

Sri Lanka killings inquiry criticized

by UPI

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka - An independent jurist group reportedly has criticized a Sri Lankan police inquiry into last year's killings of 17 aid workers as not being impartial.

The International Commission of Jurists described the investigation into the deaths of the local workers with Action Against Hunger as showing "a disturbing lack of impartiality and transparency," the BBC reported Monday.

The bodies of the aid workers were found last August in Muttur, a town on the northeastern part of the Indian Ocean island where heavy fighting has been going on between Sri Lankan security forces and rebels seeking a separate homeland for the Tamil-speaking minority.

The deaths had been blamed on Sri Lankan security forces by truce monitors, but those charges have been denied.

The commission said official Sri Lankan reports indicated that police had decided from the outset that Tamil rebels were responsible for the killings, the BBC report said.

"Collection of evidence has been incomplete and inadequate. In particular, the (intelligence department) has not interviewed any member of the Sri Lankan security forces, nor any Tamil, apart from the family members of those killed," the jurists said.

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