



Tamil Information Centre

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Committed to Human Rights and Community Development

PRESS RELEASE

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Endless Brutality: Killing of Joseph Pararajasingam, MP for Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

The Tamil Information Centre (TIC) strongly condemns the escalating political killings in Sri Lanka, which may plunge the country into the abyss of war and chaos. It is deplorable that people of all walks of life are targeted, including members of parliament, journalists, writers, academics, human rights defenders, social and community workers, NGO staff, lawyers, students, women, educators, priests and members of political parties, progressive organizations and trade unions. With them die their dreams, idealism, commitment, courage, youth, love and hope. A part of us perishes with them and the hopes and dreams of communities and the nation they represent are shattered.

The TIC is outraged by the brutal and diabolical killing of Batticaloa Member of Parliament Joseph Pararajasingham. With the killing of Mr Pararajasingham, we have once again witnessed the tragedy of a crime motivated by hate and ignorance, striking at the very heart of democracy and freedom. Mr Pararajasingham was closely associated with the TIC since 1985, assisting TIC in the vital task of documentation and has involved in human rights advocacy initiatives. The TIC and the Tamil community have lost a strong defender of human rights of the Tamil people. His loss will be felt by many at the TIC and in the human rights community.

The TIC has been increasingly concerned over the widespread and morally reprehensible harassment, intimidation and senseless violence against civilians. The prevalence of armed gangs has contributed to an increasing culture of gun violence in Sri Lanka.

Our concern has deepened in the last few months, as the targeting of civilians by all parties with impunity is regarded callously as insignificant or inevitable. Whether it is the Sri Lankan government, the LTTE, or any other militias or paramilitary groups or factions, any party involved in such actions, it is delusional to imagine that such acts would in any way contribute to the cause or for a better society. Nothing can justify these terrible acts of violence and their actions have no place in any struggle for justice.

Such acts show the grave danger to democratic traditions and it clearly shows the urgent need for all communities to unite irrespective of ethnicity, religion and political opinion.

We call upon the members of the Tamil, Sinhala, Muslim communities of Sri Lanka to stand together against intolerance, prejudice, violence, bigotry and crime and impunity and categorically affirm that *"such acts are wrong and unacceptable and we will no longer tolerate such actions"*.

The Tamil Information Centre also calls on the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE to spell out the specific measures they will implement to protect the people who speak out about human rights abuses and express political dissent in the island. Only the government and the LTTE can curb abuses committed by their agents and by armed gangs in the regions under their control.

In this moment of immense sadness, our thoughts are with Mrs Sugunam Pararajasingham and the other innocent worshipers who sustained injuries in the attack and their families which have been subjected to the trauma.

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