

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 121/95 Deliberate and arbitrary killings / Fear of further killings

26 May 1995

SRI LANKA 42 villagers of Kallarawa, Trincomalee

During the night of 25/26 May 1995, members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) killed at least 42 Sinhalese civilians at Kallarawa, a small fishing hamlet 20 miles north of Trincomalee town in the east of Sri Lanka. Amnesty International fears that the massacre may mark the beginning of renewed LTTE attacks against unarmed civilians.

According to survivors, between 200 and 300 members of the LTTE approached Kallarawa around 9.30pm on 25 May. They first attacked a small local army camp situated in the hamlet. However, the army camp was deserted as the 55 soldiers present had reportedly gone out on operations. One survivor reported that the LTTE members then walked into the village and knocked on doors. When people came out, they were shot at close range. Among those killed are at least 12 women and six children. The attack lasted all night. At the end of it, LTTE members reportedly ransacked the houses and set them on fire.

The attack follows LTTE's call on 18 April for an end to a cessation of hostilities agreement reached with the government of Sri Lanka on 8 January 1995. Since then, there have been daily reports of fighting between the security forces and the LTTE. The attack on Kallarawa is the first involving what appears to be the deliberate targeting of civilians since the resumption of hostilities.

Amnesty International's concern that the massacre at Kallarawa may mark the beginning of renewed attacks on unarmed civilians has been heightened by another report on 26 May that LTTE members killed a Buddhist priest known for his stand against them. He was killed while driving into the compound of the temple's farm at Dimbulagala in Polonnarua District.

As yet, the LTTE has not issued any statement about the attack on Kallarawa. A spokesperson at its international secretariat in London stated that no information had been received from its leadership in Sri Lanka.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The LTTE is the main Tamil armed opposition group fighting for a separate state in the northeast of Sri Lanka since the late 1970s. It effectively controls parts of the area.

In the past, the LTTE has been responsible for deliberate attacks on civilian members of the Sinhalese and Muslim community. In early August 1990, it was held responsible for the killing of 103 Muslim worshippers inside two mosques at Kattankudy in the east. In total, hundreds of Sinhalese and Muslim villagers have been killed by the LTTE. Sometimes, the LTTE has claimed responsibility for such killings. On other occasions, LTTE spokespersons abroad have issued statements denying they were involved in the killings.

Amnesty International has repeatedly appealed to the LTTE to immediately halt the deliberate and arbitrary killing of non-combatant civilians, including the killing of people apparently targeted solely by reason of their ethnic origin.

The deliberate and arbitrary killing of unarmed civilians is in clear contravention of common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which prohibits "violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds" against detainees and other persons taking no active part in hostilities.

In February 1988, the LTTE issued a press release declaring its intention to instruct its members of the importance of acting, at all times, in accordance with humanitarian law.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- expressing deep concern about reports that members of the LTTE appear to have deliberately killed 42 Sinhalese civilians at Kallarawa near Trincomalee on 26 May;
- appealing for an immediate halt to deliberate and arbitrary killings of non-combatant civilians;
- urging that all LTTE members are instructed to abide at all times by international humanitarian law standards;
- requesting that Amnesty International's appeals be conveyed to the LTTE leadership in Sri Lanka.

APPEALS TO

Please organize appeals to the first two listed and then as many as you are able in approximately equal numbers to the following addresses.

Lawrence Thilakar
 Member of Central Committee
 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
 International Secretariat
 211, Katherine Road
 London E6 1BU, United Kingdom
Faxes: * 44 181 470 8593
Telegrams: Mr Thilakar, 211 Katherine Road, London E6, UK
Salutation: Dear Mr Thilakar

Tamil Co-ordinating Committee
 341, rue des Pyrenees
 75020 Paris, France
Faxes: * 33 1 435 81191
Telegrams: Tamil Committee, 341 rue des Pyrenees, 75020 Paris, France
Salutation: Dear Sir/Madam

*** Salutation for others: Dear Sir/Madam**

World Tamil Movement
 64, Eaton Avenue
 Toronto, Ontario
 M4J 2Z5, Canada
Telephone: * 1416 461 5991
Faxes: * 1416 462 9302
Telegrams: World Tamil Movement, 64 Eaton Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

World Tamil Coordinating Council
 Gold Gasse - 8
 7000 Chur, Switzerland

Telephone: * 41 77 816609

Telegrams: WTCC, Gold Gasse 8, 7000 Chur, Switzerland

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
P.O. Box 47
7600 Struer, Denmark

Tamil Coordinating Committee
P.O. Box 1699 Vika
0110 Oslo 1, Norway
Faxes: * 47 22 190 114

Tamil Coordinating Committee
P.O. Box 694, Mulgrave North
Victoria 3170
Australia

Tamil Confederation - Germany
P.O. Box 340251
5270 Gummersbach 34, Germany

Tamil Coordinating Committee
Broot Hartogevenlaan 106
2517 BL Den Haag
The Netherlands

COPIES TO: other Tamil organizations in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 July 1995.