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Friday, 08 August 2014 09:11 -

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The Sri Lankan security forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) repeatedly violated international humanitarian law during the last five months of their 30-year civil war. Although both sides committed atrocities throughout the many years of conflict, the scale and nature of violations particularly worsened from January 2009 to the government's declaration of victory in May. Evidence gathered by the International Crisis Group suggests that these months saw tens of thousands of Tamil civilian men, women, children and the elderly killed, countless more wounded, and hundreds of thousands deprived of adequate food and medical care, resulting in more deaths.

This evidence also provides reasonable grounds to believe the Sri Lankan security forces committed war crimes with top government and military leaders potentially responsible. There is evidence of war crimes committed by the LTTE and its leaders as well, but most of them were killed and will never face justice. An international inquiry into alleged crimes is essential given the absence of political will or capacity for genuine domestic investigations, the need for an accounting to address the grievances that drive conflict in Sri Lanka, and the potential of other governments adopting the Sri Lankan model of counter-insurgency in their own internal conflicts.

Weblink:

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/191-war-crimes-in-sri-lanka.aspx>