



Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10 February 2006

17:00 Sri Lanka Time

Re: Response to allegations that TRO is not cooperating with the Police

TRO would like to **categorically state that it is cooperating fully with all Government of Sri Lanka institutions** investigating the abduction of TRO/PSEDC staff.

It is with great dismay and concern that we have read the statements in the media from the Hon. Foreign Minister Managla Samaraweera and the Hon. Cabinet Spokesman Information and Media Ministers Anura Priyadharshana Yapa that the “TRO is not helping with these ongoing investigations.”

TRO has **continuously sought out the assistance and urged the Police to investigate** this matter fully and professionally. Unfortunately, there seems to be a dearth of communication, expertise and professionalism within the police force and between the police, other institutions and the public.

TRO has documented proof of having filed police reports by TRO personnel or facilitating the filing by those victims/witnesses released or their families (see www.troonline.org for scanned copies documents):

- ◆ Batticaloa Police Station was notified 30/2/06 via telephone at approximately 22:00 hrs by TRO of the abductions.
- ◆ Batticaloa Police Station at 11:00 am on 31 January 2006 report filed by TRO
- ◆ Arjunan Ethirveerasingam petitions Hon. Mahinda Samarasinghe and IGP Fernando to investigate – assurances are given and contact details for TRO are given to the Minister and IGP.
- ◆ Interview/statement taken by C.I.D. at Colombo Office on 31/2/06.
- ◆ Welikanda on 1 February police report filed by two of the women abducted on Monday (they were released 2 hours after being abducted). TRO Batticaloa Director and SLMM accompanied them.
- ◆ Welikanda on 1 February filed by 2 of the mothers of those still being held. TRO Batticaloa Director and SLMM accompanied them
- ◆ Vavuniya on 1 February filed by the brother of Ms. Premini. (He is a resident of Vavuniya).
- ◆ **Batticaloa on Thursday 2 February the 2 pre school teachers Ms. Punniyamoorthis Nadeswari (19 years old) & Ms. Siththiravel Sivamathi (18 years old) who had been abducted on 29 January voluntarily presented themselves at the Batticaloa Police Station at great personal risk to enter a police report and be interviewed. TRO Colombo and TRO Batticaloa facilitated this interview and solicited the services of**



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the Non-Violent Peace Force to accompany the women and TRO personnel to the police station.

The two pre school teachers were detained against their will over night by the Batticaloa Police (23 hours: 15:30 February 2 – 14:30 February 3, 2006) after which they were taken to the hospital (for undisclosed reasons) and then to the courts. This illegal detention of the victims of a crime when they have come forward voluntarily to give evidence is a blatant violation of their fundamental human rights. Such treatment of victims/witnesses by the police may be the reason why some of the other victims/witness have not come forward

- ◆ Ms. Punniyamoorththy Nadeswari & Ms. Siththiravel Sivamathi testified before the Human Rights Commission on 8 and 9 February 2006. The pre school teachers were terrified after their overnight stay in the Batticaloa Police Station and, in consultation with their parents, requested that TRO bring them to Colombo. **TRO provided safe transit and once in Colombo notified the Human Rights Commission** (on 1 February) of the women's desire to testify.
- ◆ **TRO has CONTINUOUSLY and without reservation offered its assistance to those investigating the abduction of its staff.**
- ◆ **TRO has attempted to contact the investigators, the IGP Mr. Chandra Fernando, Mr. Mahinda Samarasinghe and many other government officials to no avail. Calls are not returned.**

TRO has been cooperative and will continue to do so. All the authorities have to do is make the request. Thus far the request has not been forthcoming.

The TRO phone numbers are: **269 3254**
 471 6575

We encourage those who wish to speak with us to call.

For more information please contact:

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