

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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This is a limited action. Please send up to 5 appeals per section.

UA 404/93 Unacknowledged detention/Fear of "disappearance" 16 November 1993

SRI LANKA Sinnathambi Meganathan, bodyguard for member of parliament

Sinnathambi Meganathan was abducted at about 10am on 10 November 1993 from a bus in the centre of the capital, Colombo. He had boarded the bus near Sravasti, the official hostel for members of parliament in Colombo. Shortly afterwards, when the bus had stopped outside Colombo Public Library, five armed men wearing civilian dress boarded, removed Sinnathambi Meganathan and took him away in a jeep.

Witnesses described the jeep as a blue Toyota Land Cruiser with the number plate 64 - 0945. According to reports, this jeep belongs to the Batticaloa Police (in eastern Sri Lanka).

Sinnathambi Meganathan comes from Mandur in Batticaloa District, but now lives at Sravasti in Colombo with member of parliament Suresh Premachandran, for whom he works as a bodyguard. Suresh Premachandran has raised his case in parliament, and with the Prime Minister and Defence Secretary, but Sinnathambi Meganathan's whereabouts remain unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There have been earlier occasions when a person abducted in Colombo has later been found in custody in eastern Sri Lanka.

"Disappearances" have reduced in number in Sri Lanka in the past year and there is now a greater likelihood of people being traced in custody after a period of unacknowledged detention. All of the cases of "disappearance" documented by Amnesty International during 1993 have been of members of the Tamil community.

In the north and east of Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are fighting government security forces with aims of establishing a separate state, which they call "Eelam".

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

- expressing concern at the unacknowledged detention of Sinnathambi Meganathan abducted in Colombo on 10 January 1993;

- urging that a full, impartial investigation be held to establish his whereabouts;

- seeking assurances that if he is in custody, he is humanely treated and that he has regular access to relatives and lawyers.

APPEALS TO:

1) Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe
Prime Minister's Office
150 R A de Mel Mawatha
Colombo 3, SRI LANKA
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Telexes: 22229 MINDEF CE
Faxes: + 94 1 44 6091
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

2) President D B Wijetunga
Presidential Secretariat
Republic Square
Colombo 1, SRI LANKA
Telegrams: President Wijetunga, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Telexes: 22650 PRESEC CE
Faxes: + 94 1 446657
Salutation: Dear President

3) Defence Secretary
Lt-General Hamilton Wanasinghe
Ministry of Defence
Republic Square
Colombo 2, SRI LANKA
Telegrams: Defence Secretary Wanasinghe, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Salutation: Dear Lt-General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: 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 28 December 1993.