

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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

**UA 103/95                      Fear of torture / Fear of "disappearance"                      28 April 1995**

**SRI LANKA                      Selvanayagam Rasanayagam, aged 32**

Selvanayagam Rasanayagam, a tractor driver and labourer from Periyakulam, Trincomalee District was taken into custody by soldiers on 20 April 1995 while he was working in the village. Witnesses say they saw him being taken into the Periyakulam Army Camp.

Since his arrest, his relatives have repeatedly inquired at the camp but have been told he is not detained there. They have filed a complaint with the Human Rights Task Force. To date, army authorities continue to deny he is in their custody.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International is concerned at reports of arbitrary arrests of hundreds of Tamil people in Colombo, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Vavuniya and Kandy. These arrests are taking place in the aftermath of several incidents in the northeast of the country in which members of the security forces were killed by members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) after the LTTE on 18 April called an end to the truce in force since 8 January 1995.

On 19 April, 12 navy personnel were reportedly killed when members of the LTTE bombed two navy gunboats in Trincomalee harbour. In the following days, police and army arrested at least 25 young Tamil men in the area. More than 1,000 arrests were also reported from other parts of the country. Most of those arrested are reportedly released within 24 hours.

Amnesty International is concerned about the safety of those detained as there currently is no independent organization with powers to monitor and safeguard the welfare of detainees held under the emergency regulations or the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Current emergency regulations no longer incorporate the requirement that arrests under ER 18 must be reported "forthwith" to the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF), set up in August 1991 under the Emergency Regulations "to monitor the observance of fundamental rights of detainees". This provision had been introduced in June 1993 but was removed from the regulations when they were revised in September 1994. The status of the HRTF itself is unclear as the emergency regulations under which it was created lapsed in July 1994. However, it continues to function under the Sri Lanka Foundation Law.

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

- calling for a full, impartial investigation to establish the whereabouts of Selvanayagam Rasanayagam, who was arrested at Periyakulam, Trincomalee District on 20 April 1995; asking to be informed of the results;
- seeking assurances that he is being humanely treated and urging that he be given regular access to his relatives;
- urging that he be released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- urging that the requirement that arrests should be forthwith reported to the HRTF be reintroduced as a matter of urgency and that HRTF be given access to all places of detention.

**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 11 June 1995.