

More letters demanding Sri Lankan authorities investigate murder of SEP supporter

Our correspondent
7 October 2006

Further letters and statements have been sent to the Sri Lankan inspector general of police and the attorney general demanding a full investigation and the prosecution of those responsible for the murder of Socialist Equality Party (SEP) supporter Sivapragasam Mariyadas. More than 150 people have signed the SEP's petition calling a full inquiry, including artists, workers, teachers, farmers, youths and housewives.

Mariyadas was killed at his home in the eastern rural town of Mullipothana on August 7. He was shot through the head and neck after being called to the door at about 9.30 p.m. The gunman fled on a waiting motorbike. The most likely suspects are the security forces or associated Tamil paramilitaries. There was a heavy military presence throughout the area following bitter fighting between the army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in neighbouring Muttur and Mavilaru.

In the wake of the killing, the military deliberately spread false rumors 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 renewed civil war.

The security forces have intensified their repression, targeting minority Tamils not only in the war zones but throughout the country, including Colombo and suburbs. During the past three months, 33 abductions have been reported in and around the capital. Of those, nine have been killed. No proper inquiry has been conducted into any of these cases.

The "investigations" that have been conducted are designed to cover up the role of the security forces. The Sri Lankan government has repeatedly rejected demands for the involvement of international bodies in investigating killings in the North and East.

The International Commission of Jurists expressed its "deep concerns" on October 3 over the government's decision not to allow its observer to attend the "vital inquest" into the execution-style killing of 17 local aid workers attached to the French-based Action Contre la Faim (ACF). The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, which oversees the 2002 ceasefire, held the security forces responsible for the murders in the eastern town of Muttur in early August.

These developments highlight the importance of the SEP/WSWS campaign. We again call on supporters and WSWs readers to write protest letters to the Sri Lankan authorities demanding a full investigation and the prosecution of those responsible for the murder of Mariyadas.

Protest letters should be sent 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.

We publish below a selection of the latest statements and letters supporting our campaign.

Dear Sir,

I demand a comprehensive investigation into the assassination of Sivapragasam Mariyadas.

What emerges from the assassination of Sivapragasam Mariyadas is the destruction of the right to carry out politics democratically. Therefore it is urgent that the assassins be arraigned before the law.

I believe that if the state proves incapable of exposing and punishing the criminals, it is necessary for the masses to be mobilised for this task.

B.Wimalaratne, painter,

Ratmalana, Sri Lanka

Dear Sir,

I draw your serious attention to the assassination of Sivapragasam Mariyadas, a supporter of the SEP on August 7, 2006 in Trincomalee. The facts so far exposed about this assassination clearly demonstrate that this was a political killing. He was killed due to the political stand he took. Condemning this murder, I demand that a prompt investigation be carried out and that the assassins be arraigned before the law.

Gunaratne Wickramage, short story writer,

Pannipitiya, Sri Lanka.

Dear Sir,

Sivaprakasam Mariyadas was shot dead at Mullipothana in Trincomalee district on August 7.

As I knew well, Mariyadas, a supporter of the Socialist Equality Party, was hostile to all types of communal politics, including the politics of the LTTE. It is not difficult to understand that Mariyadas, who lived within the army defence zone, was killed by state forces or groups associated with them.

I, as a person who cherishes democracy, strongly oppose the killing of an individual for his political activities whatever they are. So, I believe that it is your duty to find the true killers and punish them. With that belief, I, as a person who cherishes democracy in this country, urge you to open an immediate investigation into this crime and bring the killers to book.

Asoka Sellakapu, artist,
Wathugedara, Sri Lanka.

Dear Sir,

During the last two months, a number of assassinations have been reported, in addition to the war that is being conducted in the Northern and Eastern provinces. It has been exposed that these were the work of state forces or paramilitary groups. There is no doubt that the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas is the same thing. But the specific issue in this assassination is Mr. Mariyadas's political opinions, which became the basic reason for his killing. He was killed because he opposed the war.

Therefore finding his killers is very important. I express my deep concerns about the fact that no steps have been taken to find the murderers and urge you to bring the assassins to book immediately.

Mano Fernando,

Jaala, Sri Lanka.

Inspector General of Police Chandra Fernando,

Through the *World Socialist Web Site*, I follow the developments in Sri Lanka with great interest. I support the stand of the SEP against the brutal civil war in your country. Therefore I condemn fiercely the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas and demand an investigation into that case. Mariyadas was shot at his home in the eastern rural town of Mullipothana on August 7 at about 9.30 p.m. The murderer fled on a waiting motorbike.

A lot of questions remain unanswered. There is sufficient evidence that the security forces or at least a part of them or associated Tamil paramilitaries were involved in that crime. There was a heavy military presence throughout the region following bitter fighting with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the neighbouring areas of Muttur and Mavilaru.

