

AI INDEX: ASA 37/31/99

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### **Sri Lanka: Amnesty International condemns attack on political rallies**

Amnesty International condemned last Saturday's attacks on two political rallies in and near Colombo in which at least 25 civilians were killed. The rallies were being held at the close of the campaigning in presidential elections scheduled for tomorrow, 21 December. The attacks happened within hours of each other.

The attack on a rally organized by the People's Alliance killed at least 14 civilians and injured numerous others, including President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and four ministers. It was reported to have been carried out by a female suicide bomber suspected of being a member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the main armed opposition group fighting for an independent state in the north and east of the country.

In the other attack, a bomb was thrown at a rally organized by the United National Party in which at least 11 civilians were killed. The attack was also suspected to have been carried out by the LTTE.

Amnesty International opposes killings by armed opposition groups which violate fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, specifically these requiring civilians be protected at all times. The organization has written today to representatives of the LTTE in London condemning these attacks and appealing again to the LTTE to desist from such abuses.  
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