

# Victims of 'Expression Killings' Sri Lanka

(Media personnel, media workers, artistes and cultural activists who were assassinated)

1981 – 2009 March

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Free Media Movement pulication

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## Introduction

It should be said at the outset that reference to those assassinated media personnel, media workers, artistes and cultural activists also include both male and female victims. This stress was needed as the words though includes both male and female personnel, the linguistic connotations within the society preferably accepts a patriarchal understanding. Thus the first impression could mean 'male' only.

The reason for this collection of information on assassinated media personnel, media workers, artistes and cultural activists is that it gives importance to those in our society who sacrificed with their lives in working for freedom of expression and communication. Also it allows an understanding of the historical developments that leads to curbing of independence and freedom of expression, communication and in particular the media. While some were

assassinated outside their media practice, relevance of their contributions were accepted as worthy of their inclusion.

Physical elimination of individuals is the most brutal of all attacks on media freedom and free expression. A survey on individual killings would provide an insight into attempts made in curtailing and curbing media freedom and independence of expressions. It would also help understand the socio political background to those killings and attempts in curbing media freedom and independence of expressions. This documentation would create an opening to such perusal. To facilitate same, details and information in this documentation are arranged according to assassination dates and not on popularity, seniority or competency.

With the launch of the Free Media Movement in 1992, a spirited discourse on media freedom took place in society as a strong voice was raised against suppression, threats and other issues. Taking up issues on art and culture and freedom in a broader sense was also part of the campaign. On that same basis, this documentation includes information not only about media personnel but also on activists involved in cultural and literary work. Some have been in other professions or had their own political affiliations while being involved in the fields of media, art, literature and culture. This was the case and was very conspicuous in the North – East and in “left” politics, where full-time activists were responsible for their own journals and publications, making them live as journalists or media personnel. Some were involved in creative cultural work that focused on promoting peace, social justice and co-existence. In the past, as it is at present, all provincial stringers and freelance media personnel are employed otherwise, while being in the media.

The media in the North evolved independent of the mainstream media in Colombo and in other parts of the country. They also have their own professional media personnel as well as provincial freelance journalists employed in other work. (Due to a string of murder, threats and continued conflict, the North has almost lost its media presence.) Thus there is a confusion now in listing those in the mainstream media in Colombo as journalists and others as provincial correspondents as in the past. The adjective ‘provincial’ in comparison to Colombo, is another that needs after thought now. Nevertheless, this documentation has taken all of them on equal par.

Within this documented information, while 02 undergraduates from the Jaffna University are included, 03 students from the South have been listed as political student activists. The 02 Jaffna undergraduates, a male and a female student, were challenging the right to dissent in an environment where dissent was subdued through murder. They were involved in both creative art and media to promote democracy and peace. The 03 students from the South were different as activists in armed politics, engaged in its student wing contributing to student publications and underground literature.

Tragic deaths of a few individuals have been listed under the heading, “Accidents and information related to disappearances” on the basis of the potential shown by them in contributing to these fields while living. Two have been mentioned under ‘other incidents’ and accepted as having had worked in the media. Later information revealed they have not been in the media in the latter part. Reasons for their murders have also had no link to media work or the right of expression. One soldier is included here as he fell victim to an attack on a media establishment while on security duty.



The reason to have a set of names separately as those identified on a single source of information instead of including them in the main section is because their assassinations could not be verified through a reliable second source. Few in that list were identified from a single document only. Two Tamil media persons were identified through personal information only.

Nevertheless, all these individuals who lost their lives were not those who lost their lives from normal causes. Not even due to unavoidable circumstances. Who ever the assassin(s), all deaths were due to dissenting with the assassin(s), due to media practices that exposed assassin(s), due to positive media practice that helped the society or due to media practice that allowed space for dissent in society. Deaths due to power struggle. Deaths due to uncivilised interventions in society, instead of civilized intervention. Deaths due to terror taking its turn in society, instead of non-violence. Deaths due to conspiracies that needed to block the exposure of corruption, fraud and all other misdemeanours of politicians. Deaths due to the rejection of plurality in society that led a protracted war. Deaths due to a need to stop exposure of the war and its negative impact with a corrupt war. It plainly means these deaths were not due to their vocations as journalists or cultural activists. But due to their holding a different political view and due to a war that was out of their control.

While a government should be held responsible for the fate of the citizens in a country, all assassinations have been listed under 03 categories according to the way the death had occurred, the geographical location and the period.

