

UA 130/01

"Disappea**SRI LANKA** Murugesu Anandarasa, aged 30

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Murugesu Anandarasa has reportedly "disappeared" after being questioned by military intelligence officers at a military post in Vavuniya town centre. Amnesty International is concerned for his safety.

On 23 April Murugesu Anandarasa, a 30-year-old Tamil shop worker from Maharambaikulam in Vavuniya district, cycled to a military post situated in the Tamil Mixed School in the centre of Vavuniya to collect a residency pass. At about 2.30pm a friend of his saw him being questioned by military intelligence officers outside the army's Town Camp opposite the school. Murugesu Anandarasa has not been seen since. His bicycle was found outside the school, indicating that he was arrested by the soldiers who questioned him. His relatives have made several attempts to trace him, but have failed so far.

Murugesu Anandarasa first visited the military post in late March to renew his residency pass. He was photographed and asked to return on 9 April to collect the pass. When he returned, he was reportedly told that there was some fault with the photograph. Another photograph was taken and he was told to collect the pass at a later date.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Those detained by the security forces in Sri Lanka are frequently tortured or "disappear" while in custody (see for instance UA 41/01, ASA 37/004/2001, 15 February 2001). Many of the "disappeared" are suspected to have been tortured to death in secret places of detention.

Until May 2000, it was a legal requirement that places of detention had to be designated and published in the official Gazette. After the introduction of new emergency regulations, that is no longer the case and detainees can now be lawfully held in unauthorized places of detention. Amnesty International is concerned that the removal of such safeguards have increased the possibility of prisoners being held in secret detention and tortured.

A "pass system" was introduced in Vavuniya in 1994 in an attempt to control the movement of people, especially the thousands of internally displaced people living in the district. Security forces personnel and armed Tamil groups working alongside them play an active role in trying to identify possible members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) among the transient population of Vavuniya. The LTTE, an armed opposition group, is fighting the Sri Lankan security forces for greater autonomy in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Murugesu Anandarasa, who "disappeared" after he was questioned by military intelligence officers on 23 April;
- urging the authorities to clarify his whereabouts;
- asking that if he is in detention, he be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, or immediately released, and that he be allowed access to his family, lawyer and necessary medical care;
- urging that those responsible for his "disappearance" are brought to justice;
- calling for an immediate halt to the use of secret places of detention.

**APPEALS TO:**

President Chandrika Bandaranaike  
Kumaratunga  
Presidential Secretariat  
Colombo 1  
Sri Lanka

**Telegrams: President Kumaratunga, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Faxes: + 94 1 33 37 03**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Lieutenant-General  
Lionel Balagalle  
Army Commander  
Army Headquarters  
Flagstaff Street  
Colombo 1  
Sri Lanka

**Telegrams: Commander of the Army, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Faxes: + 94 1 43 26 82 or 43 26 85**

**Salutation: Dear Army Commander**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Sri Lanka accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 July 2001.