



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

24 January 2008

LKA102744.E

Sri Lanka: Reports of extortion by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Various sources consulted by the Research Directorate indicate that members of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) have been directly or indirectly involved in extortion, among other human rights abuses (AFP 6 Mar. 2007; TamilNet 6 Mar. 2007; *The Washington Post* 28 July 2007; HRW Aug. 2007; Freedom House 2007). According to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2007* report on Sri Lanka, all parties involved in the country's conflict, including the Sri Lankan security forces, have "engaged in a pattern of human rights violations, including civilian killings; abductions and disappearances; arrests and detentions; political assassinations; child conscription; and extortion" (ibid.).

On 6 March 2007, Sri Lanka's police chief announced that a large number of current and former armed forces personnel and police officers had been arrested for their involvement in kidnappings for ransom (AFP 6 Mar. 2007; TamilNet 6 Mar. 2007; IANS 31 Dec. 2007). Most of the victims of extortion were reportedly Tamil, Upcountry Tamil and Muslim, and a few were Sinhala (TamilNet 6 Mar. 2007). Cited in a 6 March 2007 Agence France-Presse (AFP) article, a high-ranking police detective indicated that "elements in the [security] service were working together with 'underworld gangs' to abduct, extort money and kill people" (see also Reuters 6 Mar. 2007). On the same date, TamilNet reported that, according to media reporters, senior government officials were also alleged to have colluded in abductions for ransom (TamilNet 6 Mar. 2007).

On 8 March 2007, the government of Sri Lanka released a statement denying the allegations made against the Sri Lankan army, police and government officials, saying that the accusations were "unfounded" and "based mostly on hearsay and fabrication" (Sri Lanka 8 Mar. 2007).

In July 2007, Reuters reported that the Sri Lankan police had arrested sixteen more individuals on charges of abduction and extortion, including current and former members of the Sri Lankan air force and four police officers (Reuters 4 July 2007; see also Reuters 1 Aug. 2007). During the same month, *The Washington Post* similarly reported that the Sri Lankan police had arrested a number of current and ex-police and military officers for their suspected involvement in abduction rackets (28 July 2007).

In an August 2007 report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) states that "[t]here is now a clear pattern of complicity by the security forces in abductions,

extrajudicial executions, and extortion committed by [the Karuna paramilitary] group" (Aug. 2007, 11). The report claims that in certain districts of the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka such as Vavuniya and Batticaloa, the Karuna group works "in tandem" with Sri Lankan security forces, participating in extortion and abductions (HRW Aug. 2007, 100).

Several TamilNet articles also report that paramilitary groups involved in extortion in northern Sri Lanka allegedly work in collaboration with the SLA (TamilNet 20 Oct. 2007; *ibid.* 10 Oct. 2007; *ibid.* 21 Sept. 2007; *ibid.* 26 Mar. 2006). According to one of the articles, extortion threats were reportedly made to several businessmen and other individuals in Jaffna [northern Sri Lanka] from a telephone located within an SLA-monitored High Security Zone (HSZ) (*ibid.* 20 Oct. 2007).

A special report by the Sri Lankan non-governmental organization (NGO) University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) [UTHR(J)] alleges that groups responsible for abductions, killings and extortion are supported by or associated with government security forces (3 Aug. 2007). The report states that the links between the security forces and these groups are "so obvious that even [SLA] commanders get tired of trying to deny the connection" (UTHR(J) 3 Aug. 2007).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 6 March 2007. "Sri Lankan Police, Troops Involved in Abductions: Police Chief." (Factiva)

Freedom House. 2007. "Sri Lanka." *Freedom in the World 2007*.
<http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?year=2007&country=7276&pf> [Accessed 15 Jan. 2008]

Human Rights Watch (HRW). August 2007. Vol. 19, No. 11. *Return to War: Human Rights under Siege*.
<<http://hrw.org/reports/2007/srilanka0807/srilanka0807webwcover.pdf>>
[Accessed 15 Jan. 2008]

Indo-Asian News Service (IANS). 31 December 2007. P.K. Balachandran. "Timeline on Sri Lanka 2007." (NewKerala.com)
<<http://www.newkerala.com/one.php?action=fullnews&id=8300>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2008]

Reuters. 1 August 2007. Ranga Sirilal. "Relatives of Sri Lanka 'Disappeared' Demand Answers." <<http://in.reuters.com/article/topNews/idINIndia-28772620070801>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2008]

_____. 4 July 2007. "Sri Lanka Arrests 16 over Abductions, Extortion."
<<http://uk.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUKCOL17649420070704>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2008]

_____. 6 March 2007. Simon Gardner. "Sri Lanka Police, Soldiers Arrested Over Abductions." <<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSSP21710420070306>> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2008]

Sri Lanka. 8 March 2007. Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP). "Baseless Allegations of Abductions and Disappearances." <http://www.peaceinsrilanka.org/peace2005/Insidepage/SCOPPDaily_Report/SCOPP_report080307.asp> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2008]

TamilNet. 20 October 2007. "Jaffna HSZ-Located Phone Used for Extortion Threats." <<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=23564>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2008]

_____. 10 October 2007. "Point Pedro Lawyers Protest Against Death Threats, Extortion." <<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=23494>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2008]

_____. 21 September 2007. "SLMM Collects Information on Rights Violations in Jaffna." <<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=23325>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2008]

_____. 6 March 2007. "SL Police Chief Admits Sri Lanka Forces Involved in Abductions." <<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=21472>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2008]

_____. 26 March 2006. "LTTE, TNA Discuss Vavuniya Violence with SLMM." <<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=17580>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2008]

University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) (UTHR(J)). 3 August 2007. Special Report No. 26. *Can the East Be Won Through Human Culling?* <<http://www.uthr.org/SpecialReports/spreport26.htm>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2008]

The Washington Post. 28 July 2007. Minelle Fernandez. "Lawlessness Grows in Strife-Torn Sri Lanka; Abductions, Killings and Disappearances Are Rampant as Civil Conflict Escalates." (Factiva)

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI); Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC); Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC); Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA); European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net); *The Guardian* [London]; Home for Human Rights (HHR); Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC); International Crisis Group (ICG); ReliefWeb; Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM); United Kingdom Home Office; United Nations - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); United States Department of State.

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.

