

Tube Tamil

We are writing to you because we are concerned about our arrested journalists. The Sri Lankan military, police, intelligence and pro-government groups have abused their power to infuse fear of life and threaten media freedom.

Two of our Tamil journalists were arrested by the Anti-Terrorism Squad in Sri Lanka at 05.30 am on 29.03.2021. Following the decision against Sri Lanka by the Human Rights Council, the Sri Lankan government has started intimidating and arresting innocent Tamil journalists with fabricated false cases.

Tube Tamil head-office which is located at 712 Novel Street in Jaffna (northern province in Sri Lanka), was surrounded by Sri Lankan Anti-Terrorism Squad early morning and the Tube Tamil's Sri Lankan executive and journalist Divinia Nilusini (ID card number: IC 867680527V) was arrested 05.30 am. Another lead journalist of Tube Tamil Juan Wimalraj (ID card number: IC842063639V) was arrested at his own house same time. They were arrested by the Anti-Terrorism Squad and taken to Colombo for further investigations. We do not know where they are now. Arrest receipts have been issued by the Jaffna CID stating that they have arrested them for pronouncing the name of the Tamil Tiger's leader Prabhakaran in the media. The arrest receipts numbers are A397510 and A357509. The arrested journalists are still not submitted to the court. Divinia Nilusini has a 7-year-old sick daughter, and the child is denied permission to see her mother despite her medical condition. Our lawyer says, that nothing can be done until they are handed over to the court.

At the time of the arrest, work equipment in our office was taken away which includes five laptops, five cell phones, five broadcasting equipment, a camera, internet communication equipment, all the documents and the press IDs of our journalists and staff. They had no intention of having to reassemble the equipment when they were taken, they have torn it all out and destroyed the office. The Danish flag in the office were also torn down. It might be the anger that Denmark voted against Sri Lanka at the Human Rights Council.

Vimalraj and two of our other staffs were already falsely accused and had been arrested and kept in the Jaffna Jail and later released in court. Tube Tamil director Divinia was also arrested two days ago and later released in court. Her case has been adjourned. The reason for the arrest was that she did not appear in court in Parithiturai for a previous trial. But in fact, she was falsely accused of not receiving such a call by post and was taken away. They have no evidence that the letter was sent. Sri Lankan authorities use these kinds of approaches as a weapon to repress Tamil people.

They put a high pressure on us through the police and the army both from Colombo and Jaffna divisions. Similarly, the CID is not only in Jaffna, they are also divided into several sections, one after the other, constantly investigating and disrupting our work to make us tired. They act with the intention to fatigue us psychologically so we think, it is not worth the hassle. Since we did not stop our work, they started to arrest us with fabricated false cases.

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DENMARK

SRI LANKA

We met Sarvendra Silva, one of the army commanders, to stop the harassment and ask him to ensure our security, but he could not help. The main reason for this is, that the law enforcement is divided and works for different authorities; The Presidential Brigade, the Prime Minister's Brigade and the Police of Ministers etc. Thus, we are chased in many forms and there is no end to it.

There is no peace in Sri Lanka and the problems are not resolved. The Sri Lankan government gives a false picture to the world to avoid international pressure and keeps the problems alive locally to retain the power in the country. There is also a massive corruption in who gets the emergency aid such as the Samurdhi project that allocated 5000 Rs for each one during the Corona. Only a few got to see those money and it is the same case with the housing project. We as a media in North Sri Lanka have met the affected people and covered the truth about these situations. Thus, been threatened for many times by the Sri Lankan authorities. Therefore, in this critical corona situation, we have set up a charity called Tamil Kodi and have been working for 16 hours daily for more than a year to help the starving people during the Corona period, providing food to tens of thousands Tamil people, food for school childrens, school equipment, monthly assistance to vulnerable women, creating wells, building toilets etc. Our media work took place alongside these countless community work (The videos for this are attached).

The Sri Lankan government is abusing its power and seeks revenge aiming a complete shutdown of our Tube Tamil media service in Sri Lanka and thereby silencing not only our journalists but all journalists working hard to expose the truth in Sri Lanka. Frequent arrests, death and imprisonment threads are everyday life for Tamils in Sri Lanka. Proper justice is not available here for any case. Bribery, corruption, and abuse of power are rampant. Thus, Tamil people lose hope and fears to expose the true situation in the minority areas. The government is systematically suppressing the few that comes out with an iron fist. Imprisoning them, where they are tortured, raped and murdered. These are the state weapons that are used to suppress the minority in Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan government has begun to publicly retaliate against the Tamil people for the decision against Sri Lanka at the Geneva Human Rights Council. We fear the arrests of the two journalists is just the beginning. We do not know what they are going to do to our employees who have been arrested. But the iron hands of the Sri Lankan government in the aftermath of the Geneva resolution seem to have begun explosively.

We sincerely hope you can help us save the lives of our Tamil journalists whom are arrested by the Sri Lankan government.

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Management.

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