

30 troops, 40 Tamil rebels reported killed in clashes. (1995, October 30) *The Gazette*.

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COLOMBO, Sri Lanka – Thousands of Sri Lankan troops advanced on the rebel stronghold of Jaffna city yesterday and at least 30 soldiers and 40 guerrillas were killed in fierce fighting, the military said.

Heavy civilian casualties were also feared as the military offensive to capture Jaffna entered its 13th day.

The advancing columns were eight kilometres from the city.

More than 300,000 civilians fled their homes as the military shelled the area, a Roman Catholic priest

in the war zone said yesterday.

Priests accused the army of bulldozing houses and fields in newly captured areas, and urged diplomats and human-rights groups to press the government to halt the offensive.

The military says at least 159 soldiers and 500 rebels have died in the largest offensive since Tamils began their war for an independent homeland in the north and the east in 1983.

More than 37,000 people have died.

The rebels accuse Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority of discriminating against Tamils.