

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "disappearance"

18 September 1990

SRI LANKA: Raymond PERERA

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Raymond Perera, a 29-year-old shop steward for the Mercantile and Industrial Service Union at Associated Battery Manufacturers in Ratmalana, was reportedly detained by a group of plainclothed armed men around 9.30am on 14 September on his way home from work. Eye-witnesses say the detention took place along Kathuwakurunduwatta Road, Ratmalana. They said the armed men, who are believed to be members of the security forces, were travelling in a van without a number plate.

A complaint about the detention without warrant has been registered at Ratmalana police station but so far no information about Raymond Perera's whereabouts has been received. Appeals have also been sent to the President of Sri Lanka, the Minister of State for Defence, the Inspector General of Police and a number of other officials.

The "disappearance" of Raymond Perera could be connected to the "disappearance" in early 1990 of one of his colleagues, P.V. Sarath. Raymond Perera had reportedly been making inquiries about Sarath's arrest, which had apparently been carried out by men in police uniform. Raymond Perera had received death threats for pursuing inquiries into P.V. Sarath's "disappearance".

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although reports of extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" in southern Sri Lanka have diminished in the last few months, they have not ceased, and intimidation and death threats by government forces continue. The victims include people suspected of being members or sympathizers of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), People's Liberation Front, but also members of legitimate opposition parties and groups such as trade unionists. Numerous people "disappeared" after being seized by plainclothed armed men, who in many cases were members of the security forces operating in civilian guise.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that Raymond Perera has "disappeared" after being abducted on 14 September;
- urging that a full, independent inquiry be immediately established to establish his fate or whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that if he is in detention he be humanely treated, and that he be granted immediate and regular access to lawyers and relatives;
- urging that he be immediately released or, if there are charges against him, that he be brought to trial under ordinary 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

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

Ernest Perera  
Inspector General of Police  
Sri Lanka Police Headquarters  
New Secretariat  
No 349 Galle Road  
Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Police Inspector General Perera, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Senior Superintendent of Police  
Police Headquarters  
Ratmalana  
Colombo District  
Sri Lanka

Telegrams: SSP, Police HQ, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka

Lieutenant General Hamilton Wanasinghe  
Commander in Chief of the Army  
Flower Road  
Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Commander-in-Chief Wanasinghe, Colombo, Sri Lanka  
Telexes: 22496 AYCMDC SL

**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 30 October 1990.