

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 79/01 (ASA 37/005/2001, 30 March 2001) - Fear for safety / Child soldiers

SRI LANKA Chandrasekaran Udayakumar (m), aged 8

Ravichandran Prathishan (m), aged 12

Ravisudam Kuvadasan (m) (previously mentioned as "One unknown child")

After further investigation it has become apparent that two of the three children, who went missing after reportedly leaving home to join an armed opposition group, were recruited by the People Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) in the district of Vavuniya. One has returned to his family, whereas the other remains with the PLOTE. The third child is still missing.

Initially, it was thought that the three children named above had been recruited as child soldiers by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an armed opposition group fighting the Sri Lankan security forces for autonomy in the north and east of Sri Lanka. However, around 3 April, the parents of Ravichandran Prathishan and Ravisudam Kuvadasan, whose name was unknown at the time of the original UA, received information that their children were at the "Lucky House" PLOTE camp in Rambaikulam. They were allowed to visit them, and the PLOTE commander reportedly promised that the boys could return to their families, if they chose to do so. Ravichandran Prathishan returned home on 24 April. Ravisudam Kuvadasan remains at the camp, reportedly because he does not want to return home due to family problems.

There are allegedly currently up to 15 children undergoing training at the "Lucky House" PLOTE camp. The PLOTE have been working with the security forces for many years, and have been responsible for grave human rights violations in the Vavuniya area. Amnesty International has asked the Government of Sri Lanka to take immediate action to ensure the return to their families of the children recruited by PLOTE and other groups working with the security forces. The organization is also appealing for a halt to the recruitment of children by both armed groups working with the security forces, such as the PLOTE, and armed opposition groups, such as the LTTE.

There is no further news regarding the situation of Chandrasekaran Udayakumar, who was last seen on 15 March when he left home to go and play with friends. Amnesty International is continuing to investigate his case.

No further action is required by the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to those who sent appeals.