

Sri Lankan police belatedly initiate action over LTTE's threats against the SEP

K. Ratnayake
4 November 2002

Sri Lankan police have been finally forced to respond to complaints issued by the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) over death threats against its members made by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) officials on Kayts Island and a physical attack on an SEP member, Nagarajah Kodeeswaran, on October 8. The police actions, which follow growing support for the *World Socialist Web Site* campaign to defend the SEP, have, however, been limited.

On October 30, after repeated demands by the SEP, the Kayts police convened a formal inquiry to investigate the death threats. The SEP registered a complaint with the police on September 20, after area LTTE leader Semmanan threatened to give “the proper medicine” to SEP members and pointedly referred to the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

Semmanan made his comments at a meeting of the Ampihainagar Fishermens Cooperative Union, founded by the SEP, after the organisation refused to hand over funds to build an LTTE office at Velanai. His deputy Arunthavan made a similar threat on September 27.

It has taken over a month for the police to convene an inquiry—a procedure commonly used only in minor cases as a means of mediation. SEP representatives, including a Central Committee member, appeared at the hearing but the LTTE officials failed to turn up. Assistant Superintendent of Police Janaka, Guntailake, who is in charge of the investigation, said he had sent messages to Semmanan and Arunthavan the previous day.

At the hearing, Guntailake indicated to the SEP that the police would not take the matter any further. “We can inform the LTTE of the inquiry,” he said. “But if they do not turn up we cannot do anything because of a government order. The SLMM [Sri Lanka Monitoring

Mission] is now responsible for LTTE matters.” The officer said he would report the situation to his superiors.

Guntailake's comments are of particular concern as just four days earlier, the SLMM, which is in charge of monitoring the cease-fire between the government and the LTTE, told the SEP that it was up to the police to investigate the threats. The SLMM deputy head in Jaffna, Persan Der Skarvik, told an SEP representative on October 26 that he had met with the LTTE's top Jaffna official, Ilamparthi, who had denied the threats.

Der Skarvik said: “We met the DIG [Deputy Inspector General of Police]. He told the SLMM that the inquiry had been handed over to the Jaffna SP [Superintendent of Police], Hector Dharmasiri. The DIG also stated that according to Sri Lankan law, death threats are to be investigated by a Mediation Board. As there is no mediation board in Jaffna, the police will have to produce a report in the courts. As the LTTE has refused any involvement with us, only the police can inquire into it [the threats].”

Neither the SLMM nor the police seem to be willing to investigate the LTTE's threats. In the case of the police, the government appears to be directly involved, along with top officials, in blocking even routine inquiries.

The LTTE's actions, and the lack of a serious investigation, shed new light on the talks between the Colombo government and the LTTE in Thailand. While both sides speak of peace and democracy at the negotiating table, neither is prepared to guarantee the basic democratic rights of a socialist party that has consistently fought for the interests of the working class—Tamil and Sinhala alike.

We urge our readers to write condemning the LTTE's threats against the SEP and supporting the

party's democratic rights to campaign for its policies in the working class free from intimidation and physical attack. Letters, faxes and emails can be sent to the following addresses:

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