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● JOC says death figures are less

# ICRC TO RECEIVE 18 BODIES

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THE BODIES of 18 soldiers and civilians killed in the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam), attack on Weli Oya were to be handed over to the security forces through the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) this morning.

The handing over was expected to take place at about 9 a.m. at Nochchimoddai, four miles north of Vavuniya, military officials said.

Bodies of the slain security personnel have been handed over to the military in several earlier instances too.

A woman representative of the ICRC was to take charge of the bodies from the LTTE, and hand them over to the security forces in Vavuniya. No security forces personnel were to be present at the handing over of the bodies to the ICRC representative north of Nochchimoddai.

Officials were unable to state whether all the bodies to be handed over were those of soldiers and civilians reported missing following the 'Tiger' attack early on Sunday on the Janakapura army camp in North Eastern Weli Oya region.

Ten soldiers and eight civilians including a woman and child were reported missing following the attack. Twenty four soldiers including an officer and eight

civilians were killed in the attack according to the latest reports from the JOC.

Officials were unable to confirm whether the missing persons were taken prisoner and killed or whether they were killed during the attack and their bodies removed by the LTTE.

About 300-400 terrorists including women cadres are reported to have carried out the attack on Janakapura with the launching of simultaneous attacks on Kokkuthuduwai and Kovil Point Camps.

According to senior military officers, the terrorists had crept into the camp from two points after silencing the sentries, one of whom had his throat slit by the raiders.

"They were completely surprised and there was hardly anytime for the soldiers in the camp to react," an official said.

According to unconfirmed reports, the terrorists who were approaching the camp prior to the attack had been seen by two groups of soldiers who were laying a night ambush out of the camp. But they had been unable to engage them due to the superior numbers of the enemy.