

TAMIL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

55 Warren Road
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LONDON SW19 2HY

DATE: 18 JULY, 1979

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF SRI LANKA

A CHALLENGE FROM THE OVERSEAS THAMILS CONCERNING THE ARREST WITHOUT CAUSE

TORTURE AND MURDER OF THAMIL YOUTH BY YOUR ARMED FORCES.

SIR,

1. On the 12th July 1979 at 1 a.m. (Sri Lankan Time) Mr. Kanagaratnam Visvajothy Ratnam Inbam and his brother-in-law Mr. Selvaratnam were taken from their beds by your armed forces in Jaffna, after effecting entry into their homes by force. They were not seen alive after their arrest. Later their bodies were discovered - horribly mutilated - under a bridge.
 - (a) There were definite signs of brutal torture before death. They had been skinned alive as portions of their bodies were skinless. Their private parts had been removed. Their heads had been smashed by shots fired at point blank range. The methods used to achieve such horrible wounds must have been as bad as those adopted by the worst dictatorial regimes.
 - (b) The father of Mr. K.V.R. Inbam, worried that his son and son-in-law had not returned home, made representations to the Jaffna M.P., before the bodies had been seen. That M.P. immediately contacted your armed forces headquarters in the area but was told that they had nothing to do with the arrest and torture or murder of the two young men. The M.P. then contacted the authorities in Colombo and yet again your armed forces spokesman gave out a flat denial.
2. You are aware that under the Bandaranaike governments Tamil youth had been arrested and tortured. Now under your pro-Western government Tamil youth are being tortured and murdered by custodians of the law! We, Tamils of Sri Lanka, (formerly Ceylon) fought side by side with you for independence, and although thirty years have passed, our people still remain second-class citizens and are victims of countless atrocities committed by your people.
3. In 1977 your police began a disturbance in Jaffna, which spread throughout the island and resulted in murder, rape and arson of our people. Your police and army were responsible for many of these crimes. The Red Cross, War on Want, Oxfam and other relief organizations were prevented from helping the 45,000 refugees among our people because your High Commissions all over the world denied that the Tamils had suffered such disasters. In 1958, we, Tamils had been brutally attacked and killed by the hundreds. After the 1977 disturbances nearly four hundred Tamils have disappeared without trace. These 400 do not include the known dead.
4. Your police and army have a stranglehold on the people of the Northern and Eastern provinces of the island. You know that our Tamil youth are denied higher education and jobs. Many innocent youngsters are arrested from time to time.

We, therefore, call upon you, as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, to immediately order your armed forces to desist from attacking, harassing, arresting without cause, torturing and murdering our youths.

Yours

தமிழ்த் தேசிய ஆவணச் சுவடிகள்

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