



COTANZ

Consortium of Tamil Associations in New Zealand
Auckland ? Wellington ? Christchurch ? Palmerston North

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Media Release

Sri Lankan Government disregards disappearances

"The President of Sri Lanka has chosen to dismiss the present disappearances as not worthy of local and international attention," said a resolution passed by Civil Monitoring Commission on 9th April 2007.

This resolution was passed in an event organized in Colombo, where family and friends of the disappeared gathered to express their grief. The Civil Monitoring Commission is engaged in monitoring involuntary disappearances, abduction, extra judicial killings and arbitrary arrests and detentions in Sri Lanka.

People in attendance of the event was the Commission chairman Sirithunga Jayasooriya, Opposition Leader Ranil Wickramasinghe, Commission convenor and Western People Front leader Mano Ganeshan, Tamil National Alliance parliamentarian Suresh Premachandran and United National Party parliamentarians John Amarathunga and Ravi Karunanayake.

The Commission's resolution included:

We are saddened that the present government, headed by a President who had been at the forefront of the struggle against disappearances many years ago along with the family members of the disappeared, has chosen to dismiss the disappearance of our loved ones as something that is not worthy of local and international attention. We are particularly pained at the inability or unwillingness of the government to adequately investigate this situation and their rejection of our efforts and those of local and international groups trying to help us.

The Commission's resolution suggested a number of steps the Government ought to take, including:

- *Publicly acknowledge the disappearances of our loved ones and the continuing disappearances*
- *Extend invitation to United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Madam Louise Arbour to visit Sri Lanka*
- *Make "enforced disappearances" a crime in Sri Lanka*

In the opinion of COTANZ (Consortium of Tamil Association in New Zealand), the number of disappeared Tamils, and the lack of subsequent investigation into those disappearances, is one of the clear indications that the government of Sri Lanka values Tamils less than other groups within Sri Lanka.

George Arulanantham
Coordinator
Consortium of Tamil Associations in New Zealand
The Unified Voice of New Zealand Tamils
+64 9 620 6200, george_cotanz@yahoo.com

Dr Siva Naguleswaran