



From the Tamil Refugee Council Press Office

April 25, 2013

THE EVIL WAYS OF SRI LANKAN REGIME EXPOSED ON ONE MAN'S BACK

Melbourne, Thursday -- The Tamil Refugee Council has called on the Australian Government to end its policy of engagement with Sri Lanka and the deportation of asylum seekers after another torture victim revealed the horror of his recent trip to his homeland.

“Kumar”, a 35-year-old Australian resident, told the ABC 7.30 report, and Fairfax Media, he was beaten, raped and bashed and burned with hot metal rods over four days earlier this month by Sri Lankan intelligence police.

Kumar, a Melbourne restaurant chef and father of three young children, came to Australia on a student visa three years ago after being harassed and beaten by Sri Lankan authorities for alleged links to the Tamil Tigers. In 2006, during the civil war, he was paid by the Tamil Tigers to carry parcels while working as a bus driver.

He returned to Sri Lanka earlier this month to help out in his uncle’s restaurant after his uncle fell ill. He was picked up by the Sri Lankan intelligence police a few days after arriving back.

“They kept me naked and bound like a dog in a room for four days. They bashed my feet and spine with wooden sticks, they crushed my balls and they put ice cubes in my anus. Then they heated up these iron rods and bashed and burned my back. “I thought I was going to die.” Kumar said. (SEE PICTURE BELOW, TAKEN UPON HIS RETURN TO AUSTRALIA)



"On the last day I begged them not to kill me. I said 'I've got family, I've got kids'. They showed me a blank sheet of paper and wanted me to sign." He said he signed the paper and was then released by a roadside around midnight. He said his relatives paid bribes to get him out of jail and also out of the airport. He flew back to Australia on April 11.

A spokesman for the Tamil Refugee Council, Aran Mylvanagam, said Kumar's case was living proof of the lie of the Australian Government claim that it was safe for Tamils to return to Sri Lanka, whether they be asylum seekers or people returning voluntarily.

"Australia's policy on Sri Lanka and on asylum seekers and refugees is in turmoil. It is morally, ethically and legally bankrupt," said Mylvanagam.

"The reason people like Kumar have to suffer is because governments like Australia engage with this brutal regime, giving them cover to commit their atrocities. Those horrific scars on Kumar's back prove the lie, propagated by the Australian Government, that all Tamils are safe to return, let alone asylum seekers whom the Sri Lankan president has said many times are "traitors."

"It is a sickening thought that Kumar was being tortured and raped while the Australian Minister for Immigration was declaring it was safe for asylum seekers to return to Sri Lanka, and then proceeded send back 26 of them from Geraldton in Perth. "

The Tamil Refugee Council calls on the Australian Government to conduct:

#A full, transparent investigation into the case of "Kumar", and offer urgent assistance in his asylum claim.

#A full, transparent investigation into the two suicide attempts at the MITA detention centre in Melbourne on Wednesday. One Haraza man attempted to hang himself and a 17-year-old Iraqi boy jumped from a roof. Both are in a serious condition in hospital.

#An end to mandatory detention of refugees and the immediate release of 56 refugees held indefinitely in Australian detention centres because of controversial ASIO assessments.

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