

Mexico says statement by Lanka "not accurate"
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Mexican Ambassador to the UN Claude Heller, who holds the presidency of the UN Security Council in April, told reporters yesterday a statement issued by the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry regarding talks between Sri Lanka and Mexico last week was "not accurate".

"It is not an accurate statement," Ambassador Heller said when asked to comment on the statement. "We were very clear that in the case of Sri Lanka there is a concern of the **responsibility to protect the population**

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The Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry Statement:

Following talks in Mexico City between Foreign Secretary, Dr Palitha Kohona and senior Mexican government officials, including Vice Minister Gomez-Robledo, Mexico has reassured Sri Lanka of its firm support at international fora, including the UN Security Council. Mexico is holding the presidency of the Security Council in April.

Mexico confirmed that they do not have any intention of permitting the Sri Lankan situation to be placed on the Security Council agenda, as it does not pose a threat to international peace and security.

Dr Kohona explained how the LTTE had cleverly 'herded' thousands of civilians into the tiny no-fire-zone in the north east of Sri Lanka, while pulling back its combatants and weapons also into it with the intention of sheltering behind this human shield and using these thousands of human hostages to save itself. He repeated the call of the Government to the LTTE to let these hostages go (which will automatically result in a cessation of hostilities) and lay down their weapons for the sake of the civilians. ()

Mexico also expressed its appreciation of the large quantities of food and medical relief supplies being sent by the Government to the people held hostage by the LTTE with the assistance of the UN and the ICRC. ()

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