

Public meeting: The death of Vijayakumar at the Maussakelle tea factory—No to Workers' Lives for Profit!

Socialist Equality Party and Plantation Workers' Action Committee (Sri Lanka)
19 November 2025

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the Plantation Workers' Action Committee (PWAC) in Sri Lanka will hold a public meeting on November 30 in Maskeliya, in the central plantation district, to discuss the tragic death of Krishnan Vijayakumar, who was killed while working at the Maussakelle tea factory in the central hill country.

Vijayakumar, 49, was killed instantly on November 5 when he was pulled into the tea-leaf rolling machine he was operating. The post-mortem report states that he died from “blunt force trauma,” causing “injuries to the neck, chest, and upper limbs.”

Vijayakumar fell victim to this entirely preventable tragedy because the mandatory safety guards on the rolling machine had been removed or were never installed. Fellow workers are unequivocal: Had the safety guards been in place, he would not have been killed.

The Maussakelle factory belongs to Maskeliya Plantations, part of the Richard Peiris Company (ARPICO), one of Sri Lanka's largest conglomerates. For years, the factory administration knowingly compelled Vijayakumar and other workers to operate this hazardous machine, fully aware of its dangerous condition. The administration ignored every complaint and refused to take even the most basic corrective measures.

Such disasters—stemming directly from the deliberate gutting of safety standards to cut costs and boost corporate profits—are increasing rapidly in Sri Lanka and internationally. Vijayakumar's death is the latest example of the deadly conditions prevailing in plantations and other workplaces.

Just three days before Vijayakumar's death, on

November 2, an explosion at the Kiriporuwa Estate rubber-processing plant in Yatiyantota, 75 kilometres east of Colombo, injured 25-year-old Rajinikanth, who died shortly afterward.

In August, two workers were killed in separate industrial accidents at the Colombo Port's International Container Terminal and at a factory in Makola, Sapugaskanda, a suburb of Colombo.

These are not merely “industrial accidents” but industrial murders—the direct result of the profit-driven assault on essential safety precautions by the capitalist class.

To defend their lives and advance the struggle for jobs, wages, and decent working conditions, the SEP and the PWAC call on workers to establish rank-and-file action committees in every factory, estate, and workplace—completely independent of the pro-company trade unions.

These committees must halt production in unsafe conditions, demand full disclosure of safety data, and fight to hold all those responsible for deaths and injuries criminally accountable.

The decisive question in this struggle is the international unity of the working class. The International Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees seeks to mobilise workers globally in the fight against capitalism and for socialism.

The SEP and the PWAC urge all workers, youth, and others to attend this important meeting and participate in the discussion.

Date: Sunday, November 30, 2025

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Venue: PMD Hall, Upcot Road, Maskeliya



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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