1. Killings in relation to the ethnic conflict / war ( all rivalry killings between armed Tamil groups and factional killings within armed groups)
2. Killings that took place during the JVP initiated insurgency which includes those by the JVP and counter insurgency work by the government
3. Killings resulting from conspiracies by politicians

The final chapter has notes on these killings on a provincial and ethnic basis and notes on how killings took place, under the theme, "Some observations on how killings have happened" at the end of the document.

Majority of the killings are related to the ethnic conflict and war. Of the 108 killings listed in the main section, 77 fall into this category. Most 'left political activists' who were assassinated by the JVP are those who stood for power sharing through PC's that was mooted under the Indo – SL Accord. If the number of 'leftists' assassinated up to the assassination of Wijeya Kumaratunge the film idol is totalled up, the number is very large. Also, the number of Tamils assassinated is in a majority totalling 57 out of the 109 listed.

Nevertheless, getting information on Tamil people, standing for an idea or expressing oneself, was going through a very difficult period. The most brutal and conscious attack ever, after independence, on expression of ideas and freedom of literary work comes with the burning of the Jaffna Public Library on 01<sup>st</sup> June, 1981, the proud collection of knowledge in Jaffna. This collection is supposed to have had over 97,000 books of historical value. Reports indicated that goons transported by Colombo based politicians did a systematic burning of the library, from section to section. This was the beginning of the rampage that was carried out to disrupt the District Development Council (DDC) election scheduled for the 04<sup>th</sup> of June, 1981.

The burning of the library has tales of woe and sorrow tagging after it. Rev. Father David had been a very frequent visitor to the Jaffna Public Library for his own scholarly work. During the days when the library was burnt, he had been visiting the library almost daily for research work he had begun. On 01<sup>st</sup> June night, when he saw the flames going up from the library, he is reported to have pulled his last breath in. Fr. David died of the sorrow of seeing the library burning. Another who was emotionally linked to the Jaffna Public Library was its peon, Patkunam. Working in this huge library turned Patnukam into a Tamil dramatist who even scripted drama. It is said, seeing the library going on fire had such a devastating impact on Patkunam, he ended up as a mentally deranged person.

The naked repression against the Tamil people, begins with this in 1981. The rising of Tamil youth militancy is also reported during this period. The period after this, turns into a period of power struggle between different groups, instead of a struggle for the rights of the Tamil people. Killing of those who questioned internal democracy and those who left with differences increased. At the end, the LTTE becomes the most formidable group after killing other groups. Thus in recent history, the worst victim of freedom of expression is Jaffna from 1981. This documentation thus carries information of those who were killed from 1981 to September 2008 to the extent, information could be gathered.

Suppression of the freedom of expression in Sri Lanka dates back to its ancient feudal history. This suppression of freedom of expression is noted with the suppression of practicing ones religion and damaging ola scripts pertaining to the religion during the reign of King Voharaka Tissa (A.D. 214 – 236). This emerges with the debate on Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism between the two temples, “Maha Viharaya” and the “Abhayagiriyā”.

During King Gotabhaya, it is noted in history that sixty Buddhist monks were deported from Lanka after being tattooed and literature were burnt. According to the great chronicle “Maha Wamsa” during King Mahasen’s period, more literature and skills were drastically affected. The Mahayana monk Sanghamitta who saw the deported monks with their tattoos, has come to Lanka, befriended King Mahasen and converts him to Mahayana Buddhism, says history chronicles. The monk then conspires with the king to effect damage to Theravada Buddhism. Accordingly, deities are debarred from giving alms to monks in the opposing Maha Vihara. With the help of friend and minister Sorna, the Maha Viharaya and its affiliate temples were also devastated, says historical literature. The great chronicle Maha Wamsa says, the minister friend Meghawarnabhaya of the King, influenced the king to change mind and repair the Maha Viharaya. One of the king’s concubines in fact got a carpenter to kill the monk Sanghamitta and the minister Sorna, says history. Later invasions by Kalinga and Maagha, also destroyed lots of Buddhist scriptures and temples, according to recorded history.

History nevertheless show that suppression of freedom of expression has resulted from kings giving into tale carrying, resenting a different point of view or dissenting voices, apart from foreign invasions and wars. Conspiracies often come first.

It is regretful that in a small country like Sri Lanka, living in a modern global village that is considered civilized, a feudalistic suppression is being launched against such civilized life. Social development in a civilized society can only be achieved with freedom of thought and not by suppression as in tribal communities or by indecent war. The rising sun can not be covered by a blade of grass. Truth can not be suppressed in the name of humanity. Therefore there is always a conflict of differing levels between freedom of expression and tribalistic restrictions in the world.

