

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 37/11/96

UA 143/96

Deliberate and Arbitrary killings  
/ Fear of Further Killings

13 June 1996

SRI LANKAVinoris Silva  
Benedict Perera  
Renuka Dhamayanthi (f)  
Ranil Krishantha (10)  
Warnakulasuriyage Dinesh  
Tennakoon Arachige Marie Teresa (f)  
Liyanage Lalith Chaminda  
Liyanage Lalith Manchula (3)  
Tennakoon Arachige Nicolas Appuhamy  
Jayakody Arachige Marie Josephine (f)  
Gamage Sandya Malkanthi Perera (15)  
Gamage Tilini Perera (f) (13)  
and two others (unnamed)

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Members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are reported to have deliberately killed 14 Sinhalese civilians, including five women and four children, in the early hours of 11 June at Aruvakalu, north of Puttalam town on the west coast, near the border with the Northern Province.

According to survivors, approximately 30 members of the LTTE armed with guns and machetes attacked the village. One survivor said that about fifteen LTTE members entered the house of his family shortly after midnight. They blindfolded nine people and tied their hands behind their back. They then attacked them with machetes and shot them. One of the victims managed to escape. He reported how the house with eight bodies inside was later set on fire.

Six other villagers were reportedly dragged into the nearby jungle and hacked to death there. Some of their bodies are also said to have gunshot wounds.

According to survivors interviewed by journalists and others visiting the area, the villagers sought help at a police post in a nearby village but the police did not intervene. Soldiers at two army detachments nearby did not come to the village either until hours after the attack.

Amnesty International is once again concerned that Sinhalese civilians appear to have been deliberately and arbitrarily killed solely on the basis of their ethnicity in direct violation of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. It presses upon the LTTE that it is an essential obligation under humanitarian law to at all times maintain the distinction between the civilian population and combatants, and that in case of doubt regarding the status of any individual, he or she should be presumed to be a civilian.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has repeatedly appealed to both the LTTE and to the Government of Sri Lanka to avoid deliberate and arbitrary killings in the context of the ongoing armed conflict in the north and east of the country. In a statement issued in July 1995 in response to earlier appeals by members of Amnesty International calling for an immediate halt to such killings, the LTTE argued that such killings could be justified under international humanitarian law because Sinhalese villagers in those areas were considered by the LTTE to be actively taking part in the conflict between the Sri Lankan

security forces and the LTTE because they were part of the Sri Lankan Government's "war for land" in the north and east.

Amnesty International issued a public response (see *Sri Lanka: Correspondence with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on Human Rights Abuses*, ASA 37/18/95, September 1995) stating that, because there were no reports of any of the villagers having used arms prior to or at the time of the attack by the LTTE, they could not be considered to be legitimate targets under international humanitarian law. In the incident described above, there is no evidence to suggest that any of the victims could be considered combatants.

In a meeting with representatives of the LTTE abroad on 11 June, Amnesty International raised concerns about continuing reports of killing of civilians and the killings at Aruvakalu in particular. The representatives stated that it was not a policy of the LTTE to kill civilians. Amnesty International has urged the LTTE leadership to make a clear statement condemning and prohibiting the deliberate and arbitrary killing of civilians.

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

- expressing deep concern about the deliberate and arbitrary killing of 14 civilians at Aruvakula, Puttalam district on 11 June;
- urging that responsibility for these killings be fully determined and that appropriate preventive action is taken to ensure that those responsible do not continue to commit similar abuses;
- urging that a clear statement condemning and prohibiting the deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians is issued;
- requesting a response to Amnesty International's appeals from 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**

World Tamil Movement  
 64, Eaton Avenue  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 M4J 2Z5, Canada

**Faxes: + 1416 462 9302**

**Telegrams: World Tamil Movement, 64 Eaton Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

World Tamil Coordinating Council

Gold Gasse - 8

7000 Chur, Switzerland

**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

Groot Hertoginnelaan 106

2517 EL Den Haag

The Netherlands

**COPIES TO:**

- other Tamil organizations in your country
- 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 24 July 1996.