



COTANZ

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

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Media Release

Arrest of Tamil Community Leaders in France

The arrest of Tamil community leaders in France on the 1st of April was no April Fools jokes.

French police simultaneously raided the Paris office of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, the TTN Television station, the office of the Tamil Co-ordinating Committee and the Hindu Temple in Paris. It is claimed that these institutes and offices maybe permanently closed.

Along with the closure came the arrest of at least 17 Tamil community leaders and prominent members of the Tamil community. Private homes were also later raided, although there were no further arrests.

The Consortium of the Tamil Associations in New Zealand (COTANZ) strongly condemns the arrest of Tamil community leaders and the raids on Tamil institutes in France. The raiding and closure of holy institutes, media organisations, and NGO groups has an eerie echo of the activity of the Sri Lankan government, namely the police and army in Sri Lanka. Such activity in Sri Lanka is expected by the Tamil community, however for such activity to occur in a country known as a world leader in human rights is very disturbing.

In an act that further violates basic human rights, French police cancelled permission given earlier to hold a peaceful protest rally condemning the raids and arrests. This blatant violation of Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is more often seen in Sri Lankan than in France.

Tamils have been mercilessly prosecuted in Sri Lanka and COTANZ fears such activity is now beginning to filter into other countries. The Diaspora is a result of this prosecution. We will be in great danger if this prosecution were to continue in our newfound homelands.

COTANZ urges the release of the Tamil community leaders in France and the reopening of the public institutes.

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

Ms Nirupa G