

Remembering our past: a year on



In the early months of 2009, Tamils were being displaced from their homes as they fled the advancing Sri Lankan military forces that were targeting civilian settlements. The mass exodus of more than 300,000 people was downplayed by the Sri Lankan government and international agencies who claimed that there were only 70,000 civilians caught in the fighting. Former UN official Gordon Weiss has now admitted that Sri Lanka deliberately lied about the figures. "The Sri Lankan government said many things which were either intentionally misleading, or were lies", Weiss told an ABC interview. Weiss says that after the war ended, a senior civil servant openly admitted that the authorities had deliberately underestimated the number of trapped civilians "as a ploy to allow the government to get on with its business." International agencies, who had no representatives in the war zone because the government had ordered them out, merely repeated the government's statistics.

File photo