

Fearful Tamils fleeing capital of Sri Lanka. (1993, May 6). *The Globe and mail*.

Fearful Tamils fleeing capital of Sri Lanka

THE GUARDIAN

COLOMBO – Sri Lanka's acting president, D.B. Wijetunga, met Tamil leaders yesterday amid rising panic about the prospect of mob violence after the funeral today of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who was assassinated – allegedly by Tamil Tigers – last Saturday.

Although Tamil leaders have dismissed reports of a mass exodus from the capital, fear of reprisal has spread from working-class neighborhoods to leafy sections of Colombo. The Tamils said they were satisfied that Wijetunga was sincere about wanting to prevent a repetition of the pogroms a decade ago that were the turning point in the island's civil war.

As well as bringing in extra troops from the war zones of the north and east, the president broadcast appeals for calm and is also considering imposing a curfew tonight. "He has told everyone that some action will be taken to maintain law and order," said S. Thondaman, leader of the largest Tamil trade union, the Ceylon Workers' Congress.

Up to 1,000 Tamils were killed in three days of looting and murder 10 years ago that went largely unchecked by security forces.

Tamils living in rented apartments in working-class neighborhoods near the homes of both Premadasa and his assassin, a suicide bomber who has been identified by investigators, were advised by police and Sinhalese neighbors to go away for a few days.