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## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

### ***Sri Lanka: Deliberate killing of more than 50 civilians by LTTE***

Amnesty International strongly condemns the deliberate killing of more than 50 Sinhalese civilians on 18 September by members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in a pre-dawn raid on three villages in Amparai district

The killings appear to represent a return to the large-scale deliberate attacks on civilians belonging to the Sinhala and Muslim communities in the areas bordering the northern and eastern parts of the country that are claimed by the LTTE as an independent state called Eelam.

In the past, hundreds of civilians have been deliberately killed in these areas by the LTTE, but for the last three years no such large-scale atrocities have been reported.

Amnesty International calls on the leadership of the LTTE to bring an immediate halt to all attacks on civilians and to instruct its members to comply at all times with international humanitarian law which clearly prohibits such attacks.

#### **Background information**

Observers believe that the attack may have been carried out in retaliation for the killing of 22 Tamil civilians at Puthukkudiyiruppu, Mullaitivu district, following a bombing raid by the Air Force on 15 September.

On 16 September, Amnesty International wrote to President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga expressing concern about the bombing raid. The organization has questioned the government on rules of engagement and other instructions given to combatants to avoid civilian casualties.

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