

ASSASSINATION OF S.SABALINGAM IN PARIS ON 1 MAY 1994

SABARATNAM SABALINGAM, who has been living with his family in Paris for the last several years, was shot at point-blank range and killed in the presence of his wife and child in their own home by two gunmen, known to be Tamils, on 1 May 1994.

Born on 14 January 1952 in Velanani in the Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka, **SABALINGAM** had been a pioneer of the Tamil liberation struggle. He spent some three years in Sri Lankan jails for his active participation in the 1970s in struggles against State repression of Tamils. He came to France in 1981 to avoid further persecution. He was a well known writer, publisher of Tamil literary works, human rights activist and a documentalist, besides working in an organisation assisting Tamil refugees with their problems.

SABALINGAM's assassins had gained entry into his residence under false pretences - having telephoned him and seeking his assistance and an appointment to discuss some of their personal problems. The gunmen arrived at about 2.30 pm on 1 May 1994, rang the door bell, and the unsuspecting family members allowed them into the house. The two who arrived were Tamils and spoke Tamil. Within two minutes of their arrival, one of them pulled out a gun and shot at **SABALINGAM** several times - one bullet pierced through his forehead killing him almost instantly. The two killers wrenched off the telephone wires, threatened the terror-stricken family members not to shout and escaped.

While there have been many politically motivated acts of violence among Tamils in some western countries, **SABALINGAM's** brutal assassination is the first one of its type - a well planned premeditated murder carried out by persons trained and deployed to physically eliminate the likes of **SABALINGAM** who think and act independently - carried out in a western

country. Similar acts of assassinations have occurred among Tamils in Sri Lanka and India over the years, but the killing of **SABALINGAM** in Paris sets a new and dangerous trend.

We condemn the brutal assassination of **SABALINGAM** as an act of unmitigated terrorism. It is a dangerous and sinister development threatening the safety and security of all Sri Lankans, particularly Tamils, living in European countries who wish to exercise their basic right to free expression. There is no doubt that the murder of **SABALINGAM** was ordered not only to physically eliminate him, but also to serve as an example and a warning to other independent persons within the expatriate Tamil community.

We call upon all those concerned with basic human and democratic rights to join us in denouncing the assassination of **SABALINGAM** and similar politically motivated acts of individual terrorism.

We call upon the French Authorities to vigorously pursue the investigation into the killing of **SABALINGAM** and to bring the culprits to justice.

We also alert the British Government to the prospect of this dangerous spectre of political violence and assassinations visiting independent minded Tamils living in the UK and to their deeply felt concern and fear in this respect, and earnestly urge that the authorities do take such preventive and precautionary steps as are necessary to avoid such crimes being committed against defenceless persons living in the UK.

Issued By the **COMMITTEE AGAINST
POLITICAL KILLINGS**

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