

WSWS campaign against LTTE death threats wins international support

Wije Dias

12 October 2002

The campaign launched by the *World Socialist Web Site* to condemn the death threats made by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against Socialist Equality Party (SEP) members on the island of Kayts, in the north of Sri Lanka, has received a powerful response. The WSWS has received copies of letters and faxes sent to the LTTE leadership in Jaffna from Europe, North America, Australasia and Africa, defending the democratic rights of the SEP and demanding that the LTTE publicly denounce and repudiate the threats.

Three days after the statement, on October 8, the LTTE escalated its terror campaign when an LTTE assassin attempted to murder a leading SEP member in Kayts. The details of the violent knife attack were published yesterday on the WSWS. While the police have been given the name of the assailant, no action has been taken to arrest him. Since Tuesday he has made further threats against SEP members and their families.

The LTTE's continuing threats and violence against its political opponents in Kayts underscore the necessity of intensifying the WSWS campaign and upholding the democratic right of the SEP to conduct its political work.

The WSWS editorial board statement of October 5 has been disseminated widely on the Internet and there has been significant coverage of the LTTE's threats against the SEP in the Sri Lankan media.

On the evening of October 5, the BBC's World Service (Sinhala section), which has a wide Sinhala-speaking audience in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, interviewed the General Secretary of the Sri Lankan SEP, Wije Dias.

During the six-minute broadcast, Dias detailed the background to the death threats in Kayts and named the LTTE local officials responsible. He drew out the long

and unblemished record of the SEP in its defence of the democratic rights of the Tamil people and its consistent struggle for the withdrawal of Sri Lankan troops from the north and east "as part of our political program of establishing a Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Eelam."

Dias continued: "We know that our policy cuts across the bourgeois nationalist program of the LTTE. But the LTTE leaders must explain their position on the democratic rights of socialists to function free of intimidation and violence... This is particularly important under conditions where it is engaged in talks for a settlement with the Colombo regime, which is notorious for violating the democratic rights of both Tamil and Sinhala workers."

The next day, on October 6, the *Asian Tribune* produced the full text of the WSWS statement on its Internet site. This was followed by brief reports in the English and Sinhala editions of the *Island* newspaper.

On October 8, the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) published a lengthy portion of the WSWS statement in their regular bulletin.

In a letter of protest to the LTTE leadership, the president of the Central Bank Employees Union of Sri Lanka, M.G. Kiribanda, declared that the "cowardly actions of your members are an outright attack on the fundamental democratic rights of a socialist organisation.... The seriousness of this threat is telling. It is well known in Sri Lanka and among conscious sections of the international working class that the SEP and its forerunner, the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), fought to defend your organisation from the racist war of the Colombo regime...

"We emphasise that our union, the CBEU, will not tolerate the attempt of your members to stop the SEP from engaging in its legitimate political activities. We

support the SEP's campaign to defend the democratic rights of its members...."

WSWS readers from around the world have endorsed the campaign. In a letter to the LTTE, RK wrote that the LTTE's death threats were "an affront to the international working class" and demanded that the LTTE leadership make clear whether it endorsed them or not.

JJ writing from Canada to the Norwegian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), that monitors the cease-fire agreement signed between the Colombo regime and the LTTE, wrote: "I am shocked to hear that the LTTE, beside making sweetheart deals with the Colombo government, is now apparently hiring itself out as a ready-made goons-quad, with their recent death threats against union militants.... Tell them for me that people here in North America are watching their reactionary moves VERY closely."

Also from Canada, JC wrote that the death threats made by the two local LTTE officials were "clearly unconscionable, and a breach of democratic principles of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of association. The attempted extortion by these two individuals, the proximate cause precipitating these threats, must be investigated and repudiated, in the interests of fairness and justice."

In a letter to the SLMM from Israel, DM declared: "I am adding my signature to the WSWS statement which calls on 'all those who cherish fundamental democratic rights to demand that the LTTE withdraw and repudiate the death threats against the SEP's members and guarantee the rights of the SEP to engage in its political work, free from harassment and intimidation.'"

Writing from the United States, DL wrote: "It should be noted that the LTTE is preparing to join the government. The threats, harassment and attacks against the SEP are a harbinger to what will be carried out against the working class in Sri Lanka."

Also from the US, Dr IW asked of the LTTE leadership: "Are death threats aimed at other political parties the normal order of business for the LTTE? I ask you to publicly and unconditionally repudiate your officials' threats, and avow your commitment to the SEP's democratic right to conduct political work."

Further letters have been received from WSWS readers in Canada, the United States, South Africa, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Australia and New

Zealand.

We again call on all Tamil organisations, in Sri Lanka and throughout the world, to take a public stand against the LTTE's physical violence and threats and to insist that the LTTE leadership in Jaffna publicly repudiate them. We urge all labor and human rights organisations and all those committed to the defence of democratic rights to condemn the LTTE's terror campaign and to uphold the right of the SEP to conduct its political work free from intimidation.

Letters and statements should be posted or emailed to:

Jaffna

Ilamparithi
LTTE Jaffna Office
Potpathy Road, Kokuvil
Jaffna

Colombo

LTTE
c/- Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
PO Box 1930
Galle Road
Colombo 3
Email: slmm-hq@mfa.no

They can also be posted or faxed to:

London

The LTTE
c/- Eelam House
202 Long Lane
London SE1 4QB
United Kingdom
Telephone: 44-171-403-4554
Fax: 44-201-403-1653

Please send copies of all statements to the WSWS at:

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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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