

Further letters to Sri Lankan authorities demand full investigation of SEP supporter's murder

Our correspondents
12 December 2006

More letters, petitions and statements have been sent to the inspector general of police and the attorney general in Sri Lanka demanding the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the murder of Socialist Equality Party (SEP) supporter Sivapragasam Mariyadas.

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 most likely culprits are the security forces or associated Tamil paramilitaries. There was a heavy military presence throughout the area at the time, following bitter fighting between the army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in neighbouring Muttur and Mavilaru.

The police were forced to order an inquiry three months ago amid the international campaign by the SEP and the WSWs demanding an investigation. Only last month the attorney general's department belatedly informed SEP general secretary Wije Dias that "necessary action" would be taken on the issue. However, there is no sign that the police are conducting a serious inquiry.

That is because all the evidence points in a definite direction. Four months before his assassination, Mariyadas received a death threat from a member of the home guards, an auxiliary force that operates closely with the military and police. On April 11, a home guard on duty in Mullipothana visited Mariyadas at his workplace. He accused Mariyadas of providing information about the area to the LTTE and explicitly warned that he would be killed.

Mariyadas told Jayaweera, the owner of the building in which his workshop was located, about the threat. He also informed his wife, Stella Krishanthi, and his brothers, Sivapragasam Benedict and Jesudas. Jayaweera, a retired village officer, told the SEP that the home guard, nicknamed "Tomba," had also threatened to "smash-up" Mariyadas's workshop.

The threat was 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. Hundreds of people, mainly Tamils, have been abducted and killed over the past year by death squads widely believed to be operated by the security forces.

The SEP/WSWS campaign to demand that Mariyadas's killers be found and punished will strike a blow against this orchestrated wave of killings. We again call on supporters and WSWs readers to send 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, Victor Perera,
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.

Below we are publishing further statements sent to the Sri Lanka authorities.

Assassination of Sivapragasam Mariyadas

I condemn the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas, a political supporter of the Socialist Equality Party on August 7 at Mullipothana in the Trincomalee district.

Mariyadas accepted and represented SEP politics, which are fighting to build an independent movement uniting Sinhala and Tamil workers, advancing the demand of "withdraw the Sri Lanka troops from north and east".

The main reason to kill him was his opposition to the war in public. The aim of this murder was to intimidate and silence all the activists who opposing the war under the Colombo ruling class's program to militarise the whole island.

I demand a full investigation into the murder and the prosecution of those responsible.

Sunil Harischandra

(President, "The Professional Friends"—Matara District Photographers Association)

Matara, Sri Lanka

Petition calling for a prompt and proper investigation regarding the assassination of Sivapragasam Mariyadas, political supporter of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP)

We are presenting this petition in order to request that a prompt and proper investigation be held into the murder of Sivapragasam Mariyadas, a political supporter of the Socialist Equality Party, on August 7 last at Mullipothana in the Trincomalee district.

Mariyadas was killed at 9.30 p.m. in his home by a person who beckoned him by name and shot him in the head and neck when he went to see who had called.

Mariyadas's spouse Stella Krishanthi saw the killer as he made his getaway, running across the compound and jumping over the garden wall.

The police officers of the Tambalagamuwa police station arrived at the spot within half an hour of the crime and took Mariyadas's body to the Kantalai hospital. At the subsequent inquest the Magistrate made the routine conclusion that the death was due to injuries caused by the bullets from the gun of an unknown killer.

In response to a request by the SEP the acting OIC of the crimes division of the Tambalagamuwa police station said the investigators had failed to find any clue about the murder, and that the case would be taken up once again in the magistrate's court three months later.

The circumstances of the killing point to the fact that it was a consciously planned professional murder. We have reasons to suspect that it was the work of members of the defence forces, the police or the paramilitaries.

The entire area where the murder took place is in a war zone with maximum security. It is patrolled by the police and the home guards day and night so that any one traveling in the night would be closely searched at the numerous checkpoints.

We request earnestly that steps be taken without delay to apprehend the culprits, whoever they are, and to produce them before the law.

Yours faithfully

TK Aldeniya, branch secretary and alternative general council member

Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers Union (CMU) Branch

Ceylon Theatres, Sri Lanka

Demanding a full investigation and the prosecution of those responsible for the murder of Socialist Equality Party (SEP) supporter Sivapragasam Mariyadas.

I join, as a Sri Lanka worker, the international campaign launched by the WWSW on the murder of SEP long-term supporter Sivapragasam Mariyadas.

Since 1977, I have been reading Revolutionary Communist League [forerunner of the SEP] literature. After I discussed the case with WWSW and SEP members it is clear that Mariyadas's murder was carried out under the guidance of the Sri Lankan security forces.

The SEP is a party that has conducted a hard struggle against racism and Sinhala chauvinism since 1968.

After President Rajapakse came to power, he intensified the racist war, destroying the Tamil peoples' life and property. Meantime he is also destroying the living conditions of all workers and the oppressed.

The racist capitalist government is intensifying the civil war, using the oppressed youth of South as the war bullets. In the same time Mariyadas was killed on August 7 in the East Mullipothana at his residence. After that, the armed forces rhetorically spread rumors that he was an LTTE member.

I completely agree with the SEP's Marxist concepts. About the murder of that party's supporter Mariyadas, I strongly demand a full proper investigation and the punishment of the culprits responsible for this barbaric murder.

Truly

K Kaluarachchi

Aruggoda, Sri Lanka

Dear Sir,

Sivapragasam Mariyadas, a political supporter of the Socialist Equality Party, was murdered by a gunman on August 7 last at Mullipothana in the Trincomalee district.

I wish to inform you that I brought to the notice of the Inspector General of Police and the Attorney General that a proper investigation should be made into this murder.

Yours sincerely

Amarapala Wanniarachchi,

All Island Justice of the Peace

Maharagama, Sri Lanka

Sir, I wish to add my voice to the demand for a proper investigation of the murder of SEP supporter Sivapragasam Mariyadas on August 7 this year. Mariyadas was a principled opponent of communalist violence and took a political stance that is in the interests of the majority of Sri Lankans and indeed the majority of people on this globe. Social progress is better than endless war, whether on "terror" or of it.

Thank you

Yours Sincerely

Robert Verdon

Australia

Below we are publishing the comments of some of the people who signed a petition in the Sri Lankan plantation area demanding an immediate inquiry and the punishment of the culprits of Mariyadas's murder.

R. Sivanathan from Agarapatana said: "According to the information given by the WWSW, Sivapragasam Mariyadas was a supporter of the SEP and WWSW. SEP is a well-known party, which consistently fights for the unity of workers, irrespective of language, religion or colour. The SEP is also fighting continuously against the war.

"The killing of Mariyadas took place after the war was renewed. It is very clear that the instigators of the war are the people behind the killing of Mariyadas. I strongly condemn this killing and urge the responsible authorities to hold a proper full-scale investigation to bring the killers before the law."

Periyasamy Sivakumar, a schoolteacher at Pathana, said: "I vehemently condemn the killing of Sivapragasam Mariyadas, a genuine Socialist Equality Party supporter. I urge the police chief to have an impartial inquiry into his killing as quickly as possible and punish the offenders. Justices delayed is justice denied."

Mariyasoosai Margrat, a teacher at Halgaranoya, said: "As the Socialist Equality Party says, it is very clear that Sivapragasam Mariyadas was killed either by the armed forces or paramilitary groups associated with the armed forces, when you see the time and period of killing. I condemn this coward act and ask the police department to have a full-scale investigation to find the culprits and punish them."



To contact the WWSW and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wwsw.org/contact