Support for inquiry into murder of SEP supporter in Sri Lanka

Our reporter
19 September 2006

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Sri Lanka has started to petition for a full investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the murder of the SEP supporter Sivapragasam Mariyadas. The petition is part of an international campaign launched by the SEP and the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) to demand that the Sri Lankan authorities take action.

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 false 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.

We again appeal for our readers and supporters to support our campaign by sending protest letters to the Sri Lankan authorities demanding a full investigation 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. 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.

We publish below some of the letters and statements supporting the campaign.

The following petition has been sent by 29 students from the Madras Presidency College in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu to the Inspector General of Police and Attorney General of Sri Lanka:

Investigate and punish all those responsible for the assassination of Mariyadas

We the undersigned vehemently condemn the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas, a supporter of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), and demand a full investigation into the murder of Mariyadas.

Mariyadas was killed on the night of August 7 at his home in the rural town of Mullipothana, 20 kilometres of from the eastern port city of Trincomalee. Mariyadas's murder is part of a broader campaign by the Sri Lankan military, particularly in the North and East of the island, to intimidate and silence any opposition to the government's renewal of war.

After reading articles about the murder case of Mariyadas Sivapragasam who is from Mullipothana near Trincomalee, I would like to express my full support for a full and public investigation about this case. I support the plea of his wife for such an open investigation because I believe that so many innocent lives would be lost in any country where it is in a war or civil war. One way to avoid such tragedies is by public investigation by local

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authorities about all crimes and by bringing criminals to justice.

Yousif Bekir,

Coquitlam, British Colombia, Canada

Inspector General Fernando,

I am writing to express my shock and deep dismay at news of the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas, and to urge you to take immediate action to bring his assassins to justice. As a supporter of the SEP myself, I find the idea that a man could be suddenly murdered in his home in front of his wife for his political beliefs deeply chilling.

Allow me to be frank. Mariyadas's murder was a professional job. Nothing was stolen from his house, not even his wallet. This murder has all of the features of a targeted political assassination. The actions of the authorities and military during and following the murder, as the initial SEP investigation has demonstrated, cannot but suggest complicity or conspiracy.

Do not allow a cover-up to take place. Find and prosecute Mariyadas's killers, and drag any accomplices they may have in the state apparatus into public view. If, on the other hand, you decide to look the other way, you could set a very dangerous precedent. Who will be next?

Mariyadas's only crime, in the eyes of his killers, was that he sought to bring peace to a region devastated by decades of communalist violence. Honor his memory by bringing his killers to justice.

Thomas Seabaugh,

USA

A number of Sri Lankans expressed their support for the SEP's campaign during petitioning in southern rural areas and among rubber and estate workers in the central hills district.

R.D.J. de Silva from Wathugedera near Ambalangoda said: "The SEP is well known to me as a party consistently opposed to the war. I was shocked to hear about the murder of its supporter Mariyadas. I think this murder is to silence the campaign against the war. We can't be silent about the killings and abductions now increasing in Sri Lanka. These are attacks against the democratic rights of every person. I demand that the authorities work under the law to find those responsible for the murder."

Sagara Amaratunge, 31, a building supervisor from Hikkaduwa, said: "I think the murder of Mariyadas is part of the intimidation of people opposing the war. Successive governments in this country have carried out injustices against Tamils. The war is being used to suppress poor Sinhalese and Tamils. The ruling class wants war because it can't solve the social problems of people.

"Inflation is very high in Sri Lanka. Last night *Rupavahini* [TV] announced the price of gas would increase by 100 rupees again. Now how many times have they increased prices of essentials this year alone? The bus fare is going to be increased again because diesel prices increased recently. How can we live?"

R. Jayaratnaraja, 34, a rubber plantation worker from the Kegalle plantation, said: "I strongly condemn the killing SEP supporter, Mariyadas. As far as I know, the SEP is the one and only party demanding the withdrawal of Sri Lankan forces from the North and East and opposing war in any part of the world.

"We are told that because of the cost of war that the government cannot bring down the cost of living. The prices of all food items have skyrocketed. When I joined the plantation as a casual worker at the age of 18, I was paid a daily wage of 42 rupees. Sixteen years later I am paid only 135 rupees."

K. Suppaiah, 35, from the Panmur Estate near Hatton, said: "I think Mariyadas was murdered because of the war. Tamil people can't walk around the streets. If any bomb blast takes place, Tamils are arrested. The only reason is that they belong to the Tamil community. This must be stopped. Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims must all be treated equally."

Banumathy, 28, a teacher, said: "If a person who is opposing the war and calling for the unity of all communities is killed, for whose benefit is the war being conducted? War deprives everyone of their rights. A large sum of money apart from other things is wasted on war. So how can a government spend on the welfare of people? It is a duty of every human being to oppose the war."

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

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