

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 20 per Section.

**UA 139/95**

**"Disappearances"**

**15 June 1995**

**SRI LANKA**

**Velayutham Sivalingam, aged 30, fisherman  
Muthukumar (alias Asirvatham) Mariadas, aged 30, barber  
Kanagaratnam Krishnapillai  
Subramaniam Chitravel, aged 52, farmer**

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The whereabouts of four people taken into custody by the security forces in the northeast of Sri Lanka between 2 May and 4 June 1995 remain unknown, despite numerous appeals to the relevant authorities.

Around 2am on 2 May, a group of eight men believed to be from the Air Force camp at China Bay, Trincomalee District, arrived in the nearby village of Karidippuvel, Vellaimanal, in a vehicle thought to belong to the Air Force.

The men reportedly took Velayutham Sivalingam, married with four children, and Muthukumar (alias Asirvatham) Mariadas, married with two children, from their homes. No explanation for their detention was given. Relatives lodged complaints at the China Bay police station, the Human Rights Task Force and to a local member of parliament. Appeals were sent to the Commander Officer, Trincomalee, the Deputy Inspector General of Trincomalee and the Air Wing Commander, Trincomalee. However, the Air Force denied the arrests.

Kanagaratnam Krishnapillai from Kiran, Batticaloa District was among four people arrested at the ferry crossing at Thuraiyaddi on 2 May. All four were missing for several days. Then, on 8 May three of them were found by people gathering firewood in the jungle near the Paper Mill army camp at Valaichenai with their hands tied behind their backs. The whereabouts of Kanagaratnam Krishnapillai remain unknown.

Subramaniam Chitravel, from Kaddaiparichchan, Trincomalee District was arrested on 4 June around 6pm. He was stopped by members of the security forces (possibly army personnel) in a green jeep as he was walking along Vihara Road, Trincomalee District, on his way to visit his brother. The men reportedly told Subramaniam Chitravel to hand over his bag to his companion, another farmer from Kaddaiparichchan, and to get into the jeep. A complaint was lodged with the Deputy Inspector General at Trincomalee and inquiries were made at various places of detention in Trincomalee, but without success.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the outbreak of the hostilities in the northeast of Sri Lanka between the security forces and members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the main armed opposition group fighting for a separate state in the northeast of the country, there have been reports of arbitrary arrests of hundreds of Tamil people, particularly in the east of the country and in the capital, Colombo.

The security forces have to date refrained from resorting to systematic extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" as frequently reported in the past, but Amnesty International is concerned that a clear message should be given to the security forces that the government is committed to the upholding of fundamental human rights at all times and in all circumstances.

There have been reports recently that the government has decided to reinstate the powers of the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF), an independent body set up by the previous government to monitor and safeguard the welfare of detainees (see also UA 103/95, ASA 37/07/95, 28 April 1995) and that the President has issued mandatory directives to the heads of the security forces to safeguard the rights of detainees.

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

- calling for a full, impartial investigation to establish the whereabouts of Velayutham Sivalingam, Muthukumar (alias Asirvatham) Mariadas, Subramaniam Chitravel and Kanagaratnam Krishnapillai (giving detention details), asking to be informed of the results;
- seeking assurances that, if in detention, the detainees are being treated humanely in accordance with international standards;
- welcoming measures recently announced to safeguard the rights of detainees, and urging that they be implemented fully and rigorously.

**APPEALS TO**

Her Excellency President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga  
 Presidential Residence  
 "Temple Trees"  
 Colombo 3, Sri Lanka  
**Faxes: + 94 1 33 37 03**  
**Telegrams: President Kumaratunga, Colombo, Sri Lanka**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

The Hon (Colonel) Anuruddha Ratwatte  
 Minister of Irrigation, Power & Energy and Deputy Minister of Defence  
 Ministry of Irrigation, Power & Energy  
 No. 500 T B Jayah Mawatha  
 Colombo 10, Sri Lanka  
**Faxes: + 94 1 68 77 68 (dialling tone may change before it connects to fax)**  
**Telegrams: Deputy Defence Minister, Colombo, Sri Lanka**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Lt-General Gerry de Silva  
 Army Commander  
 Army Headquarters  
 Flagstaff Street  
 Colombo 1, Sri Lanka  
**Telegrams: Army Commander, Colombo, Sri Lanka**  
**Salutation: Dear Army Commander**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 30 July 1995.