

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety/ Hostage-taking

29 April 2002

SRI LANKA

K V Sithamparapillai (m), aged 82

K V Sithamparapillai was taken captive by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on 26 April. He is being held hostage at Paddiruppu, Batticaloa district. His wife was allowed to visit him on 28 April. He reportedly is in good health, but the stress of being held hostage may affect this adversely.

On 28 April at around 10.30am, K V Sithamparapillai from Bar Road, Thamaraikerny, Batticaloa district, had visited the LTTE office at Paddiruppu in order to hand over 300,000 Rupees (approximately \$3,100) of an amount originally demanded from him several weeks ago. His family has reportedly been told that he will continue to be held until they pay a further 2,200,000 Rupees (\$22,800).

According to reports the LTTE had for several months put pressure on K V Sithamparapillai to provide them with money or face captivity. He was previously abducted on 16 April after he had refused to pay 5,000,000 (\$52,000). He was held overnight and released on condition that the money would be paid. A relative stood surety and negotiated for a reduction in the amount. The LTTE apparently then asked for 2,200,000 Rupees first and another 300,000 later.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

There have been many reports of hostage-taking for ransom and extortion by members of the LTTE in Batticaloa over the last few months. This follows unilaterally declared cease-fires by the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka in late December 2001, which were replaced by a permanent cease-fire on 23 February after negotiations facilitated by the government of Norway.

The abduction of K V Sithamparapillai was brought to the attention of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, a body set up under the cease-fire agreement to monitor its observance. Under Clause 2.1 of the agreement, the Sri Lankan security forces and the LTTE have to "in accordance with international law abstain from hostile acts against the civilian population, including such acts as torture, intimidation, abduction, extortion and harassment".

The taking of hostages, including for ransom, is in violation of international humanitarian standards, including common article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of 82-year-old K V Sithamparapillai who was taken captive at the LTTE camp at Paddiruppu, Batticaloa district on 26 April 2002, apparently as a hostage for ransom;
- expressing concern that his captivity is in violation of international humanitarian standards prohibiting the taking of hostages and in violation of the cease-fire agreement entered into by the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka in February 2002;
- urging that he be immediately and unconditionally released.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

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75020 Paris, France

**Telegram: Dr Anton Balasingam, Paris, France**

**Fax: + 33 1 43 58 11 91**

**Salutation: Dear Dr Balasingam**

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**Telegram: World Tamil Movement, Toronto, Ontario**

**Salutation: Dear Sir or Madam**

Tamil Co-ordinating Committee Norway

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**Salutation: Dear Sir or Madam**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 June 2002.