

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 109/93 (ASA 37/08/93, 13 April 1993) - and follow-up (ASA 37/15/93, 9 August 1993) - Unacknowledged Arrests/Fear of "Disappearance"

SRI LANKA:Velupillai Jayakumar

Arrested 17 February 1993

Kandiah Murugamoorthy

Visvanathan Rajakumar

Ponnuthurai Samithamby

Nagamany Thangavadivel

Nagamany Sivamoorthy

Nagamany Panchadcharam

Mylipody Umaranjan

Kanthakutty Chitravel

Samithambi Yogarajah

Kandapody Puvanasingham

Kadapody Palan

Chellappa Udayakumar

Chelliah Balakrishnam

Nagamany Punniamoorthy

Nagamany Mahendran

Kannapathipillai Sevarajah

Arrested 27 December 1992

Muthukutty Pushparajah

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The Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) has published further information on the case of the sixteen Tamil men named above who were arrested at Vannathi Aru, Batticaloa District, on 17 February 1993. In its Annual Report of 29 September 1993, which covers the period from 10 August 1992 to 10 August 1993, the following account is given:

"They [the 16 farmers] were strung together on a long rope and marched off in Indian file and have not been heard of since. This incident had a disturbing effect on the Army Command at Batticaloa and Colombo. A committee of three high ranking Army officials was said to be making inquiries. A Police probe was also said to be on. Nothing has however materialised so far. The HRTF did its usual search but drew a blank. We have the stark possibility that they have been killed staring us in the face. This was aftermath to a confrontation between soldiers of the Rugam Army Camp and the LTTE in this area who it is alleged were getting these farmers to reap the harvest in the fields of Vannathi Aru."

On 11 October 1993 the Chairman of the HRTF, Justice Soza, wrote to Amnesty International to say that he had heard that the names of the army officers from the Rugam Army Camp who were in the vicinity of Vannathi Aru on 17 February 1993 had been forwarded to the Batticaloa Magistrate's Court (M.C. Batticaloa

Case No. 176/47) and that an identification parade is expected to be held. The case is next due to be called on 13 October 1993. Amnesty International will monitor developments in this case.

There is no further information on the two men reportedly arrested on 27 December 1992. Justice Soza had written to several Urgent Action participants saying that he believed Kannapthipillai Selvarajah may be one of the three prisoners he had visited who had this name, and sending their details. He has now confirmed in his letter of 11 October 1993 that none of these three men is the Kannapathipillai Selvarajah who reportedly "disappeared" on 27 December 1992, and so this case remains unclarified.

There is no need for further action at this stage. Thank you to all who sent appeals.