

Massacre triggers Sri Lankan offensive. (1995, October 23) *The Globe and mail.*

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Massacre triggers Sri Lankan offensive

Hundreds of soldiers tracking rebels

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NEW DELHI — The Sri Lankan government has moved to prevent the country's ethnic tinderbox from reigniting after Saturday's massacre of 66 Sinhalese villagers by suspected members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the rebel army that has been fighting since 1983 for a Tamil homeland.

As the government stepped up the war effort with its biggest offensive yet against the Tamil Tigers in the northern Jaffna peninsula, hundreds of soldiers and police launched cordon-and-search operations in Tamil neighbourhoods in Colombo. They are hoping to find those involved in the rebels' suspected attack Friday on two oil depots in the capital.

The government also announced the return of the paramilitary civil defence force to

prevent communal violence, and imposed dusk-to-dawn curfews in Colombo.

The government said Tamil Tiger rebels killed the 66 villagers before dawn on Saturday in three separate areas of north-central and eastern Sri Lanka to divert the military's attention from the northern battleground. In the biggest terrorist attack on civilians since 1992, when rebels killed 166 Muslim villagers, several of Saturday's victims, including women and children, were hacked to death with machetes.

Although the government immediately blocked all domestic news sources from reporting the killings, word spread quickly through the capital Colombo on Saturday, and two Tamils were killed in what police said were reprisal attacks by Sinhalese nationalists.

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