

Text of "Urgent Action Appeal" by Amnesty International

16 September 1998

URGENT ACTION APPEAL

The following information is from Amnesty International's research headquarters in London, England. A.I. is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the release of people detained because of their beliefs, color, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used nor advocated violence. These are termed prisoners of conscience. It works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the death penalty, extra-judicial executions (political killings), 'disappearances' and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners without reservation. Amnesty International promotes awareness of and adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognized human rights instruments, the values enshrined in them and the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and freedoms.

UA 243/98 Fear of torture 11 September 1998

SRI LANKA

A. Rasaratnam, E. Nayavel (Amudan), Thirugnanam Sambandan, Kasinathan Naguleswaran, Rajendran Sudarsan

None of the above-named men, all members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) living in areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in northern Sri Lanka, have been seen since being recently taken prisoner by LTTE members. There are fears that they are being tortured during interrogation by the LTTE about SEP activists. Their detention has led to further fears for the safety of other local members of the SEP.

A. Rasaratnam and E. Nayavel were taken prisoner on 31 August 1998 from their homes at

Kanchisivapuram, Killinochchi district, by members of the intelligence wing of the LTTE. Relatives who later went to enquire at the LTTE office at Naichikuda were told that they had been transferred to Visumadu.

Two other members of the SEP, Thirugnanam Sambandan and Kasinathan Naguleswaran, were similarly taken away in late July from their homes at Thirunapuram, also in Killinochchi district. A fifth member, Rajendran Sudarsan, was taken prisoner on 2 August.

Complaints have been lodged with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). According to the relatives, to date the LTTE has not responded to the ICRC's representations on their behalf.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP), formerly known as the Revolutionary Communist League, is a left-wing revolutionary political party made up of members from all the ethnic communities in Sri Lanka.

In the early 1990s, soon after it gained control over large parts of the north and east of the country, the LTTE was responsible for the killing of thousands of members of other armed Tamil groups. These included armed cadres as well as sympathizers of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). Many other members of these groups were taken prisoner and remain unaccounted for to date.

Although the ICRC is able to visit a small number of prisoners held by the LTTE, including members of the security forces and Sinhalese fishermen, it has not been able to gain access to Tamil prisoners held by the LTTE, on political grounds.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters:

- expressing concern for the safety of A. Rasaratnam,

E. Nayavel, T. Sambandan, K. Naguleswaran and R. Sudarsan, who were recently taken prisoner by the LTTE in Killinochchi district;

- requesting assurances that they will not be ill-treated or tortured and quoting Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment';

- urging that they be immediately granted access to the ICRC and allowed to communicate with their relatives;

- urging clarification of the reasons for their detention.

APPEALS TO:

Please send appeals to the first two listed and then to any of the other addresses as you are able.

Senior Representative of LTTE Mr Manoharan
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam International House
Eelam House, 202 Long Lane London SE1 4QB,
United Kingdom

Dear Mr Manoharan:

Telegrams: LTTE, 202 Long Lane, London SE1, UK

Faxes: 011 44 171 403 1653

Salutation for the rest: Dear Sir/Madam

Tamil Co-ordinating Committee 341, rue des
Pyrenees 75020 Paris, France

Telegrams: Tamil Committee, 341 rue des Pyrenees,
75020 Paris, France

Faxes: 011 33 1 435 81191 (may get a wait signal,
'attendez s'il vous plait')

World Tamil Movement 64 Eaton Avenue Toronto
Ontario, M4J 2Z5, Canada Faxes: 1 416 462 9302

World Tamil Coordinating Council Gold Gasse - 8
7000 Chur, Switzerland

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam P.O. Box 47 7600
Struer, Denmark

Tamil Coordinating Committee P.O. Box 1699 Vika
0110 Oslo 1, Norway

Tamil Coordinating Committee P.O. Box 694,
Mulgrave North Victoria 3170, Australia

Tamil Confederation - Germany P.O. Box 340251
5270 Gummersbach 34, Germany

Tamil Coordinating Committee Groot Hertoginnelaan
106 2517 EL Den Haag, The Netherlands

Please send appeals immediately. Check with the
Colorado office between 9:00AM and 6:00 PM,
Mountain Time, weekdays only, if sending appeals

after October 23, 1998.

Urgent Action Network
Amnesty International USA
PO Box 1270

Nederland CO 80466-1270

Email: sharriso@aiusa.org

<http://www.amnesty-usa.org/urgact/>

Phone: 303 440 0913

Fax: 303 258 7881



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact