

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 37/07/94

Distr: UA/SC

This is a limited appeal. Please restrict appeals to 10 per section.

UA 14/94 Unacknowledged detention/Fear of "disappearance"14 January 1994

SRI LANKA

**Tharmalingam Rajeswaran (aged 18)
Kathirgamathamby Karunakaran (aged 20)
Chithiravel Sivakumar (aged 13)
Konesapillai Sathiyarajah (aged 16)
Peryian Sivalingam (aged 35)**

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the five Tamil men named above, who are all farmers from Cithandy Village in Batticaloa District. The five were reportedly arrested on 24 December 1993 near the Santhanamadu River, Kudavaddaikadu, Batticaloa District, by army personnel belonging to the Mullivedduvan army camp. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

Relatives have informed the Batticaloa Peace Committee and have made inquiries at the Pullipainjakal (Tiger Leaf Rock) army camp where the five were believed to have been taken. The commanding officer at the camp denied that they were detained there.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the northeast of Sri Lanka, the armed conflict between government security forces and the LTTE, which is trying to establish a separate Tamil state, continues. The number of "disappearances" reported from northeastern Sri Lanka has decreased significantly in the past year. The security forces do not necessarily acknowledge arrests at first, but whereas previously unacknowledged arrests often proved to be long-term "disappearances", more often now prisoners are eventually traced in custody. Some, however, have not been traced.

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

- asking for information on the whereabouts of the five Tamil men named above who were reportedly arrested on 24 December 1993 near the Santhanamadu River, Kudavaddaikadu, Batticaloa District, by army personnel from the Mullivedduvan army camp;
- urging that a full, impartial investigation be held to establish their whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that if they are in custody, they be humanely treated and that they be given immediate and regular access to relatives and a lawyer.

APPEALS TO

1) President D B Wijetunga
Presidential Secretariat
Republic Square

Colombo 1, SRI LANKA

Telegrams: President Wijetunga, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

Telexes: 22650 PRESEC CE

Faxes: + 94 1 446657

Salutation: Dear President

2) Justice J F A Soza

Chairperson

Human Rights Task Force

75 Norris Canal Road

Colombo 10, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Justice Soza, Human Rights Task Force, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka

Salutation: Dear Justice Soza

3) Justice B E de Silva

Chairperson

Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Involuntary Removal of Persons

Room No 2-115, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall

Bauddhaloka Mawatha

Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Justice de Silva, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

Salutation: Dear Justice de Silva

4) Major General Gerry de Silva

Commander in Chief of the Army

Army Headquarters

Flower Road

Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Commander in Chief, Major General de Silva, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

Salutation: Dear Major-General

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 25 February 1994.