

# Ceasefire in Sri Lanka

*Rebel leader greets president's inauguration with a unilateral announcement*

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COLOMBO, Sri Lanka - The leader of the Tamil Tiger rebels announced a unilateral ceasefire hours after the inauguration of Sri Lanka's new president.

In a message broadcast Saturday over the Tigers' clandestine radio station, rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran said the guerrillas should retaliate only if attacked, military intelligence officials said.

More than 34,000 people have been killed in the Tamil Tigers' 11-year war for a separate state in the north and east of this island off the tip of India. Tamils, who make up about 3 million of the country's 17 million people, accuse the majority

Sinhalese of discrimination.

Chandrika Kumaratunga, the former prime minister, won Wednesday's election with 62 per cent of the vote on a pledge to end the rebel war.

"We will continue our quest for peace, recognizing that the path is a difficult and tortuous one," Kumaratunga said after taking the oath of office on Saturday.

Kumaratunga's main opponent, Gamini Dissanayake, was killed along with 56 others on Oct. 24 by a suicide bomber suspected of being a Tamil rebel. Peace talks with the rebels were suspended then.

Dissanayake's wife, Srima, took his place but finished far behind Kumaratunga in the voting.

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