

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Extrajudicial executions

28 April 1992

SRI LANKA:

Thambimuttu Suppiah
P Karunayamma - female
Suppiah Kopalan
Suppiah Saroja - female child
Suppiah Sasikala - female child
Suppiah Rajanayakam - child
Suppiah Neela - child
Vadivel - female

On 14 April 1992, around 2 p.m., a group of army personnel accompanied by members of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), an armed group working in conjunction with the military, reportedly killed deliberately all the members of the family of Thambimuttu Suppiah, his wife and five children, and a neighbour present in their house at Mandur, Batticaloa district.

The eight civilians were allegedly killed in reprisal for the killing earlier that day of two members of TELO by members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who had been lying in ambush near the house of the above family. Witnesses allege that other TELO members returned to the spot about one hour later after the killing of their two members, accompanied by army personnel, and entered the family's house. The witnesses said they heard shots. Later, the bodies of the victims were found with bullet wounds. It was also alleged that some of them had stab wounds. The bodies were taken to Batticaloa hospital, where a post mortem was carried out. The victims have since reportedly been buried.

Several newspapers, including The Island and the Daily News, carried articles the next day suggesting that seven civilians had been killed in a crossfire at Mandur, Batticaloa district.

Amnesty International is calling upon the government to establish a full and impartial investigation into this incident and to bring to justice those found responsible.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The armed conflict between the security forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which resumed in June 1990, continues throughout the northeast of Sri Lanka. In the Batticaloa district in the east, the fighting has been restricted mainly to the rural areas. The LTTE has established camps in the jungle, from where it occasionally launches attacks on the security forces and Tamil armed groups cooperating with them.

The Sri Lankan press regularly carries articles referring to the killing of civilians in crossfire between the security forces and its allies, and the

LTTE. It is often impossible for observers to ascertain the exact circumstances of these killings. The details provided by the witnesses to the above incident, however, suggest that the members of this family and their neighbour were deliberately killed in an apparent reprisal for the killing of two members of TELO near their home.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern about reports of the extrajudicial killing of Thambimuttu Suppiah, his wife and five children and their neighbour on 14 April 1992 at Mandur, Batticaloa district in apparent reprisal for the killing of two members of TELO by the LTTE;

- urging the government to institute an independent and impartial inquiry into their killing, and to bring to justice those found responsible;

- urging that all possible steps be taken to halt extrajudicial killings by the security forces and armed groups working in conjunction with them.

APPEALS TO:

1. Major General Cecil Waidyaratne
General Commanding Officer
Army Headquarters
Flower Road
Colombo 7
Sri Lanka

**Telegrams: Major General Waidyaratne, Army Headquarters
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Telexes: 22496 AYCMDC SL; 22460

[Salutation: Dear Major General]

2. His Excellency President Ranasinghe Premadasa
Presidential Secretariat
Republic Square
Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

**Telegrams: President Premadasa, Colombo
Sri Lanka**

Telexes: 22650 PRESEC CE

Faxes: + 94 1 44 6657

[Salutation: Dear President]

3. The Hon D B Wijetunga
Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Republic Square
Colombo 2, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Telexes: 22229 MINDEF CE

Faxes: + 94 1 44 6091

[Salutation: Dear Prime Minister]

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: diplomatic representatives of Sri Lanka in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 June 1992.