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### PUBLIC STATEMENT

#### *Sri Lanka: Amnesty International condemns Vavuniya bombing*

*Amnesty International today condemned the bombing of the main post office in Vavuniya, northern Sri Lanka, in which at least 11 people were killed, including several civilians, and over 70 people injured, many of them seriously. The majority of those injured were civilians.*

*The bomb attack, which comes in the aftermath of a number of suicide bomb attacks in Colombo in the last two months, is widely believed to have been carried out by members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).*

*The parcel bomb, which had been placed on the counter along with outgoing mail, appeared to have been targeted at security forces personnel and police who regularly use the post office to send money home to their families.*

However, Amnesty International pointed out that by choosing a post-office as its target, the LTTE appeared to have contravened the principle of distinction in international humanitarian law.

This principle obliges all parties to a conflict to take all measures to distinguish between civilian and military targets and direct their attacks only at military objectives, which should apply under all circumstances.

*"The risk to civilians in this attack far outweighed any military objective as the casualty list so tragically shows," Amnesty International said.*

*At least 25 civilians were killed by suicide bombers at election rallies in Colombo, just days before presidential elections took place on 21 December. Dozens of people were injured in the attacks, including President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and four ministers.*

*Furthermore, a suspected LTTE suicide bomber blew herself up outside the office of the Prime Minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, on 5 January, killing 12 people and injuring numerous civilians.*

*ENDS.../*