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## **Sri Lanka: Amnesty International appalled at LTTE attack on civilians**

In a message to representatives of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) abroad, Amnesty International today condemned the killing of 10 civilians in yesterday's attack on the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy.

“The deliberate killings of civilians by armed opposition groups are human rights abuses which cannot be tolerated under any circumstances,” Amnesty International said today.

Three members of the LTTE drove a truck laden with explosives through roadblocks and detonated it in front of the temple just after 6am on Sunday. The victims are reportedly all pilgrims who were on their way to worship at the temple, containing a relic of a tooth of Buddha. Among them are five members of one family from Embilipitiya, Ratnapura district, including a two-year-old and a seven-year-old child.

Amnesty International is concerned that the attack flouts the principle of distinction set out in international humanitarian standards which govern the conduct of hostilities. According to this principle, armed forces of all sides to a conflict must at all times distinguish between civilian and military targets and must not target civilians.

The organization reiterated its call to the LTTE to ensure that its forces abide by basic principles of international humanitarian law, in particular, common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II.

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