It is also outrageous that in the wake of the murder the military spread false rumors that Mariyadas was an LTTE supporter and did not even shrink from doing this at his funeral in his hometown. I share the view of the SEP that 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 recourse to war and brutal oppression.

Once again: I demand a full investigation to find and prosecute those responsible for the murder of SEP supporter Sivapragasam Mariyadas. If you don't want your country mentioned in the same breath as existing and former dictatorial states in South East Asia and Latin America, you should bring the murderer to book.

Ulli Gilgenbach,

Duisburg, Germany.

I am writing to call for a full and independent investigation of the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas and now, as well, of the lack of a proper police inquiry into this assassination.

As a delegate in the United Federation of Teachers in New York City and a teacher of history, I recognize that the known circumstances of this killing indicate that it was bound up with the war in Sri Lanka, behind which is the intensified drive to discriminate against and exploit, not only the Tamil population, but all working people of Sri Lanka. Here in the United States, there is a long history of ethnic, racial, and religious divisions being used to prevent the unity of workers for the benefit of the ruling elite.

The publicized deficiencies in the police investigation—Mariyadas's dead body removed from the crime scene, the magistrate not proceeding to the crime scene, evidence from eyewitnesses and from the reporting home guard not recorded—as well as the fact that the area, including Mullipothana, was being heavily patrolled by security forces, lead to the speculation that a cover up on behalf of the army, or an associated paramilitary group, is being carried out in order to intimidate opponents of the horrible war.

Contrary to the rumors spread by the military after his death,

Sivapragasam Mariyadas was not a supporter of the LTTE, but rather promoted the enlightened program of the Socialist Equality Party, which is against the war being carried out by the government of Sri Lanka and appeals for the unity of all Sri Lankans, Sinhalese and Tamil and Muslim, on the grounds of democratic and workers rights for all that can only be provided in the establishment of socialism.

That policies such as these would benefit the working class of Sri Lanka, the United States, and of all nations makes the murder and the failure of justice an outrage that people from all the world, including myself, will protest. The just course of action now, to which I urge that you commit yourself and your agencies, is a full investigation into this political crime, with the immediate arrest and prosecution of the killers and organizers.

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New York, USA

Newton Perera, a hospital worker Kalubowilla, Colombo condemned the murder of Mariyadas. He told the WWS: "I fully support the SEP campaign demanding a full investigation into the murder of Mariyadas. I have read the SEP statement about the Mariyadas murder. According to the statement, it seems that the armed forces or paramilitary forces behind the murder. He was not a supporter of the war-launching government or the LTTE.

"It is the responsibility of the government to punish the culprits under the law whoever they are. But we cannot think that government will punish them. Every day there are killings and abductions. The government is speaking about peace and continuing the military offensive.

"Combined with the war, the government is increasing the prices of essential goods. The price of one kilogram of flour increased by four rupees yesterday. A few days before, the government again increased the prices for electricity. People could not afford these prices. The government has asked the masses to tolerate the situation to protect the country.

"The government warned workers not to launch strikes or make demands in this situation. With the high cost of living, it is very difficult to manage. We government workers have campaigned for a pay increase. The government increased our pay by only 400 rupees [\$US4] a month. That's not enough. For the first six months of this year, the government should have paid 1,100 rupees as the cost of living allowance. But it has paid only 375 rupees. Hospitals workers who work for urban councils are not paid even that.

"If an all-out war is declared, inflation will keep going higher and higher. At the same time, the government will intensify its repressive laws on workers. I saw in the newspapers that the president has issued a special gazette notification banning strikes. War and the suppression of workers' rights are being imposing at the same time.

"I oppose the war. The government and JVP [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna] supporters here brand those opposing the war as supporters of the LTTE. As the government, they demand everyone unites to protect the motherland. The government is not treating the Tamils in the north-east and workers in the south differently. Workers should oppose the war. At the same time, they have to oppose the government's repressive laws."

In India, 36 students from the Presidency College and 58 students from other colleges in Chennai (Madras) in Tamil Nadu have signed a petition to demand Sri Lanka authorities carry out a full investigation and punish all those responsible for the assassination of Mariyadas.

Nadaraj, a second year student from the Presidency College, told the WWS: "No to war [in Sri Lanka]. Peace is okay. In the war people die unnecessarily. As long as the military is in the North and East of Sri Lanka, no one can win. There is no room for negotiations. India or other governments should intervene. Life is invaluable."

Iyathurai, a student from Nandanam College, said: "The socialist

movement must fight for this investigation. If it is allowed to go unchallenged suppression will continue. Sinhalese and Tamil people should not be affected. War is not necessary.”

Manikandan, from the same university, said: “An investigation must be conducted into the murder of Mariyadas. It happened within a military-controlled area. A probe will expose the truth. The war continues for military interests. A solution should be found through peaceful talks.”



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact