

Letters demand inquiry into murder of SEP supporter in Sri Lanka

12 September 2006

The *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) has already received copies of a number of letters sent to Sri Lankan authorities demanding a full investigation of the murder of Socialist Equality Party (SEP) supporter, Sivapragasam Mariyadas.

Mariyadas was killed on the night of August 7 at his home in the rural town of Mullipothana, 20 kilometres from the eastern port of Trincomalee. At about 9.30 p.m., he went to the door after hearing someone call out his name in Tamil. A gunman shot him in the forehead and neck, then fled on a waiting motorbike. Mariyadas died instantly.

The most likely culprits are the Sri Lanka military or associated Tamil paramilitaries. Mariyadas was killed following heavy fighting between the army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the neighbouring districts of Muttur and Marilavu. Security forces heavily patrolled Mullipothana, making it difficult for anyone to move unchallenged in the town at night.

Moreover, in the wake of the murder, the military deliberately spread rumours that Mariyadas was an LTTE supporter, including at his funeral in his hometown of Selvanayagapuram. Mariyadas's murder is part of a broader campaign by the military, particularly in the North and East of the island, to intimidate and silence any opposition to the government's renewal of civil war.

Over the past 10 months, violence has escalated against Tamils in Colombo and the northeast, including against members of parliament and journalists. In none of the cases where the military or paramilitaries were suspected of involvement has there been a serious police inquiry. The most recent outrage involved the murder of 17 local aid workers attached to the French-based Action Contre la Faim (ACF) in Muttur just days before Mariyadas was killed.

SEP general secretary Wije Dias last week wrote to the Sri Lankan media, enclosing a copy of the SEP's statement "Sri Lankan SEP demands full investigation into murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas". Last Saturday, the *Island*, an English language daily, published a prominent article on page 2 on the SEP's demands for a proper investigation. Yesterday, the widely read Tamil newspaper *Thinakkural* republished the SEP's statement in full.

We urge our readers and supporters to support this campaign by sending protest letters to the Sri Lankan authorities demanding a full inquiry into the murder of Mariyadas.

Inspector General of Police Chandra Fernando, Police Headquarters, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka. Fax: 0094 11 2446174 Email: igp@police.lk

Attorney General K.C. Kamalasekera,
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.

We publish below some of the letters to Sri Lankan authorities received by the WSWS.

On behalf of Students for Social Equality at the University of Illinois, I am writing to demand that you open an investigation into the killing of Sivapragasam Mariyadas without delay.

Mariyadas was assassinated on August 7 in the eastern district of Trincomalee. His killing had all the trappings of a politically-motivated execution, and one, moreover, that appears to have had at a minimum the tacit support of security forces.

I assure you that an international audience is following this case with the utmost interest.

We, students at the University of Illinois, demand that you carry forth the duties of your office by opening an investigation without further delay.

Tom Mackaman,
President, Students for Social Equality, University of Illinois,
Urbana-Champaign,
Illinois, USA

It is with great shock and sorrow that I learnt of the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas on August 7, 2006 at Mullipothana, in Trincomalee. I am aware of his activities as a person who has openly campaigned against all atrocities against Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim people, whatever the source.

Mariyadas was sympathetic to Socialist Equality Party (SEP), which is known all over the world for the defence of democratic rights of the people and its consistently socialist standpoint. I urge the authorities to carry out a serious and prompt inquiry into this crime and to bring the culprits to book.

M. G. A. Cooray,
Professor of International Relations, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Socialist Equality Party in Sri Lanka and the World Socialist Web Site have announced that their supporter Sivapragasam Mariyadas was shot dead at his home on August 7.

As the president of Central Bank Employees Union, I thoroughly condemn that assassination and express my strong protest.

The SEP and WSWS stated that this assassination was likely to have been carried out by members of the Sri Lankan military, police or para-military groups associated with them. I agree that their suspicion is reasonable when examining the facts.

