URGENT ACTION

DETAINED JOURNALISTS FREED IN SRI LANKA

Journalist Vettivel Jasikaran and his wife Valarmathi Jasikaran were released on 26 October. They had been arbitrarily detained since March 2008 under anti-terror legislation.

The police Terrorist Investigation Division (TID) had arrested Vettivel Jasikaran on suspicion of "terrorism-related activities," and his wife Valarmathi Jasikaran as an accessory, under emergency regulations, on 6 March 2008. Vettivel Jasikaran is a writer, publisher and manager of the news website Outreach Sri Lanka.

On 8 June 2008 Vettivel and Valarmathi Jasikaran filed a fundamental rights case at the Supreme Court, stating that their arrest and detention was illegal and that Vettivel had been tortured in TID custody. The Ministry of Defence extended their detention under emergency regulations on 30 June 2008.

After nearly six months detained without charge, Vettivel Jasikaran was indicted on 27 August 2008 for "inciting communal disharmony" by printing, publishing and distributing the magazine *North Eastern Monthly*. Valarmathi was charged with aiding and abetting her husband.

Almost a year after their trial began, on 26 October the Supreme Court allowed the withdrawal of the Jasikarans' fundamental rights petition and acquitted them of all charges.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals

This is the second Update of UA: 110/08 (ASA 37/018/2008). Further information:
http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA37/018/2008/en and http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA37/026/2008/en

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