It took us 04 full months to collect information that was not with us. Confirmation of written information according to time, geographical location and the trade or sector, was done by meeting Seniors. All information were confirmed by two or more sources of information. There were times when over 40 telephone calls had to be made to get just one clarification. Efforts were made to have verbal information confirmed through many sources. Though personal identities can not be divulged for reasons best known to all, it should be said that many senior Tamil journalists living in Jaffna, Colombo and abroad and a few Muslim colleagues helped with what they remembered best, while a few media institutes too helped in the collection of information. Senior media friends in the mainstream media also helped with what they remembered. Personal sources were very many. The survey included many documentations of Jaffna University academics association, literature that belongs to the period of the insurgency and many more. Publication of the “Yukthiya” news paper over a period of 10 years, libraries of some mainstream media, the library of the National Library Services Board, political information from both the Tamil and Left parties and websites came as useful in this survey. We are grateful to all those people, organisations and institutes.

Yet, this may not be a perfect record. It is true that recorded history has bias towards the powerful and to those with a loud voice. Those less privileged and women in a dominant ideology do not live in such a history. Or have little mention. In this documentation too, those silent contributors in history may have dropped out of memory from those who recorded events and incidents and thus from the pages of history. We made an effort to scout for such silent and unseen persons. But there still may be persons whose presence we have missed during this short period of information scouting. They should have a place in history in any future editing of this documentation.

Seetha Ranjanee

On behalf of the Free Media Movement

## **The list of media personnel, media workers, artistes and cultural activists who were assassinated – according to the year of assassination**

1981

Navaratnam – Photo journalist / June 30

Wimal S. Surendra – Photo journalist / October 26

1982

Sathasivam Sivashanmuhmurthi (Suntheram) – Editor, Puthiya Pathei / January 02

1984

Rajaratnam Jeyachandran (Parthan) – Journalist / around June and July

1986

Kavalur S. Jeganathan – Writer / 1986

1987

Nilantha Gunawardne – Lighting Technician, SLRC / October 05

Renuka Attanayake – Engineer, SLRC / October 05

Gamini Jayantha – Technical Officer, SLRC / October 05  
Y. Karunapala – Driver, SLRC / October 05  
Kumaraia Kamaladas – Printing employee / October 13  
Aruna Kahandagamage – Poet / October 19  
Nandana Marasinghe – Cultural activist / November 29  
Sathyapala Wannigama – Writer / November 18 – abducted  
K.M. Vasahar – Journalist  
S. Nadaraja – Journalist

1988

Wijeya Kumaratunge – Film Artiste / February 16  
Chandarasiri Weerawickrama Singhasena – Sales Agent / May 17  
G.B. Gunadasa – Sales Assistant / May 17  
Kandiah Kandaswamy – Owner media institute / June-July  
Henry Pamunuwa – Media personnel / October 02  
T.B. Wijesuriya – Cultural activist / October 03  
J. E. Gunasekera – Writer cum translator / October 19  
D. M. D. Chandrawimala – Political journalist / November 17  
H. E. Dayananda – Writer / December 02  
N. C. M. Ismail – Media personnel / December  
S. Selvarajah – Media personnel

1989

D. N. S. Pathirana – Media personnel / January 24  
Ananda Navaratne – Writer / January 25  
B. M. Weerakoon Bandara – Cultural activist / February 09  
N. G. Premaratne (Upali) – Street Drama performing artiste / February 11  
Sarath Seneviratne - Street Drama performing artiste / February 11  
J. A. Maithripala Jayaweera (Loku Aiya) - Street Drama performing artiste / February 11  
Gamini Senaka Bandara (sagara) – Writer / March 06  
K. Thanabalasingham – Writer / March 24  
Sunil Navaratne – Journalist / March  
T. Mahalingam – Journalist / May 11  
P. D. Wimalasena – Manager, Govt Printing Press / May 27  
Ivan Jayasekera – Journalist / June 24  
Thevis Guruge – Chairman ITN / July 23  
Premakeerthi de Alwis – Radio and TV Presnter / July 31  
Kulasiri Amaratunge – Media personnel / August 11  
Sagarika Gomes – TV presenter / September 18  
Rajini Rajasingham Thiranagama – University academic cum Writer / September 29  
I. Shanmugalingam – Journalist / November 06  
M. Amirthalingam – News paper owner, Tamil Trust Fund  
R. D. Pitawela – Teacher cum Dancing artiste  
Sarath Chandraratne – Singer  
M. Navaratnam – Media personnel

1990

Lakshman Perera – Drama producer / January 27  
Richard de Zoysa – TV presenter cum dramatist / February 18  
Kumaraguru Kuhamurthi – Media personnel / September 16

