

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Sri Lanka: Amnesty International condemns civilian killings**

Amnesty International today condemns the indiscriminate killing of at least 17 civilians and the wounding of more than 30 civilians by two suicide bombers believed to be members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

"The LTTE must stop any direct or indiscriminate attacks on civilians. They are forbidden under international humanitarian law and are never acceptable," said Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International, as the organization raised its concerns about the rising number of civilians being killed or injured as a result of deliberate attacks in Sri Lanka's increasing violence.

Amnesty International urges all parties in the conflict to comply with their obligations under international law to protect civilians and allow access by humanitarian aid agencies to populations in need. The security forces and the LTTE must immediately cease all violations of international humanitarian law, and take all measures necessary to ensure they are not repeated in the future.

The attack comes at a time when the conflict is escalating in the north of the country, and follows the killing of 11 school girls on Tuesday in the Vanni area controlled by the LTTE. Both the main parties in the conflict blamed each other for the children's deaths.

In a separate incident on Monday two teachers and three students were seriously injured when seven artillery shells fell into the school compound at Maluvarayankattaiadampan.

Amnesty International also condemns the civilian killing as a result of the recent Sri Lanka military air strike on the Voice of Tigers, the radio station of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Three of the station's staff and six other civilians were killed.

"Amnesty International urges an immediate halt to the escalation of violence on all sides in order to protect the lives of innocent civilians and children," said Irene Khan.

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