

# Sri Lankan SEP to hold meeting on fishermen's struggle

Socialist Equality Party  
26 June 2012

The Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka) and the International Students for Social Equality will hold a public meeting in the western port town of Chilaw, on June 30, to discuss a socialist program for the struggles of fishermen.

In February, President Mahinda Rajapakse's government increased fuel prices by nearly 50 percent, in accordance with IMF dictates. Facing a crippling rise in their costs, thousands of fishermen staged protests. The government responded by mobilising the armed forces.

In Chilaw, one fisherman, Antony Warnakulasuriya, was shot dead and another three were seriously wounded. Last week, one of the wounded fishermen, W.J. Kinsly Fernando, committed suicide because of the economic difficulties resulting from his disabling injury.

A government promise to provide fishermen with a 25 percent fuel subsidy soon proved fraudulent—it was paid only for a few months. The cost of fishing equipment has also skyrocketed, but the prices for what fishermen catch have not risen.

The fishermen's struggle is part of a broader battle. All workers are being hit by the government's austerity measures, the devaluation of the rupee and rising prices for essentials and utilities, such as electricity and water. As popular opposition grows, the government has resorted to increasingly anti-democratic measures.

Without a political struggle against the government and its program, neither fishermen nor any other section of the working people can defend their social

and democratic rights. This means a joint political struggle to replace the Rajapakse government with a workers' and peasants' government committed to implementing a socialist program for the benefit of the vast majority of society.

The SEP is the only party that fights for the perspective of socialist internationalism. We urge fishermen, workers and youth to attend our meeting.

**Venue:** Sudasuna Hall, Chilaw

**Date and time:** Saturday June 30 at 3.30 p.m.



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