Sona Pathmanathan – Media personnel / September 27

U. L. Dawood – Writer

Ahamed Lebbe – Writer / December 26

1991

Velupillai Anandan – Writer / February 21

Soosaipillai Norbert alias Dominic – Writer / May 17

Selvinithi Thiagarajah – Freelance journalist cum cultural activist / August 26

S. Thillainathan - Cultural activist / August 26

K. Manoharan - Cultural activist / August 26

1993

Anthony Quintus Fernando – Media personnel / May 02

1994

A. Sabhalingam – Writer / May 01

Kanakaratham Sriskandarajah (K. S. Rajah) – Journalist / December 03

1995

Karunaratne Saputhanthree – Journalist / April 29

Kirama Piyasoma – Journalist / April 29

Edwin Weerasinghe – Photo journalist / April 29

S. S. Ganeshapillai (Waranuran) – Radio artiste / August 30

1996

Sudeepa Purnajith – Cartoonist / July 28

Kandiah Gajendran – Journalist / October 27

1997

Thirunavakarasu Tharmalingam – News paper Agent / October 02

1998

Sashy Krishnakumar – Freelance journalist / September 29

1999

Rohana Kumara – Journalist / September 07

Anbutharajah Nadarajah (Ramesh) – Media personnel / November 02

Anura Priyantha Cooray – ITN Light technician / December 18

Indika Patthiniwasam – Sirasa Camera Assistant / December 18

Bastian Anthony Mariadas – Radio Artiste / December 31

2000

Selian Preimbanayagam – Journalist cum Writer / September 10

A. M. Niyamathullah – Journalist / September 16

Mylvaganam Nimalarajan – Journalist / October 19

2004

Aiyathurai A. Nadesan – Journalist / May 31

Kandaswamy Aiyer Balanadaraj – Writer / August 16

Lanka Jayasundera – Photo journalist / December 11

2005

Dharmaratnam Sivaram – Editor TamilNet / April 28  
Kannamuttu Arakumar – Media employee / June 29  
Relangee Selvarajah – Radio Announcer / August 12  
D. Selvaratnam – Security guard / August 29  
A. L. M. Faleel (Netpittimunai Faleel) – Writer / December 02  
K. Navaratnam – Media employee / December 22

2006

Subramaniam Suhirdarajan (S. S. Rajan) – Journalist / January 24  
S. T. Gananathan – Partner, Tamil News and Information Centre / February 01  
Bastian George Suresh – Media employee / May 03  
Rajaratnam Ranjith Kumar – Media employee / May 03  
Nihal de Silva – Writer / May 27  
Sampath Lakmal de Silva – Journalist / July 02  
Mariadasan Manoranjan – Media employee / August 01  
Pathmanathan Vismananthan – Singer and musician / August 02  
Sathasivam Baskaran – Media employee / August 15  
Sinnathamby Sivamaharajah – Media owner / August 20

2007

S. Raveendran – Media employee / February 12  
Subramaniam Ramachandran – Media personnel / February 15  
Subhash Chandrabosh – Media personnel / April 16  
Selvarasah Rajeev Varman – Media personnel / April 29  
Sahadevan Neelakshan – Under study, Media personnel / August 01  
Anthonypillai Sherin Siththiranjana – Media employee / November 05  
Vadivel Nimalarajah – Media personnel / November 17  
Isaivisi Sempian (Subhajini) – Voice of Tigers Media personnel / November 27  
Suresh Limbiyo - Voice of Tigers Media personnel / November 27  
T. Tharmalingam - Voice of Tigers Media personnel / November 27  
W. Gunasinghe – Media personnel / December 05

2008

Paranirupesingham Devakumar – Media personnel / May 28

Few who were identified from a single source

K. S. Ratnasingham - Media personnel / Batticaloa - 1986  
T. Dayanandan – Media personnel / Thambiluvil, Ampara – 1985  
Poet assassinated in Eravur / 1990 August 11  
Nagalingam Thiagarajah – Media personnel / Batticaloa  
K. P. Upasena – News paper Agent / 1988 May 16  
U. C. Karunathilake – Photographer / 1988 July 09  
Nelson Karunaratne – Media personnel / Galewela – 1988 November 23  
Wijesiri Nananayakkara – Media personnel / Mathugama – 1989 April 22  
Jinasena Kasturiarachchi – Media personnel / Tangalle – 1989 August 21  
I. C. Fernando – News paper distributor / Menikhinna (during the insurgency period)

