

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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**UA 448/90 Unacknowledged Detention/
"Disappearance"**

7 November 1990

Sri Lanka:

E N Karunapala

E N Karunapala from Epaladeniya, Kuliyaipitiya, Kurunegala District "disappeared" after he was detained on 29 October by a group of armed men in plain clothes. The local police had reportedly been looking for him on several previous occasions, saying he was suspected of being a member of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), People's Liberation Front, an armed opposition group. The police had harassed members of his family.

On 8 October, the Kuliyaipitiya police had come to the house and had asked for E N Karunapala. When it became clear that he was not there they took his six-year-old son, Tilina Roshan, instead and held him at the Kuliyaipitiya police station. Two days later, on 10 October in the middle of the day, E N Karunapala's brother-in-law was killed at Nugegoda, where he had gone with E N Karunapala's wife, reportedly by two unknown armed men travelling on a motorbike.

On the day of E N Karunapala's arrest, an armed group came to the place where the family was staying near Maharagama. They brought the child, Tilina Roshan with them, and took the whole family - E N Karunapala, his wife and another son - into custody. The wife and two children were released on 31 October from the custody of Kuliyaipitiya station. E N Karunapala's wife subsequently took several parcels with food to the police station to be handed over to her husband. They were accepted. However, on 3 November they refused to accept the parcel and denied that they had E N Karunapala in custody.

Complaints have been made on behalf of relatives to the superintendent of police of the area but no reply has yet been received. Appeals were made to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to the Minister of State for Defence but E N Karunapala's whereabouts remain unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" from southern Sri Lanka, in the context of intimidation and death threats by government forces. The victims include people suspected of having had connections with the JVP such as E N Karunapala.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern about the unacknowledged detention of E N Karunapala near Maharagama on 29 October, by the Kuliypitiya police;
- urging that a full, independent inquiry be immediately established to reveal his fate or whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that he be humanely treated and granted immediate and regular access to lawyers and relatives;

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President R Premadasa
Presidential Secretariat
Republic Square
Colombo 1
Sri Lanka

Telegrams: President Premadasa, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Telexes: 22650 PRESEC CE
Faxes: + 94 1 54 6657

The Hon Ranjan Wijeratne
Minister of Plantation Industries and Minister of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Colombo
Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Minister Defence, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Telexes: 22229 MINDEF CE
Faxes: + 94 1 54 6091

Ernest Perera
Inspector General of Police
Sri Lanka Police Headquarters
New Secretariat
No 349 Galle Road
Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Police Inspector General, Sri Lanka Police HQ, Colombo, Sri Lanka

General Cyril Ranatunga,
Secretary, Ministry of Defence
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: General Ranatunga, Defence Ministry, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Telexes: 22229 MINDEF CE
Faxes: +94 1 54 6091

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Sri Lanka in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 19 December 1990.