SRI LANKA SITUATION REPORT

April 22, 2019

Highlights

- On April 21, 2019 on Sunday Easter day, 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 targeted three churches in Negombo, Batticaloa and Colombo’s Kochchikade district in the morning hours, when worshippers were gathered for Easter services. Another three explosions targeted the Shangri-La, Kingsbury and Cinnamon Grand hotels in Colombo, detonated in restaurants during breakfast. The blasts were carried out by suicide bombers. Later in the day, the police carried out two raids, one in Dehiwala, southern Colombo, and the other at an apartment near the Colombo district of Dematagoda and explosions occurred in both those locations, resulting in the death of three officers. Security personnel also identified a pipe bomb near the Bandaranaike International Airport of Colombo and detonated it in a controlled manner.
- According to the latest available data, 290 people have been killed during the attacks, while about 500 people injured. Among them, scores of children were killed and injured as families gathered in churches and restaurants to celebrate Easter festivities. A total of 37 foreigners are reported among the dead.
- While data about children is still coming in, Government has confirmed in Batticaloa alone, 13 children were killed, the youngest being just 18 months old, while 15 children and adolescents were injured, aged 7-16. At least three of the children were killed were foreign nationals, according to media. 20 children have been admitted to a hospital in Colombo, four of them in intensive care unit. The information about impacted children from other locations is being collected by the authorities. 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 for two days; announced curfew restricting movement of civilians at night; and restricted access to major social media sites. Police arrested 24 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 April 23 a National Day of Mourning.

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290
Estimated number of people killed, including children (more than 13 children killed in Batticaloa alone).

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

(Source: Government of Sri Lanka, April 22, 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 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.
- Psycho-social support and counselling have been identified as a major need; given extremely limited capacity of the government services, there is a need to obtain this service from professionals who are not employed by the Government.

UNICEF works with the Government partners to collect reliable information about the situation of children and adolescents impacted by the attacks. UNICEF Sri Lanka 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

UNICEF Sri Lanka needs funding to immediately implement emergency response activities to respond to the above identified immediate needs. Once more data is available, funding needs will be further developed.

Next SitRep: 23/04/2019

UNICEF Sri Lanka: https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/

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