

Further international protests against LTTE death threats

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The *World Socialist Web Site* has received a steady stream of letters from around the world protesting the death threats made by local officials from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) on the island of Kayts in northern Sri Lanka.

On October 8, three days after the WSWs published an editorial board statement calling for the defence of the SEP's democratic rights, a well-known LTTE member Karthikesu Amirthalingam attempted to kill a leading SEP member in Kayts, Nagarajah Kodeeswaran, with a knife. Kodeeswaran was able to escape but suffered serious wounds to his head, neck and shoulders and had to be treated in hospital.

The threats are continuing. Early this week a fisherman from Ampihainagar went to the LTTE's camp at Velanai in Kayts to complain about Amirthalingam's suspicious behavior towards him. The LTTE officials told him: "You should not worry. We are concerned only about those five. We will give them the proper medicine."

The "five" refer to SEP members on Kayts island. The reference to the "proper medicine" echoes the original warning made by LTTE's Kayts representative, Semmanan, on September 6 to a gathering of the Ampihainagar Fishermen's Co-operative Union. He said that the LTTE would not tolerate the activities of the SEP on Kayts and warned that they would be dealt with in the manner of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated by a suicide bomber in 1991. "Very soon we will find out the disease and give the proper medicine," Semmanan said.

Despite the fact that the SEP has lodged formal complaints over the threats and the attack, the police have taken no action against either Semmanan or

Amirthalingam.

On Tuesday, SEP General Secretary Wije Dias wrote to the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) in northern Sri Lanka to complain about the failure of the police in Kayts to act. "They have refused to properly record the complaints of Socialist Equality Party (SEP) members over the death threats and criminal attack on them by LTTE leaders in the area, let alone to take immediate steps to arrest those engaged in these criminal acts and to bring them before the courts," he stated.

Dias noted that in both cases the police had failed to write down the political affiliation of those involved, even though they are all well-known members of the LTTE. When Dias followed up his letter with a phone call to the Deputy Inspector General, a spokesman acknowledged that the complaint had been received but would only say that the matter was being looked into.

The SEP has also contacted the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which is responsible for supervising the ceasefire agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE signed earlier this year. An SLMM spokesman said that the mission had received a number of faxes and emails in response to the WSWs campaign and had informed its office in the northern Sri Lankan town of Jaffna to take action.

Below is a selection from letters sent to the WSWs by readers who have protested against the LTTE's blatant attack on the SEP's democratic rights.

Prof C from Sri Lanka wrote: "I consider it my duty to condemn in an unequivocal voice the death threats made by the LTTE against the members of the Socialist Equality Party, in the North. The record of the firm political stand of the SEP against the violation of rights of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka and the deployment of the armed forces in the North and the East, has been

very clear and widely known to the international community. The LTTE should clearly denounce the violence against SEP and withdraw the death threats allowing the members of this socialist organisation to carry out their political activities freely.”

Helmut Arens, a member of the Party for Social Equality, the SEP’s sister party in Germany, is a candidate in state elections in Hessen. In a letter to the LTTE, he wrote: “I will utilise our election campaign to make the electorate aware of the criminal attacks perpetrated against our members. There will be outrage in the German working class and among the Tamil speaking community in Germany as they will hear about the brutal attack on Nagarajah Kodeeswaran...”

“It is no accident that the LTTE resorts to such methods against their working class opponents, while it is having amiable talks about power sharing with their erstwhile enemies in the civil war. I am sure the working class of Sri Lanka, Tamils and Sinhalese alike, will reject this perspective.”

AI, from the US, stated: “The death threat by one Semmanan and his subaltern Arunthavan earlier in the month after an unsuccessful attempt to extort [money from] the fishermen’s union indicate that this murderous attempt was part of a premeditated political action by the LTTE.” Calling on the LTTE to recognise the SEP’s democratic rights, he commented: “If you deny democratic rights of others, then you enslave Tamil people to imperialism.”

SP, a storeman from Melbourne Australia, wrote to the LTTE: “You at this stage by refusing to make any statement on this attack are clearly lining up with the anti-Tamil and anti-working class regime in Colombo... In order for you to do a deal with the Sri Lankan government you are also going to preside over the brutal policing of the Tamil working class... Does the leadership of the LTTE support these death threats and violent assault or not? What are you going to do about it?”

GA from Bucharest, Romania commented: “The LTTE is getting used to the political life of the Colombo establishment, as the dealings with the Sri Lankan government show. ... This perfectly explains the death threats towards militants of the SEP. ... I firmly condemn the behaviour of the LTTE. This organisation should stop at once the harassments and intimidation of left wing militants.”

PS from France wrote: “I am adding my signature to the WSWs statement which calls on all those who cherish fundamental democratic rights to demand that your organisation (the LTTE) stop and repudiate the death threats against the SEP members.”

The WSWs has also received letters condemning the LTTE’s threats against SEP members from Germany, Sri Lanka and Canada.

We call on all those who are committed to the defence of democratic rights to support the WSWs campaign to demand the LTTE leadership repudiate the death threats against the SEP.

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:

Email: editor@wsws.org

Fax:

United States: 248 967 3023

Britain: 0114 244 0224

Australia: 02 9790 3501



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact