

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 37/45/90
Distr: UA/SC

PLEASE SEND UP TO TEN APPEALS PER SECTION

UA 476/90

"Disappearance"

22 November 1990

SRI LANKA: W G Siriwardena

W G Siriwardena, a 22-year-old agricultural worker from Diyapalagoda, Muruthalawa, in Kandy District was taken from his home at around 8pm on 25 October 1990 by a group of armed men. Witnesses reported that they recognized the members of the group as police officers attached to the Peradeniya police station. W G Siriwardena's relatives made inquiries with the Superintendent of Police in Kandy but have so far not received any reply to Amnesty International's knowledge.

Amnesty International has no information about the possible reasons for the arrest of W G Siriwardena.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Reports of arbitrary arrests and "disappearances" in southern Sri Lanka have continued in the last few months. The victims include people who the security forces apparently believe had some connection with the violent opposition Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP, People's Liberation Front). Others had been released from detention or from rehabilitation camps shortly before they were abducted and "disappeared".

More than a dozen cases of "disappearances" have been reported from Kandy District alone in the last two months. Local residents have reported seeing the remains of burnt bodies at roadsides in the area, suggesting that in the south the pattern of "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions which was widespread in the between 1988 and early 1990 is continuing, albeit at a lower level.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters: (up to TEN appeals per section)

- expressing concern at reports that W G Siriwardena from Diyapalagoda, Muruthalawa, Kandy District has "disappeared" after being detained on 25 October by armed men, recognized as police officers from Peradeniya police station;
- urging that a full, independent inquiry be immediately instituted to establish his fate or whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that, if he is in detention, W G Siriwardena is being humanely treated and that he will be granted immediate and regular access to lawyers and relatives;
- urging that W G Siriwardena be immediately released or, if there is evidence of criminal activity against him, that he be charged and brought to trial under ordinary criminal procedures of law.

APPEALS TO

His Excellency President R Premadasa
Presidential Secretariat
Republic Square
Colombo 1
Sri Lanka

Telegrams: President Premadasa, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Telexes: 22650 PRESEC CE
Faxes: + 94 1 54 6657

The Hon Ranjan Wijeratne
Minister of Plantation Industries and Minister of State
for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Colombo
Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Minister Defence, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Telexes: 22229 MINDEF CE
Faxes: + 94 1 54 6091

Ernest Perera
Inspector General of Police
Police Headquarters
Colombo 1
Sri Lanka

Deputy Inspector General of Police
Kandy Police Headquarters
Kandy, Sri Lanka

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Sri Lanka in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 January 1991.