

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 37/15/96

UA 219/96

**Deliberate and arbitrary killings / fear of further killings**

13 September 1996

**SRI LANKA Eleven bus passengers, killed  
Civilian population in areas of conflict**

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According to several independent sources, members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) deliberately killed 11 bus passengers, including four women and a two-year-old child, around 10.30am on 12 September at Arantalawa, Amparai district.

Survivors interviewed by journalists and others visiting the area told how a man in civilian clothes, thought to be a member of the LTTE, signalled to the bus driver to stop. Then approximately 30 armed men in camouflage uniform approached the bus from both sides of the road and started shooting. A few armed men boarded the crowded bus and shot at the driver and passengers. At the time of writing, the bodies had not been identified by name, but it is believed that among those killed are two Muslim men; all others are members of the Sinhalese community.

Amnesty International is once again concerned that 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 at all times to maintain the distinction between the civilian population and combatants.

**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.

Since the resumption of the armed conflict in April 1995, the organization has documented several incidents of deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians attributed to the LTTE. They took place during attacks on villages in the east and bordering areas, as well as bombings in the capital, Colombo.

In late July 1996, a spokesman for the LTTE denied that it was responsible for the deliberate killing of at least 70 civilians and injury to hundreds more when two bombs exploded on a commuter train at Dzhivela, north of Colombo. The spokesman gave assurances that the organization does not target civilians. Since then, however, an alleged member of the LTTE has reportedly confessed to the police that he was responsible for placing the bombs, casting doubt on the spokesperson's statement.

Amnesty International is appealing to the LTTE to call an immediate halt to the deliberate killings of civilians and other human rights abuses by its members and to declare a clear commitment to uphold human rights at all times.

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

- expressing deep concern about the reports of deliberate and arbitrary killing of 11 civilians at Arantalawa, Amparai district on 12 September;
- urging that responsibility for those killings be fully determined and that appropriate 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 by the LTTE leadership;
- requesting a response 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 other addresses.*

Lawrence Thilakar  
 Member of Central Committee  
 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam  
 International Secretariat  
 211, Katherine Road  
 London E6 1BU, United Kingdom  
**Fax:** + 44 181 470 8593  
**Telegram:** Mr Thilakar, 211 Katherine Road, London E6, UK  
**Salutation:** Dear Mr Thilakar

Tamil Co-ordinating Committee  
 341, rue des Pyrénées  
 75020 Paris, France  
**Fax:** + 33 1 435 81191  
**Telegram:** Tamil Committee, 341 rue des Pyrénées, 75020 Paris, France  
**Salutation:** Dear Sir/Madam

World Tamil Movement  
 64, Eaton Avenue  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 M4J 2Z5, Canada  
**Fax:** + 1416 462 9302  
**Telegram:** World Tamil Movement, 64 Eaton Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam  
 P.O. Box 47  
 7600 Struer, Denmark

World Tamil Coordinating Council  
 Gold Gasse - 8  
 7000 Chur, Switzerland  
**Telegram:** WTCC, Gold Gasse 8, 7000 Chur, Switzerland

Tamil Coordinating Committee  
 P.O. Box 1699 Vika  
 0110 Oslo 1, Norway

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.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 October 1996.