

Nine killed in night raids

COLOMBO (AP) — Suspected Sinhalese radicals raided homes in two neighboring towns in the south Friday and killed nine government supporters, military officials in Sri Lanka said.

The victims, all Sinhalese, were dragged out of their homes in pre-dawn attacks and shot or stabbed to death, the officials said.

At least five people were killed in the town of Elpitaya, about 110 kilometres south of Colombo, said the officials, who cannot be identified under briefing rules. The other four were killed in neighboring Balapitiya town, they said.

Sinhalese radicals launched an anti-government campaign last year to protest a peace accord aimed at ending the five-year-old war by rebels of the minority Tamil community.

The radicals claim the India-sponsored accord grants too many concessions to the Tamils.

The campaign was stepped up earlier this month after the People's Liberation Front, a militant Sinhalese group, called a series of crippling strikes in the Sinhalese-

dominated south to demand the resignation of President Junius Jayewardene.

On Wednesday, a cabinet minister said the radicals had killed 324 people, most of them government supporters, between Oct. 15 and Nov. 15. The government blames the People's Liberation Front for at least 550 deaths between July and October 1987.

The military officials said suspected Front members shot and killed a police constable in the south Thursday. In other violence, Tamil rebels killed three Indian soldiers near the eastern port town of Trincomalee, they said.

India became involved in ethnic strife in Sri Lanka because of the sympathies of its own 60 million Tamils for the rebel cause. But it sent in at least 47,000 soldiers to quell the Tamil insurgency after the rebels rejected the 1987 peace accord.

The presence of the Indian troops in Sri Lanka has been criticized by opposition parties, who say it infringes on the country's sovereignty.