

19 February 1996

Further information (1) on UA 35/96 (ASA 37/04/96, 13 February 1996) -  
Extrajudicial Executions / Fear of Further Killings

## SRI LANKA Stephen Padhini (f)

Sundaralingam Lakshmi (f)  
Sivapackiam Prasanthini (f)  
Thangavel Kaladevi (f)  
Arunasalam Kamaladevi (f)  
Ananthan Annama (f)  
Sundaralingam Sabashini (f)  
Amirthalingam Rajinikanthi (f)  
Packiyarajah Vasanthini (f)  
Subramaniam Packiyam (f)  
Alaguthurai Parames (f)  
Valipillai Devi (f)  
Arumaithurai Thanalakshmi (f), aged 17  
Tellathurai Packiyarajah  
Vinayagamoorthy Sutha  
Vadivel Nadarajah  
Suppiah Sedurajah  
Kanagarajah Suvathirajah  
Sundaralingam Prabhakaran  
Kovindan  
Thurairajah Karunakaran  
Sivakolunthu Thinathurai  
Ramajeyam Kamaleswaran  
Shanmuganathan Ithakaran

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A statement has been issued by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence expressing "deep shock and concern" at the reported extrajudicial execution of 24 civilians at Kumarapuram, Trincomalee district on 11 February 1996.

According to the statement, police investigations into the incident are in progress and "some military personnel" have been placed under military custody. The statement continues that "*[i]f military personnel are found to be involved in this incident, action will be taken to charge them according to the laws applicable to every citizen of Sri Lanka.*"

A senior army officer is presiding over a court of inquiry to investigate and report on the killings. The statement also stresses that the "*most severe disciplinary action will be taken against any military personnel found to be involved in the said incident*". It ends by stating: "*The Government of Sri Lanka will under no circumstances condone any indisciplined behaviour on the parts of its armed forces.*"

Amnesty International welcomes the Government of Sri Lanka's public condemnation of these killings. However, the organization is still concerned that the various inquiries are being carried out by members of the security forces. To entrust these investigations in the first instance to the security forces some of whose members are thought to be responsible for these human rights violations could, in Amnesty International's view, jeopardize their outcome. For instance, eye-witnesses could withhold information about the circumstances of the killings during the police or army investigations because of fears of reprisals. Amnesty International therefore reiterates its appeal

for speedy, impartial and independent investigation into the killings at Kumarapuram to be established forthwith. It also urges that if members of the security forces are found responsible for the killings that they be charged and tried in civilian, rather than military, courts.

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

- welcoming the statement issued by the Ministry of Defence condemning the reported extrajudicial executions of 24 villagers at Kumarapuram;
- urging that a speedy, impartial and independent investigation under a civilian authority be established forthwith;
- urging that those responsible will be brought to justice in civilian courts.

**APPEALS TO:**

Her Excellency President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga  
Presidential Residence  
"Temple Trees"  
Colombo 3, Sri Lanka  
**Faxes: + 94 1 33 37 03**  
**Telegrams: President Kumaratunga, Colombo, Sri Lanka**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

The Hon (General) Anuruddha Ratwatte  
Deputy Minister of Defence  
Ministry of Defence  
15/5 Baladaksha Mawatha  
Colombo 3, Sri Lanka  
**Faxes: + 94 1 54 15 29 or 68 77 68**  
**Telegrams: Deputy Defence Minister, Colombo, Sri Lanka**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Lt-General Gerry de Silva  
Army Commander  
Army Headquarters  
Flagstaff Street  
Colombo 1, Sri Lanka  
**Telegrams: Army Commander, Colombo, Sri Lanka**  
**Salutation: Dear Army Commander**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Sri Lanka accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 April 1996.