

PUBLIC

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Fear of torture

11 September 1998

**SRI LANKAA Rasaratnam
E Nayavel (Amudan)
Thirugnanam Sambandan
Kasinathan Naguleswaran
Rajendran Sudarsan**

None of the above-named men, all members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) living in areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in northern Sri Lanka, have been seen since being recently taken prisoner by LTTE members. There are fears that they are being tortured during interrogation by the LTTE about SEP activists. Their detention has led to further fears for the safety of other local members of the SEP.

A Rasaratnam and E Nayavel were taken prisoner on 31 August 1998 from their homes at Kanchisivapuram, Killinochchi district, by members of the intelligence wing of the LTTE. Relatives who later went to enquire at the LTTE office at Naichikuda were told that they had been transferred to Visumadu.

Two other members of the SEP, Thirugnanam Sambandan and Kasinathan Naguleswaran, were similarly taken away in late July from their homes at Thirunapuram, also in Killinochchi district. A fifth member, Rajendran Sudarsan, was taken prisoner on 2 August.

Complaints have been lodged with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). According to the relatives, to date the LTTE has not responded to the ICRC's representations on their behalf.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP), formerly known as the Revolutionary Communist League, is a left-wing revolutionary political party made up of members from all the ethnic communities in Sri Lanka.

In the early 1990s, soon after it gained control over large parts of the north and east of the country, the LTTE was responsible for the killing of thousands of members of other armed Tamil groups. These included armed cadres as well as sympathizers of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). Many other members of these groups were taken prisoner and remain unaccounted for to date.

Although the ICRC is able to visit a small number of prisoners held by the LTTE, including members of the security forces and Sinhalese fishermen, it has not been able to gain access to Tamil prisoners held by the LTTE, on political grounds.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of A Rasaratnam, E Nayavel, T Sambandan, K Naguleswaran and R Sudarsan, who were recently taken prisoner by the LTTE in Killinochchi district;
- requesting assurances that they will not be ill-treated or tortured and quoting Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment";

- urging that they be immediately granted access to the ICRC and allowed to communicate with their relatives;
- urging clarification of the reasons for their detention.

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.

Senior Representative of LTTE

Mr Manoharan

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

International House

Eelam House, 202 Long Lane

London SE1 4QB, United Kingdom

Telegrams: LTTE, 202 Long Lane, London SE1, UK

Faxes: + 44 171 403 1653

Salutation: Dear Mr Manoharan

Salutation for the rest: Dear Sir/Madam

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")

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

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 October 1998.