

Sri Lankan military court jails 305 army deserters

Sri Lanka's military court Tuesday jailed 305 army deserters for failing to respond to the general amnesty offered by the military since May.

'Sri Lankan Army's Courts Martial, following imposition of punishment on 106 convicted army deserters, have handed them over to the Welikada Prisons Headquarters Tuesday for imprisonment. One more batch of 199 convicted army deserters are also scheduled to be handed for imprisonment on Wednesday upon completion of their legal proceedings,' the military said in a statement here.

These deserters were arrested by the Military Police and respective police stations in the recent past as part of a crackdown on army deserters for their failure to honour the general amnesty.

The convicts would serve a jail sentence between three months and one year 'in accordance with respective rulings determined, based on the periods of desertion'.

'At present, several hundreds of such deserters are scheduled to be tried by Courts Martial in the next few weeks,' the military statement said.

It, however, said that over 7,500 army deserters have made use of the general amnesty and surrendered to the army in May and June alone.

The Sri Lankan Army is carrying out an onslaught against Tamil Tigers in the war-torn north over the past one year.

Defence authorities Tuesday said the advancing troops had captured yet another 'strategic bastion' from the rebels in the northern Wanni region amid fierce resistance.

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