

UN Rights Chief Urged to Monitor the Arrest of Sri Lanka's Jaffna University Student Union Leaders: TGTE

"Request Sri Lanka not to use the current situation as a pretext to commit human rights violations against members of the Tamil community"

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In a letter to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet Jeria, the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam's (TGTE) Prime Minister Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran has urged her to monitor the arrest of N. Diwakaran (24-years-old), Sri Lanka's Jaffna University Student Union President and S. Badilraj (23-years-old) its Secretary on 3 May 2019. In addition he urged UN Rights Chief to request Sri Lanka not to use the current situation as a pretext to commit human rights violations against members of the Tamil community.

The letter states that:

I am writing to bring to your attention the arrest of N. Diwakaran (24-years-old), Sri Lanka's Jaffna University Student Union President and S. Badilraj (23-years-old) its Secretary on 3 May 2019.

While we understand the current security challenges in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday bombings, we are concerned that Sri Lankan Government may be using the current climate as a pretext to detain Tamils who have nothing to do with Easter Sunday bombings.

The recent arrest of Jaffna University student leaders took place when Security forces were allowed to enter Jaffna University by the University Administration and the Student Union.

During the search, a picture of LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirabhakaran and some banners of people killed during the end of the war used during remembrance ceremonies were found in the student union office. The government does not allege that either student has any connection to what happened on Easter Sunday. In addition, a Medical College Canteen employee was arrested for having a picture of a Tamil leader.

These student leaders and the canteen employee were remanded until May 16th and there are concerns that Sri Lankan Government may use certain sections of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) to detain them without charge. As you are aware, Sri Lanka agreed to repeal PTA in Human Rights Council resolutions it co-sponsored. UN Special Rapporteurs have also found that persons held pursuant to the PTA have been subjected to torture.

We are writing to urge you to monitor this case and urge Sri Lanka not to use the current situation as a pretext to commit human rights violations against members of the Tamil



community.

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