

Tamil Tigers call truce

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — 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 won Wednesday's election with 62% 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.