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சமாதானத்திற்கும் ஜனநாயகத்திற்கான இலங்கைப் பெண்கள்  
Sri lankan Women for Peace and Democracy

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*16 June 2006*

### **Women Say No to War Condemn the Attack on Civilians at Kebithigollewa**

We strongly condemn the claymore attack allegedly by the LTTE on a passenger bus plying between Kanugahawewa and Kebithigollewa last morning. This cruel and senseless attack has taken the lives of 64 men, women and children and injured dozens more - all civilians from poor and disadvantaged village communities. We are saddened by the loss of life and offer our condolences to the bereaved families.

This is the deadliest attack on civilians since the ceasefire agreement and follows on a number of claymore and other attacks which have affected civilians as indicated in the statement made by women against war of 15 May 2006.

It has also been reported that in response to the Kebithigollewa attack, the state launched attacks by land and air into Sampur, Mullaitivu and locations close to Kilinochchi. Air strikes too, however carefully targeted can and do affect civilians and both attack and counter attack of this nature make civilian life extremely insecure and render more vulnerable the situation of civilians caught in the cusp of violent conflict between the State and the LTTE.

The break down in formal negotiations between the government and the LTTE with the non meeting at Oslo has precipitated military engagement with grave consequences, particularly for civilians many of whom have suffered the ravages of war for over two decades. Further the brief promise of peace and the search for a sustainable, negotiated settlement to the ethnic conflict has again receded, pushing the country into yet another spiral of violence.

Today, we echo the hope of President Mahinda Rajapakse that the incident at Kebithigollewa will not sabotage the peace process and welcome his statement of commitment to the peace process and his call for clam and restraint in the aftermath of the attack.

C/o. 174, අල්විස් මාවත, කාසල් වීදිය, කොළඹ 8, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව, ■ 174, அல்விஸ் ஒழுங்கை, காசல் வீதி, கொழும்பு 8, இலங்கை,  
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We call upon the LTTE to act responsibly and make their statement that 'armed attacks targeting civilians cannot be justified under any circumstances' a reality for all Sri Lankan people. We also ask for a commitment to a negotiated peace.

We further wish to remind both the LTTE and the State that they must be committed to the principles of International Humanitarian Law which prohibit attacks against civilians and requires all parties to conflict, to distinguish between civilians and combatants at all times.

We would like to reiterate, particularly to those who seek to resolve the conflict through war that in cases of protracted conflicts negotiation takes a considerable period of time and often suffers numerous set backs before the issue is finally resolved.

We call upon all Sri Lankans to remember the period of war we experienced and come to the realisation that a resumption of hostilities will bring about even greater destruction. From human casualties, damage to infrastructure and adverse impact on the economy, to more checkpoints and cordon and search operations, and to heightened human rights violations, a return to war will adversely affect every facet of life of all citizens of Sri Lanka. Particularly vulnerable will be poor and marginalised communities of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim civilians living along the 'border' of the northern and eastern provinces. All proposals and decisions that take the path towards a resumption or continuation of hostilities put the lives and livelihoods of these communities in deadly peril - a peril that those who propose a military solution to the conflict are rarely likely to experience.

Both the Government and the LTTE should desist from further action which erodes the integrity of the ceasefire agreement and instead strive to find means of common ground to resume an engagement that seeks a negotiated resolution to the conflict. An approach of compromise and reconciliation is what Sri Lanka needs at this critical moment, and we hope that those in positions of power will prove themselves to be capable of facing this challenge.

As civilians and as women we say again 'No to War'. In this time of crisis let us reaffirm our commitment to the peace process and to a just and sustainable peace for all peoples of Sri Lanka.

***SRI LANKAN WOMEN FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY***