

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 37/04/00

**** THIS IS A LIMITED ACTION - PLEASE RESTRICT APPEALS TO 20 PER SECTION ****

UA 41/00

Fear of t

SRI LANKACHitravel Manivannan

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Chitravel Manivannan, who has reportedly been repeatedly tortured during interrogation by the police Counter Subversive Unit (CSU) in Vavuniya. He is reported to be in need of medical attention.

He has allegedly been repeatedly beaten with batons, and had a plastic bag filled with petrol tied over his head until he nearly suffocated. He now has difficulty walking.

Chitravel Manivannan was arrested on 10 January 2000 at a lodge in Vavuniya. He had just served a five-year sentence in Kalutara prison, and had travelled to Vavuniya to have the detention order lifted by the court that issued it. He had done this, and was waiting for a pass from the security forces to leave Vavuniya for Colombo when he was arrested. He is being held under a 60-day detention order.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Torture has been widespread in Sri Lanka for many years. Amnesty International has obtained many testimonies from victims of torture, and medical certificates corroborating these testimonies. The prevalence of torture is also revealed in Supreme Court judgements awarding compensation to victims of torture, and in recent reports from government inquiry commissions.

There have been widespread reports of torture since the conflict between the security forces and the armed opposition group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) resumed in April 1995. The LTTE are fighting for an independent state of Tamil "Eelam" in the north and east of the country. Young Tamil men originally from the north or east of the country, such as Chitravel Manivannan, are especially at risk of arrest as suspected LTTE members.

Sri Lanka acceded to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1994, and torture has since been made a criminal offence. However, under current legislation, the security forces have broad powers of arrest and detention. These wide powers have contributed to the prevalence of human rights violations, including torture. Torture has also been facilitated by widespread impunity of the perpetrators. To date, no member of the security forces has been brought to justice for committing torture.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Chitravel Manivannan, who is reportedly being tortured in the custody of the police Counter-Subversive Unit in Vavuniya;
- urging the authorities to undertake full and immediate investigations into these reports and take the necessary steps to bring the perpetrators to justice;
- urging the authorities to grant Chitravel Manivannan access to any medical treatment he may require, and to his family and lawyer.

APPEALS TO:

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga
Presidential Residence, "Temple Trees", Colombo 3, SRI LANKA

Telegrams: President Kumaratunga, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Faxes: + 94 1 33 37 03

Salutation: Your Excellency

Inspector General of Police Lakshman Kodituwaka
Police Headquarters, New Secretariat, Colombo 1, SRI LANKA

Telegrams: Inspector General Police, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Faxes: + 94 1 43 89 15

Salutation: Dear Inspector General

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Sri Lanka accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 March 2000.