

Wife of murdered SEP supporter appeals for support for WSWs campaign

Our correspondent
11 September 2006

The Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka) is campaigning for an investigation into the murder of party supporter Mariyadas Sivapragasam. Mariyadas was shot dead by a gunman at his home in the eastern rural town of Mullipothana, near Trincomalee, on the night of August 7.

Evidence collected by the SEP indicates that the government security forces or allied paramilitaries were responsible. The murder took place in the immediate aftermath of fierce fighting between the army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the neighbouring areas of Mavilaru and Muttur.

Mariyadas's wife, Stela Krishanthi, was at home at the time with her husband and three-year-old son. The gunman came just after the dinner while Stela was in the kitchen washing dishes. She heard the gunshots and turned to see her husband collapse.

Speaking to the *World Socialist Web Site* last week, Stella fully supported the SEP campaign for an inquiry. She was shocked and angry about the murder, but determined to get justice for her husband.

"I appeal to everyone to support this campaign for a full investigation into the killing and to arrest those responsible for the murder. My husband was known for helping whoever came to him in any possible way. He was very active. I never saw him afraid at any time. People who know us in Mullipothana and Trincomalee are shocked and ask, 'Mariyadas was so helpful to people. Why did these fellows kill him?'"

"This campaign to expose who killed my husband will at least help defend other people from this type of killing. And it will help bring out to the world what is exactly happening here. None of the media deal with these incidents in a critical way."

She strongly denied rumours spread by the military that her husband was an LTTE supporter. "It is wrong,"

she said. "I know that he supported the SEP. He was involved in social activities such as donating gifts for sports in schools and church functions. He didn't see any difference between the Tamil, Sinhalese or Muslim schools."

Stela said she had come to know more about the SEP and its activities. "I am happy to hear of a group of people working beyond all communal and religious and other differences."

Speaking about the renewed war, Stela said: "[T]his is an unwanted war which does not benefit ordinary people. See how many innocent people are being made victims daily and how many are being displaced. Right at this minute, someone may have been killed.

"I experienced refugee life in 1990 when there was communal violence. I was about 12 years old then. We had to stay at the St. Joseph school refugee camp for four months. We all had just one set of clothes and we didn't have proper or adequate meals. In those days, my parents used to tell us about the peaceful days and how they travelled around the island without fear.

"At present, there are a number of families from Muttur at the St. Joseph school. That school has been a refugee camp so many times.

"I don't know exactly why and how this war has been started. But it is often said in the media by politicians that it is to 'safeguard the country'. But I don't understand how the country can be safeguarded when people are the victims of war.

"People are facing very difficult conditions. Fishermen cannot go out to the sea. Two or three years back the bus fare to Kantalai was 20 rupees. Now it is 35 rupees. Prices may go up again after the fuel price increased last week. The prices keep going up when the fighting occurs."

Stela said that it was difficult to survive on a monthly

salary of 5,000-7,000 rupees [\$US50-70]. Few people around Trincomalee even earned such a wage. The plight of young people was particularly acute. They have no jobs and cannot move about because of the war.

“I also have to find a job to live like many others,” she said.

The SEP and the WSWs urge all our readers and supporters to write to the Sri Lankan authorities protesting the murder of Mariyadas, demanding a full investigation and the arrest and charging of all those responsible.

Protest letters should be directed to:

Inspector General of Police Chandra Fernando,
Police Headquarters, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka.

Fax: 0094 11 2446174

Email: igp@police.lk

Attorney General K.C. Kamalasabeyson,
Attorney General's Department,
Colombo 12, Sri Lanka.

Fax: 0094 11 2436 421

Copies should be sent to the Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka) and the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Socialist Equality Party,
P.O. Box 1270,
Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Email: wswscmb@sltnet.lk

To send letters to the WSWs editorial board please use this online form.



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