

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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

PLEASE ORGANIZE UP TO TEN APPEALS PER SECTION

UA 383/90

"Disappearance"

20 September 1990

SRI LANKA: Kumaraguru KUGAMOORTHY

According to information received by Amnesty International, Kumaraguru Kugamoorthy, a radio producer at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation in Colombo, "disappeared" after his arrest on 13 September at around 5.30pm. Two colleagues say they saw Kumaraguru Kugamoorthy being stopped by a group of armed men, including one person in a camouflage uniform, while going along Jawatta Road on his motorbike. He was then apparently put in a Mitsubishi jeep, which had the registration number SRI 9164, together with his motorbike.

On 17 September, police from Cinnamon Gardens police station in Colombo went to his home and reportedly informed relatives that the motorbike had been found along the road and was now at the police station. They told his relatives that Kumaraguru Kugamoorthy should come and collect it. No further information was provided about the circumstances in which the motorbike was found or about the whereabouts of Kumaraguru Kugamoorthy himself.

Relatives, friends and colleagues have made inquiries with several police authorities, including the Inspector General of Police and the head of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) but no information has been given to them. Furthermore, CID officials have reportedly denied that he is in their custody. Appeals have also been sent to the President of Sri Lanka and the Minister of State for Defence but, to Amnesty International's knowledge, no replies have been received.

Kumaraguru Kugamoorthy had handed himself over to the police approximately one month ago after he had been informed that the police had received a communication about him. He was released after one day.

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.

After heavy fighting broke out in the northeast of Sri Lanka between government security forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the main Tamil armed opposition group, in June 1990, Amnesty International started to receive increasing reports of extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" from that area. Hundreds of Tamils in Colombo and other southern districts were also detained and screened for connections with the LTTE. Some were released, while others remain in detention. Several, however, have reportedly "disappeared".

Amnesty International does not know why Kumaraguru Kugamoorthy, who is Tamil, was arrested but is appealing to the Sri Lankan authorities to immediately

reveal his whereabouts, ensure that he is humanely treated if in custody and that he be granted access to lawyers and relatives. It is urging that he be released without delay unless he is to be brought to trial promptly and fairly on recognizably criminal charges.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters: Ten appeals per section only. Please try to get other organizations to appeal too.

- expressing concern about the "disappearance" of Kumaraguru Kugamoorthy after his arrest on Jawatta Road, Colombo, on 13 September;
- urging that a full, independent inquiry be immediately established to reveal his fate or whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that if he is in custody he be humanely treated and granted immediate and regular access to lawyers and relatives;
- urging that he be released without delay unless he is to be brought to trial promptly and fairly on recognizably criminal charges.

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
 Sri Lanka Police Headquarters
 New Secretariat
 No 349 Galle Road
 Colombia 1, Sri Lanka

Telegrams: Police Inspector General Perera, Colombo, 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 2 November 1990.