The Central Bank Employees Union also expresses its grave concerns over the current abductions, killings, threats against journalists and repression against working people in Sri Lanka and strongly protests them.

In relation to the above-mentioned assassination carried out on August 7, the acting officer in charge of the crime branch at Thambalagamuwa police station said the investigators failed to get any clue as to the crime. This shows that there is an avoidance of arresting the culprits and also a cover up of the crime.

As the president of Central Bank Employees Union, I strongly oppose these actions and urge you to hold a full investigation into the assassination and bring the culprits to book.

M.G. Kiribanda,

President of the Central Bank Employees Union, Sri Lanka

I vehemently condemn the murder by shooting of Sivapragasam Mariyadas, a supporter of the Socialist Equality Party on August 7 at Mullipotana in the Trincomalee district. Mariyadas, as a supporter of the SEP, was an opponent of the war from the standpoint of the working class. The main reason for his murder is that he stood up for his position against the war publicly.

The position of the SEP on the war has from the outset been different from that of the capitalist government in Colombo, as well as the LTTE separatists. SEP is the international socialist movement that fights to build an independent movement of the working class under the demand “withdraw the army from the North and the East”. Mariyadas stood for this political outlook.

The aim of this murder is to intimidate and silence all standpoints that oppose the war and the process of militarising the entire island by the ruling elite in Colombo.

I request that a full and prompt investigation be carried out and those responsible be punished.

Dharmasiri Bandaranayake,

Sri Lanka

[Bandaranayake is a prominent Sri Lankan film and theatre director]

I am writing to demand that the police conduct a full investigation of the assassination of Mariyadas Sivapragasam on the night of August 7, 2006, in the eastern district of Trincomalee.

The assassination took place in a war zone, which at the time was occupied and heavily patrolled by the Sri Lankan security forces. The assailant escaped on a motorcycle and must have passed through at least one of the security checkpoints set up throughout the area, and therefore, the assertion that this was the work of the LTTE or a sympathiser is simply not credible.

I am vehemently protesting the way in which this investigation has been carried out up to now and demand that those responsible be brought to justice. This heinous crime will not be forgotten, nor will your investigation—the world is watching.

Herman Rogers Jr.

Las Vegas, US

I strongly support the Socialist Equality Party’s campaign 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.

Mahalingam Velu

Jaffna, Sri Lanka

The law of the jungle in Sri Lanka should be stopped. The murderers of Sivapragasam Mariyadas should be brought to justice without lame excuses. There seem to be enough clues to find the truth, provided the so-called “Law Governors of Sri Lanka” are keen and sincere in their efforts to nab the murderers. You should understand the feelings of the parents, wife and child whose dearest and nearest was murdered brutally in close proximity. You cannot escape from justice for long, though you dream you can escape forever. Don’t forget there is a super power above us.

Sunthari Ramalingam

I am writing to you to vent my anger at the fact that, up to date, there has been no serious police investigation into the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas and to demand that this situation be changed. Sivapragasam Mariyadas was a supporter of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Sri Lanka and as such a devout advocate of the unification of the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim working people against the Sri Lankan government’s war. The Sri Lankan government and military do not like this perspective as it cuts across their agenda of divide and rule, pitting worker against worker while the national and transnational companies take advantage of the cheap labour of Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim working people alike.

There is no doubt he has been targeted for his principled position. It is also not surprising that the military has been circulating lying claims that he was an LTTE member. It firstly insinuates that you must be a member of the LTTE if you oppose the government’s racist war against the Tamils and that this is the treatment you will get if you oppose the government. And secondly it attempts to confuse working people about the principled fight of the SEP compared with the treacherous and dead-end perspective of the LTTE.

As a supporter of genuine democracy, I demand that no efforts be spared in tracking down and prosecuting the murderous thugs who had a hand in the murder of this principled man.

Steve Pollock,

Melbourne, Australia



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact