

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 37/06/00

EXTRA 18/00 Fear of "disappearance" / Medical concern 6 March 2000

SRI LANKA Vyramuttu Jeyakili, aged 33

---

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Vyramuttu Jeyakili who has been missing since 25 February 2000 when he was arrested by the navy in Trincomalee district. He may be in need of medical treatment as he was reportedly hit on the head at the time of his arrest and was seen bleeding.

He was arrested with three other fishermen while they were drying their nets at Kuramalai, Sambaltivu, Trincomalee district and taken into navy custody. When relatives made inquiries at the Nilaveli navy camp nearby, officers reportedly denied they were in their custody. On the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission, however, three of the men were handed over to the police on 28 February.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Of the large numbers of "disappearances" reported in Sri Lanka since the mid 1980s, many relate to the fighting between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and government forces in the north and east of the country.

Vyramuttu Jeyakili's is the third reported "disappearance" this year. In 1999 Amnesty International recorded 10 "disappearances". The United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances visited Sri Lanka in October 1999 to evaluate its progress in implementing recommendations made by the government following two visits in 1991 and 1992. The report of this latest visit is due to be submitted to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights due to open in Geneva, Switzerland on 20 March 2000.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Vyramuttu Jeyakili, who has not been seen since he was arrested by the navy on 25 February 2000;
- urging the government to immediately provide information about his whereabouts and the reasons for his arrest;
- asking that if he is in detention he be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, or immediately released;
- urging that in the meantime steps are taken to guarantee his safety and allow him access to his family and a doctor;
- urging that those responsible for his "disappearance" be brought to justice.

#### APPEALS TO (please note that the fax number for the President can be difficult to get through to):

##### President

Her Excellency 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**

##### Navy Commander

Cecil Tissera

2

Navy Headquarters  
Flagstaff Street  
Colombo 1  
Sri Lanka

**Telegrams:Navy Commander, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Salutation:Dear Commander**

**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 3 April 2000.