

**Vavuniya is almost completely deserted. (1999, November 11). *The Tamil net.***

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**Vavuniya is almost completely deserted, the last few traders to leave the northern town told TamilNet today when contacted by telephone. They said they would be leaving shortly for safe areas designated by the Liberation Tigers.**

The traders said the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) fired artillery from their bases in the town, and Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) planes were observed.

Meanwhile an official of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) told TamilNet "We are still in Vavuniya, monitoring the situation."

"We are urging both parties to be conscious of the security of the civilians," he added.

Similarly, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) staff are in the town, also, monitoring developments, they said.

People have been leaving Vavuniya in thousands from about noon yesterday, following the announcements by the Liberation Tigers that residents should move to designated safe areas ahead of a possible LTTE assault on the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) garrison town.

The Voice of Tigers (VoT) radio in a broadcast in Tamil and Sinhala has been repeatedly advising civilians in Vavuniya town, Pandarikulam, Katkuli, Thekkangadu, Thonikkal, Vairavapuliankulam, Paddanichchi, Puliyanikulam, Veppankulam, Nelukulam and Thandikulam to go to Rajendramkulam area and the people of Kovilkulam, Moonrumurippu, Samalakulam, Maruthankulam, Iratperiyakulam and Sinnaputhukulam to Asikulam area.

The VoT further said that this action has been taken to safeguard the people of these villages as they live close to the SLA camps in these areas.

Meanwhile, the Liberation Tigers have asked civilians not to travel by aircraft belonging to the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), which ply to and from Jaffna.

Consequent to this statement, Jaffna residents have been cancelling their advanced bookings, sources said.