## Student political activists of the Inter University Student Federation involved in media and cultural work

Pathmasiri Trimavithana – Creative artiste / 1988 October 22

Upali Gamage – Editor, ‘Wedi handa’ journal / 1990 January

Athula Senaratne – Editor, ‘Medical Students’ voice’ / 1990 September 17

## Information on accidents and involuntary disappearances

Leena Irene Haputhantri – Poet and Writer / 1987 May 18

Chandrakumara Wickramaratne – Poet / missing since 1991

Kulasinghe – Media personnel

K. Nanda Kumar – Media employee / 2001 May 06

Rukshika Prasadinie – Media personnel / 2006 December 19

## Few other incidents

Corporal Sepala Gunathilake – SL army / 1984 November 03

Ananda Mendis – Meetiyagoda Correspondent / 1988 April 17

Ranatunge – Page layout artist / during the insurgency period

## Information on media personnel, media workers, artistes and cultural activists who were assassinated

(According to the year of assassination)

1981

Navaratnam –

Photo journalist / 1981 June 03

Navaratnam, a photo journalist, is the first person in the media who was assassinated, according to information collected. He died from police shooting in Chunnakam, Jaffna on 03 June, 1981.

The incident leading to the death of Navaratnam is said to be violent incidents instigated by the then government in disrupting and rigging of the District Development Council elections that was scheduled for June 04<sup>th</sup>. Violent activities continued for 03 days with the burning of the prestigious and the largest library in Asia, the Jaffna Public Library on 01<sup>st</sup> June.

On the same day, the office of the provincial Jaffna news paper “Eelanadu” was also set on fire. Navaratnam is said to be a freelance photographer who provided photographs to this Eelanadu news paper. This could not be confirmed as no employee of the Eelanadu news paper during that period was available to make any clarification.

It is said Eelanadu had no full time photographer during that time. Printing was old fashioned, on a litho printing machine.

Some speculate that Navaratnam may have tried to photograph incidents during the period police enforced curfew in Jaffna district. He was around 40 – 45 years old.

Wimal S. Surendra –  
Photo journalist / 1981 October 26

The second person from the media to be assassinated is photo journalist Wimal S. Surendra (Somaratne Wima Surendra). He was in the mainstream media and was the first to have been assassinated in Colombo. At the time of his death he was with the “Divayina” news paper of the Upali News paper group. He had previously worked with “Dawasa”, “Sirilaka”, “Janadina” and “Attha” news papers, as a photographer.

He was said to be the owner of “Krishantha Studio” in Borella and stayed in a room there with a few of his journalist friends.

His death occurred on the main road in Kandana, opposite the house of one of the senior ministers of the then government, on October 26<sup>th</sup> 1981. While it was reported as an accident, there were many issues that made it suspecting.

The motorcycle Surendra was said to have been riding was left on a stand by the road side, facing Colombo. The helmet he used was in the house of the Minister. On the night of the suspected murder, police had entered his room and had removed a sophisticated camera provided to Surendra by the news paper and photos of the wife of a very powerful personality in the government.

His brother who suspected foul play tried to work on the details all by himself and had received death threats, compelling him to leave Sri Lanka, to a Mid East country.

“Ravaya” news paper that carried out an investigative exposure on the incident, revealed that Surendra had gone to Kandana on the invitation of a friend who was married to a relation of the said minister’s wife. Surendra’s friend was a close ally of the minister and had wanted to meet Surendra that evening. Ravaya revealed that Surendra had run to the minister’s house for safety, but was fatally attacked in there. After he fell on the ground from the attack, he had been dragged to the road, by his legs. Police had not visited the scene immediately and eventually when taken to hospital after about 04 hours, it had been too late.

1982

Sathasivam Sivashanmuhamurthi (Suntheram) –  
Editor, Puthiya Pathei / 1982 January 02

Sathasivam Sivashanmuhamurthi was popular as Suntheram. He is known for his political commitment in fighting for the rights of the poor and for his pioneering work in establishing a political news paper as its editor.

He had joined the LTTE to fight for the rights of the Tamil people, but had later left the LTTE with differences. There after he worked on his own political group for which he started the “Puthiya Pathei” (New Path) news paper in 1980. **This political group later emerged as the PLOTE.(??)**

His work as Editor of the Puthiya Pathei news paper was short lived. The LTTE targeted Suntheram while he was at the printing press “Yarl Chitra” on January 02<sup>nd</sup> 1982.



1984

Rajaratnam Jeyachandran (Parthan) –  
Journalist / around 1984 June and July

Resident in a village called ‘Pankulam’ in Trincomalee, Rajaratnam Jeyachandran came to be known as Parthan, the name he adopted as a political activist of PLOTE. He then used this name ‘Parthan’ for his media work too. He became the Editor of the news paper “Viduthalei” that was published by the political wing of the PLOTE. This paper was printed and published in Batticoloa. According to PLOTE sources, he had been arrested by the security forces some where in Kalawanchikudi and subsequently killed around June or July, 1984.

