



வடகிழக்கு மனித உரிமைகள் செயலகம் NORTH EAST SECRETARIAT ON HUMAN RIGHTS NESOHR

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Disappearance of Anthonippillai Soosainather and Thevasahayampillai Jeyakumar

Soosainather



Name: Anthonippillai Soosainather (Male) (44)
Marital status: Widowed with three children
Address: Vannankulam, Mullaitivu
Occupation: Fisherman

Soosainather and his family displaced to India during the 1990 Sri Lankan military operation in Mullaitivu. He came back home to Mullaitivu in 2003 following the signing of the ceasefire agreement. His family and home were seriously affected in the December 2004 tsunami. He lost his wife and his 13 year old daughter in that tsunami. He was living with his three remaining dependent children in the transit camp at Unnappulavu.

Jeyakumar



Name: Thevasahayampillai Stanis Jeyakumar (Male) (39)
Marital status: Married with three children
Address: Vannankulam, Mullaitivu
Occupation: Fisherman

Jeyakumar was displaced to India during the war. He came back in February 2003 because his mother who was in Mullaitivu was very sick. Jeyakumar's mother Lilly Thevasagajampillai says that Jeyakumar left his wife and two children in India and brought one of his children with him. Since then he has been looking after his mother and the child. Jeyakumar's mother laments the plight of his child and herself without her son.

Incident

On 23rd January 2006 around 3.30 pm the pair, Jeyakumar and Soosainather, left to go fishing from Vannankulam area in Mullaitivu. Fishermen in this area would normally return from the sea with their day's catch around 7.00 am the next morning.

At about 8.45 pm on 23rd, several people at the shore heard gunshot noises coming from the sea which they all recognized as coming from gunboat. Families and friends of those who went to sea that night started to worry about the men at sea.

Jeyakumar and Soosainather did not return to shore on 24th morning. Their families organized two boats to go to sea in search of the men. These two boats returned that evening without any good news and the searchers also said that they did not see an oil slick or any other item indicating that the boats have sunk. The searchers, however, said they saw two pieces of fishing net floating 6 km from the shore. A search team of 37 boats were sent the next day, January 25th, by the Federation of Fishermen's Unions, also did not find any trace of the men.

On January 27th people from Mullivaikkal, an adjacent village 8 km away, found the boat belonging to the disappeared pair swept ashore. The boat was easily identified as belonging to the disappeared pair by several distinguishing marks. These are: it carried the number 195; it carried the name "Don Bosco" since it was donated to one of the missing pair by Don Bosco Religious Congregations; and it also had the names of the three children of Jeyakumar, one of the missing pair, to whom the boat belonged.

There were additional tell tale signs. As shown in the photos below, a brand new rope that had snapped and an iron cable were attached to either side of the boat. These were not attached to the boats when the pair went to sea. The missing pair's family and friends express the strong view that these are the type of rope and iron cable used by the Sri Lankan Navy.



The parish priest of this area Fr. Jude Amalathas says that two days prior to the disappearance of the pair the Sri Lankan Navy gunboats close onto to boats of the fishermen who were fishing in the sea at high speed. Fr Jude said that this is a cruel harassment of fishermen who would then leave their nets in the sea and speed in their boats towards the shore in panic.

Since Mullaitivu is in the LTTE administered area, families have lodged the disappearances with the LTTE police station in Mullaitivu. Families have also lodged the disappearances with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM).

Dr N Malathy
(NESOHR Secretary)