

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Advisory

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Amnesty International to visit Sri Lanka

An Amnesty International delegation will visit Sri Lanka from 16 - 30 June to lobby for human rights protection to be put at the centre of peace negotiations. The delegates will meet both the government and, for the first time, the leadership of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

They will travel to the Vanni to meet with the LTTE leadership during the first week and then return to Colombo to hold meetings with the new Sri Lankan government. The delegates will also meet with local human rights organizations, peace movements and the business community.

"Human rights protection has taken a back seat to hostilities over the past 19-years. However, the current ceasefire and imminent peace talks offer both sides a real opportunity to put human rights squarely on the agenda," Amnesty International's Sri Lanka Researcher, Ingrid Massage, said. "Security and peace depend on it."

The delegation will also take the opportunity to raise specific concerns with both parties. Among the issues to be raised with the government will be; impunity, the death penalty, women's rights, review of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the rights of refugees and internally displaced people. With the LTTE leaders, the delegation will discuss reports of the recruitment of child soldiers, the return to their families, and rehabilitation; as well as the return of internally displaced Muslims (who were forced to leave their homes by the LTTE in 1990), and other issues.

Amnesty International will hold a press conference to report on these meetings:

11 am Saturday 29 June 2002
Renuka Hotel
328 Galle Road, Colombo 3
Tel: + 94 1 573 598.

Delegates:

Derek Evans, former Deputy Secretary General of Amnesty International who is currently working in the areas of leadership development, reconciliation and conflict resolution.

Claude Bruederlein, former ICRC delegate and adviser to the UN on humanitarian affairs who is currently Program Director at the Harvard School of Public Health and Lecturer at the Harvard Law School.

Ingrid Massage, Researcher on Sri Lanka at Amnesty International's International Secretariat.

For more information contact the Press Officer on the delegation, Maya Catsanis, on +44 207 413 5729

or mobile phone +44 7778 472 173, or email mcatsani@amnesty.org

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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