

# Australian teachers union leader demands LTTE release Sri Lankan socialists

The WSWs Editorial Board  
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The general secretary of the union covering more than 60,000 teachers in the government school system in the Australian state of New South Wales has demanded that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam release arrested members of the Socialist Equality Party in Sri Lanka.

John Hennessy, general secretary of the NSW Teachers Federation, wrote to the LTTE yesterday calling on the organisation to respect the basic labour, human and democratic rights of the SEP members. He also noted the SEP's consistent record of opposition to the Sri Lankan government's war against the Tamil people.

The NSW Teachers Federation is one of the largest unions in Australia. Hennessy drafted the letter after requests from members of the union, including a resolution passed last month by union delegates representing teachers in the far western suburbs of Sydney. The letter reads as follows:

The statement from a major Australian union is all the more significant because it coincides with the arrest of two more members of the Sri Lankan SEP by the LTTE. The August 31 arrests of A. Rasaratnam and E. Nayalvale bring to five the number of SEP members in the hands of the Tamil secessionist organisation and provides disturbing confirmation of a report, sent from Killinochchi in mid-August, that the LTTE is hunting down all SEP members in the area.

The lives of the five Tamil socialists are in grave danger. Thirugnana Sambandan and Kasinadan Naguleswaran were arrested by the LTTE on July 26. Rajendran Sudharshan was taken from his home on August 2. Yet the London-based leadership of the LTTE refuses to acknowledge these arrests, let alone give any explanation for why the SEP members are being detained or any guarantees of their well-being.

The SEP is waging a powerful campaign in Sri Lanka to mobilise popular support to demand the LTTE leadership immediately and unconditionally release the five SEP members and cease its campaign of repression against the SEP. Well-attended public meetings have been held in Colombo and other centres in the south. Reports on the defence campaign have been featured prominently on Sri Lankan radio and television.

The *World Socialist Web Site* urgently calls on all its readers, all labour, human rights and Tamil organisations, and all those who defend basic democratic rights to send faxes and letters to the LTTE condemning the repression of the SEP and demanding the immediate and unconditional release of the five SEP members.

Letters should be faxed to the LTTE c/o Eelam House (London) at:

44-171-403-1653

Telephone: 44-171-403-4554.

Statements can also be mailed to:

The LTTE

c/o Eelam House

202 Long Lane

London SE1 4QB United Kingdom

Please send copies of all statements of protest to the WSWs at:

E-mail: [editor@wsws.org](mailto:editor@wsws.org)

Fax: (US) 248-967-3023



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**