1986

Kavalur S. Jeganathan  
Writer / 1986

S. Jeganathan is a reputed short story writer according to information collected from literary personalities in the North – East and abroad. Although every one knew he was murdered in Tamil Nadu no one would provide an exact date of murder. The year 1986 was said to be the possible year.

A laboratory Assistant with the Peradeniya University, Jeganathan had frequently visited Jaffna to organize literary events. He had been a pioneer in inviting Indian writers for literary functions. He had used those contacts to travel on boats that took 03 hours to cross the Palk Straits and engaged in literary work. He had there after left to Tamil Nadu with his family and is reported to have worked closely with an armed Tamil group there. Some claim the group was EROS. Some said he was a victim of an internal clash in the EROS. Born in the islet of Kayts, he had later taken residence in the islet Analatheevu, his wife’s place of origin. “Kavalur” is said to be the Tamilean name for Kayts. He came to be known as a writer with the name of his birth place prefixed to his name.

1987

Nilantha Gunawardne – Lighting Technician, SLRC  
Renuka Attanayake – Engineer, SLRC  
Gamini Jayantha – Technical Officer, SLRC  
Y. Karunapala – Driver, SLRC  
1987 October 05

All four of them were employees of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC). They had been all murdered on the same day and together.

The SLRC was telecasting war related special news and reporting in Jaffna, from the Palaly SL army base. It had been the practice to send teams from Colombo to work in Jaffna. The four individuals named along with a few others were on duty at the time of the incident. On the night of the fateful day, Gunawardne, Attanayake and Jayantha had left with the Tamil announcer Vigneswaran to drop him at his residence in Myliddy, on the KKS road. Their

driver was Karunapala. The four had not returned after dropping Vigneswaran. The vehicle too had disappeared. It is believed they have been severely tortured and burnt after death. There had been death threats to the SLRC crews working in Palaly from the LTTE. Nilantha Gunawardne young employee from Hokandara, had joined SLRC as a Lighting Technician in 1985. Renuka Attanayake was a young Engineer from Veyangoda. SLRC had arranged to pay their salaries and allowances to their families, until their retirement age. Driver Karunapala had by then passed the retirement age. The accompanying photo had been taken in the studio, on the day of their death, in the morning. From the left standing in the photo are Renuka Attanayake, Nilantha Gunawardne and Y. Karunapala. Seated is Gamini Jayantha

Kumaraia Kamaladas – Printing employee  
Died 1987 October 13 (??)

Kumaraia Kamaladas, an employee in the printing section of the Uthayan news paper in Jaffna, died from shelling. The 1987 July Indo-SL Peace Accord that was to effect a solution to the ethnic conflict was being violated from September. The LTTE by then had taken opposition to the Indian Peace Keeping Force and by October the question was who would first fire the shots of war. On 10<sup>th</sup> October, the first shots were fired and the people were taken by surprise with heavy shelling. Kamaladas fell victim to such shelling on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

Aruna Kahandagamage –Poet  
Aged 35 years /1987 October 19

Brother of reputed poet Piyasena Kahandagamage, Aruna was also a poet. He was contributing to many news papers and had worked for the publication “Mission” published by an NGO. A member of the Communist Party he was against the war. As an anti-capitalist, he was popular among the poor in his area, working against injustice.

Born in the village Werangketagoda, Ambalangoda in the Galle district he had taken residence in Uhana, Ampara. He had been employed by a NGO as a Social Development Officer, far away from his place of residence in Pimburethhawa, Polonnaruwa.

Having returned home on the motor bicycle given to him by the NGO he had gone to meet a friend on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1987.

A driver in a bus that was just behind him, has seen Kahandagamage been stopped by some who were dressed in SL army type uniform, near the 29<sup>th</sup> Mile post on the Ampara – Kandy road in Aranthalawa, where it was reported the LTTE had killed 31 Buddhist monks on June 02<sup>nd</sup>. As he was a popular person in Ampara, the driver remembered him.

The murder was freely credited to the the account of the LTTE. Yet according to the assumption of a Senior journalist in Kandy who was a close friend of Kahandagame and few more others, murder of Kahandagamage should be a political killing and not by the LTTE. Their argument is, if it is the LTTE, then they should have definitely attacked the bus with about 35 passengers and not his single person.

Nandana Marasinghe – Cultural activist  
1987 November 29

Nandana Marasinghe the poet, was also a lyricist and an sensitive cultural activist who worked in organizing cultural networks. He was born in Anurahapura and was a student of Anuradhapura Central College. He joined the JVP as a very young activist, was imprisoned twice and had also been severely tortured. He once led a group to attack the Jaffna prisons to release Wijeweera. He was arrested in 1973 and was released in 1977. In prison he became a Central Committee member of the resurrected underground JVP.

