

SRI LANKA: EXPLOSION IN COLOMBO

15 October 1997

Information Bulletin N° 01

The Disaster

Early this morning (15 October) local time, a bomb blast shook the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo. The affected area is reported to be in the immediate vicinity of the newly opened World Trade Centre, about 10 minutes by car from the Sri Lankan Red Cross Society (SLRCS). The area of the blast, which occurred on a national holiday, has been cordoned off: only security officials, medical personnel, and ambulances are allowed access.

While information is imprecise at the early stages of the rescue operation, 11 people have reportedly been killed and more than 90 severely injured. Information collected by the Federation Office Administrator in Colombo, supported by pictures on international television networks, indicates that the 28 storey World Trade Centre and two international hotels have sustained severe damage. There were also reports of heavy exchanges of gunfire in the area after the explosion.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The SLRCS has been actively involved in providing first aid, medical care, and evacuation for the victims and has mobilised all available SLRCS vehicles to assist in transporting the injured to hospital. The Chief Ambulance Coordinator of the SLRCS said 10 - 15 SLRCS Volunteers reported immediately for duty, and more are being deployed as they become available.

The Federation Office Administrator began gathering information from the SLRCS and other sources almost immediately after the blast, and will continue to provide this valuable information link as the situation unfolds.

Needs

At the moment, it is not anticipated that the SLRCS will need additional resources.

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