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