He believed people could be sensitized through art and culture and was thus one who initiated the JVP musical programme, “Liberation Songs”. He later left the JVP on political differences.

There after he initiated the formation of the “People’s Art Centre” in Kandy. That was later extended to Kurunegala and Anuradhapura. In 1984 the musical show called “Kalaye Ravaya” (Echo of this Era) that brought together Musician Gunadasa Kapuge and many others was his initiative.

He became a target of the JVP in 1987 for his criticism of the JVP and his people oriented work. Married with two children, his income was from selling footwear at the Anuradhapura public fair. On Sunday 28 November, two assailants who came on a motorbicycle, shot him dead while he was at the public fair selling shoes and went off.

**Sathyapala Wannigama – Writer**

1987 November 18 – abducted

and killed in January end, 1988

Reports indicate Sathyapala Wannigama was taken to custody by the Middeniya police on 18 November 1987 and was killed some time in end January, The charred body found in Wetiya, Tangalle during that period, was said to be his. He was a lecturer in the Humanities and Social Sciences faculty of the Ruhuna University and was known as a writer. He wrote a drama titled “Ginnen upan minissu” (People born out of fire) was very critical of caste oppression. He used the pen name “Sunil Wikrama” to write features to the Divayina news paper.

Born in the village of Kariyamadittha in 1950 March, Wannigama was an ex-Buddhist monk and a graduate of philosophy from the Peradeniya university. He was a close sympathizer of the JVP and was the chief speaker at the rally in Matara organized by the JVP held in protest of student arrests.

He was arrested by the Middeniya police while he was getting ready to leave home for the university on 18 November. Academic staff of all universities organized a one day strike demanding his release on 22 January.

**K.M. Vasahar – Journalist**

Died in 1987 (??)

K. M. Vasahar was a Programme Producer and a Radio Artist with the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation from 1968. He is reported to have escaped death during the Tamil pogrom in 1983 July and was pressured by his family to leave Colombo and get back to the village. After he visited the village, he opted to live with his family, although he did not officially resign from the job.

Senior Tamil staffers in the SLBC said he had died from a shell explosion, during the early period when the IPKF took control of Jaffna security and then went into war with the LTTE. It was not possible to find the exact date of his demise.

**S. Nadaraja – Journalist**

**Died in 1987 (??)**

S. Nadarajah had joined the SLBC in 1951 when it was located on Cotta Road Borella. Having started his career as an announcer, Nadarajah had retired from service as the Chief Controller of the Tamil national service of the SLBC. He was incidently the first Tamil cricket announcer on radio in Sri Lanka. After retirement, he had gone back to Jaffna and while there, he had fallen victim to a shell while in the paddy field. There were reportedly heavy shelling when the IPKF and the LTTE engaged in a war.

1988

**Wijeya Kumaratunge – Film Artiste**

**Assasinated / 1988 February 16**

At the time of his assassination, Wijeya Kumaratunge was the most popular actor and the most popular left politician. Having acted in a whole lot of films, he was the popular hero on the silver screen. With the few songs he sang, he was accepted as a very popular singer. During a period when racist politics were strongly emerging, Wijeya Kumaratunge stood for a negotiated political solution and for social peace. His was a strong voice for social justice and equality and participated in most progressive people's struggles. He was the leader of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party and played a leading role in the formation of the United Socialist Alliance (USA). His funeral took place on February 21<sup>st</sup> attended by a massive crowd on the day the USA was to be officially launched.

Father of 02 children, a son and a daughter, he was assassinated when he was leaving his residence in the morning in Narahenpita, Colombo, shot on his head, by suspected JVP assassins. His widow Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumaratunge was later elected President in 1994.

**Chandarasiri Weerawickrama Singhasena – Sales Agent**

**G.B. Gunadasa – Sales Assistant**

**Assasinated / 1988 May 17**

Wijewickrama Book shop in Welimada that was also a news paper dealer, was a target during the JVP insurgency. On 17<sup>th</sup> May or there about, the assassins broke into the book shop set it on fire and killed Singhasena, a relative of the owner and a Sales Assistant, one Gunadasa.

