INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT
CALL FOR ACCESS TO THE POPULATIONS TRAPPED BY WAR
AND RESPECT OF HUMANITARIAN AID WORKERS
IN SRI LANKA

October 2006. 17 employees of humanitarian non governmental organisation (NGO) Action contre la Faim were deliberately massacred in Muttur (East Sri Lanka) on 4th of August, 2006. This act represents an escalation of violence targeting humanitarian actors, and as such is unprecedented in Sri Lanka. We are appalled by this war crime.

Over the several months in Sri Lanka, access to populations has been severely curtailed by parties to the conflict, thus violating International Humanitarian Law. Humanitarian organizations have been denied access to civilians affected by this conflict. As a result, approximately 200,000 displaced people do not receive regular or sufficient assistance.

Therefore, the under-signed humanitarian NGOs appeal:

• to the Government of Sri Lanka to undertake every measure to ensure that this war crime of Muttur does not stay unpunished, and thus guard against impunity, in close collaboration with declared international experts, so that those responsible for the massacre of the 17 humanitarian workers of Action Contre la Faim be identified and tried;

• to the parties to the conflict to respect International Humanitarian Law, including respect of humanitarian principles, in particular to facilitate unimpeded access to all victims and protection of all civilian populations;

• to the governments and the United Nations, in particular the members of the UN Security Council – but also the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sri Lanka and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights - to use all possible means of diplomatic pressure on all concerned parties to demand that they respect International Humanitarian Law.

Under-signed humanitarian NGOs:

1. Action contre la Faim
2. Acted
3. ADRA-EU
4. Architectes de l’urgence (*)
5. Aide Médicale Internationale Foundation (*)
6. Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI)
7. Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP)
8. Concern
9. DanChurchAid
10. Diakonie Emergency Aid
11. FinnChurchAid
12. German Agro Action
13. Health Unlimited
14. Ingenieros Sin Fronteras (*)
15. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
16. Islamic Relief
17. Johanniter International Assistance
18. Lutheran World Federation - World Service
19. Malteser International
20. Médecins du Monde
21. Médecins Sans Frontières (*)
22. Mensajeros de la Paz (*)
23. Mission East
24. Muslim Aid (*)
25. Plan – UK
26. PMU InterLife
27. Première Urgence
28. Save the Children – UK
29. Solidarités
30. Solidaridad Internacional (*)
31. Tearfund
32. Trocaire
33. World Vision

Note: all signatories are member organisations of VOICE
- European network of Humanitarian NGOs - except where indicated by (*)

Press contact: Lucile Grosjean (Action contre la Faim)
00 33 1 43 35 82 22 / lgrosjean@actioncontrelafaim.org