

10 killed in Sri Lanka clashes

At least 10 people including nine Tamil Tiger rebels and one soldier were killed in separate clashes between the troops and the rebels in northern Sri Lanka, the military said Wednesday.

The Media Centre for National Security said in a statement that the exchange of fire erupted between government troops and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) after the rebels launched a mortar attack against the troops in Vilaththikulam in northern Vavuniya district Tuesday.

Three LTTE rebels were killed and five others injured in the fighting while one soldier was killed and two others were wounded.

An hour later, rebels attempted to mount another attack in the same area and were thwarted by the Army, the statement said, adding that three rebels were killed in the battle.

Also in Vavuniya, three rebels were killed in a confrontation with the troops in Thampane.

Clashes between LTTE rebels and government troops have been common in northern Sri Lanka since mid-September.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority, the LTTE has been fighting the government since the mid-1980s to establish a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east of the island.

More than 5,000 people have been killed in the new wave of violence since the end of the Norwegian brokered ceasefire agreement in 2005.

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