

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 37/19/97

16 July 1997

Further information on UA 210/97 (ASA 37/18/97, 14 July 1997) - Hostage-taking / Fear for safety

SRI LANKAT A D J Thenuwara

L Sunil Perera

M H R Pushpakumara

Mahinda Dias

J A J Jayakody

A W M Mustapha

R Yugathanathan - crew Members from the ship *Misen*

Maulavi J Abdul Rahman, religious leader (released)

A R Nisam Deen, village headman (still held)

A S Niros, aged 13, school pupil (released)

Seven students (5 released)

New names: Abdul Cader, aged 45, (still held)

F M Sajith Khan, 19-year-old student (still held)

F M Siraj, 16-year-old student (still held)

and 27 other villagers of Irakkakandy (still held)

Following the release of seven Muslims from the group of 39 civilians who appear to have been taken hostage by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on 2 July 1997, Amnesty International is calling for the immediate release of those still held. The organization reiterates its unequivocal opposition to hostage-taking.

Concern remains for the safety of the seven crew members of the *Misen* ship taken prisoner by the LTTE on 1 July.

On 14 July, the seven Muslims, including Maulavi J Abdul Rahman and 13-year-old school pupil A S Niros, were handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by the LTTE. Their release was reported by the LTTE as a humanitarian gesture. Among those still held are the *grama sevaka* (village headman), A R Nisam Deen and 45-year-old Abdul Cader. Two students, 16-year-old F M Siraj and 19-year-old F M Sajith Khan, also continue to be held.

Those released have reported that they were transferred blindfolded by sea from the village of Irakkakandy to a house thought to be situated in Mullaitivu district. They have also stated that they were treated well throughout their time in LTTE custody.

Reportedly the LTTE asked the seven men to convey a message to the government of their offer to swap the remaining 32 detainees in exchange for five of their members apparently handed over to the army by villagers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In another development, on 15 July, the LTTE stated that it would regard as legitimate military targets any merchant vessel taking supplies to the Jaffna peninsula in the north of the country. In their statement the LTTE accused the government of "shipping war materials to Jaffna under the pretext of supplying food and necessities for the people".

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

- welcoming the news that seven of the villagers of Irakkakandy have been released;
- calling for the unconditional and immediate release of all those still held hostage by the LTTE;
- expressing concern about the safety of the crew of the *Misen*;
- urging that they be treated humanely and given immediate access to the ICRC;

APPEALS TO:

Please organize appeals to the first two listed and then as many as you are able in approximately equal numbers to the other addresses.

1. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
International House
Eelam House
202 Long Lane
London SE1 4QB, United Kingdom
Telegrams: LTTE, 202 Long Lane,
Faxes: + 44 171 403 1653
London SE1, UK
Salutation: Dear Mr Thilakar

2. Tamil Co-ordinating Committee
341, rue des Pyrenees
75020 Paris, France
Telegrams: Tamil Committee, 341 rue
des Pyrenees, 75020 Paris, France
Faxes: + 33 1 435 81191 (may get a
wait signal, "attendez s'il vous
plaît")

Salutation for the rest: Dear
Sir/Madam

World Tamil Movement
64, Eaton Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4J 2Z5, Canada
Faxes: + 1416 462 9302

World Tamil Coordinating Council
Gold Gasse - 8
7000 Chur, Switzerland

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
P.O. Box 47
7600 Struer, Denmark

Tamil Coordinating Committee
P.O. Box 1699 Vika
0110 Oslo 1, Norway

Tamil Coordinating Committee
P.O. Box 694, Mulgrave North
Victoria 3170, Australia

Tamil Confederation - Germany
P.O. Box 340251
5270 Gummersbach 34, Germany

Tamil Coordinating Committee
Groot Hertoginnelaan 106
2517 EL Den Haag, The Netherlands

COPIES TO:

other Tamil organizations in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 August 1997.