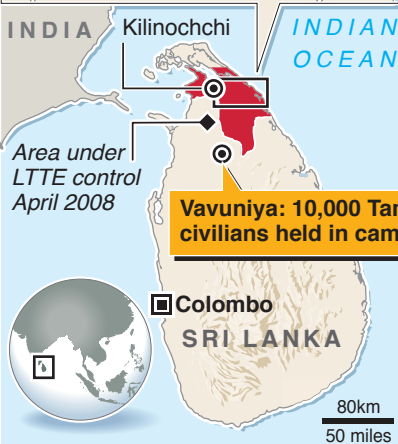
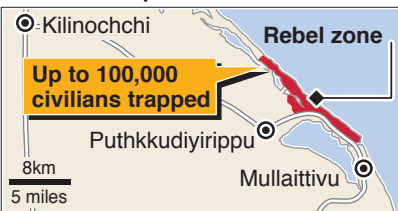


Key dates in Sri Lanka's civil war

The Sri Lankan government has given the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) a 24-hour deadline to surrender or face a final assault to end Asia's longest-running civil war. Over 200 hardcore fighters – including leader Velupillai Prabhakaran – are holed up deep inside the rebel zone



■ **1956:** Minority Tamils marginalized after government makes Sinhala the language of state

■ **1976:** Rebel LTTE formed by **Velupillai Prabhakaran** to fight for separate Tamil state in north-east of island



■ **1987:** India deploys peace-keepers to Tamil areas but they leave in 1990

■ **1993:** President **Ranasinghe Premadasa** assassinated by LTTE suicide bomber in Colombo

■ **2002:** Government and rebels sign Norwegian-brokered ceasefire

■ **2005:** **Mahinda Rajapaksa** elected president

■ **2006:** LTTE resumes attacks

■ **2008:** Government annuls ceasefire

■ **2009:** Army takes main rebel bases of Kilinochchi and Mullaittivu