**Kandiah Kandaswamy – Owner media institute /**

**Assasinated / 1988 June-July**

One of the most popular weekly English tabloids ever published from Jaffna, the “Saturday Review” was started by Attorney at law Kandiah Kandaswamy on 05<sup>th</sup> January, 1981. Though a lawyer by profession, his intention was to provide to the people, news and information the mainstream media in Colombo avoids. His short note written to the maiden publication of the Saturday Review, provides his vision on media practice. It says, “In SL the number of news papers published daily in all 03 languages is not less than 13. Except one, all other news papers are published in the South, from Colombo. The only exception is the Tamil news paper “Eelanadu”, published in Jaffna. This clearly means that incidents in the North and the East are taken to the South and there they are filtered, seasoned, edited and often tempered, before sending the news back to our readers in the North.... We hope to change this flow in the opposite direction and rectify the imbalance with our weekly publication.”

Born in 1930 in the village called Maviddypuram, this owner of the weekly news paper also focused his attention on human rights and rehabilitation. He graduated from the Peradeniya University as a Maths graduate and qualified himself as a lawyer, later.

It is said the EROS organisation had wanted a share from the rehabilitation fund Kandiah Kandaswamy had established for his people. As he refused their request, it is commonly believed they had abducted Kandiah Kandaswamy some day in July 1988. The day he was assassinated is not confirmed by any source.

It was Kandiah Kandaswamy as a lawyer who worked to have the Saturday Review published on the few occasions it was censored and closed. Yet when it was closed for the last time, it coincided with his abduction and was never published there after.

## Henry Pamunuwa – Media personnel Assassinated / 1988 October 02

Henry Pamunuwa by profession was a compositor. He was the head of the composing division of the printing press of the “Attha” news paper, published by the Communist Party of SL. HE also contributed to the “Attha” news paper as a writer and was a leading member in the Kotte organisation of the Communist Party. He contested for the Colombo district at the first Western Provincial Council elections in 1988 from the United Socialist Alliance (USA).

On October 02<sup>nd</sup> he was shot dead by suspected JVP assassins at his residence in front of his wife and children

## T.B. Wijesuriya – Cultural activist Assassinated / 1988 October 03

Born in the remote village Doraweruwa in the Polpithigama Divisional Secretariat area in the Kurnegala district, T. B. Wijesuriya was popular in the area as a cultural activist and as a Left political activist who was involved in broad movements like farmers’ rights and people’s agitations against water tax. His first political affiliation was with the JVP in 1971, for which he sacrificed his higher education too. Was in prison for the 1971 insurrection and after his release he left JVP politics.

At the time of his assassination he was a leader of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party in the Kurunegala district and stood for a political solution to the ethnic conflict. He was elected a Member to the first NW Provincial Council in 1988.

With his vision of a society with social justice and equality, he believed art and culture could create awareness among the people. He thus pioneered the formation of a street drama group

called “Veera Puran Appu” and mobilized the people in his village to found the library that was named “Gorky Library”. This popularity among the people was explained as the reason why he was targeted by the JVP.

On October 03<sup>rd</sup> morning around 10 o’clock, when he was returning with 03 others after a ceremony that distributed land to 150 landless families, he was ambushed by suspected JVP assassins in Madagalla.

**J. E. Gunasekera – Writer cum translator**

**Assassinated / 1988 October 19**

J. E. Gunasekera came into politics through the “Sooriya mal” movement of 1929 that was essentially an anti imperialist campaign. Later he became a member of the Communist Party. He was known in society as a literary person. Most of his writings had been for children and he had translated a fair number of Russian children’s stories into Sinhala with the Soviet Cultural Centre sponsorship. In 1985 the award for the Best Children’s Literature was won by him. He started as a teacher but gave it up as he was born with a stammer and lived his life as a translator and a writer.

He was residing in Habarakada in Homagama and was the branch Secreatry of the Communist Party in that area. During the insurgency in 1988 period when anti war, peace loving people were being hunted, he was assassinated at his residence.

**D. M. D. Chandrawimala – Political journalist**

**Assassinated / 1988 November 17**

D. M. D. Chandrawimala started his youth as a Sama Samajist, following his father who was himself a member of the L.S.S.P. He was an employee of the Ceylon Transport Board (CTB) and therefore became a member of the All Ceylon Motor Transport Workers’ Union. Being active in trade union work, Chandrawimala rallied with the Left Tendency of the LSSP that subsequently became the NSSP. Due to his active politics, he was victimized by the CTB authorities and later gave up employment to take up full time politics. He was elected to the Central Committee of the NSSP and was arrested twice for political work.

Towards mid 80’s Chandrawimala served in the editorial of the party journal “Haraya”.

He was residing in Kotte electorate in the Colombo district.

On November 17<sup>th</sup> Chandrawimala fell victim when SLMP presidential candidate’s election rally was attacked.

He was married and was a father of two children.

**H. E. Dayananda – Writer**

**Assassinated / 1988 December 02**

H. E. Dayananda was an employee of the Bank of Ceylon. He came into art and literature through his writings to the “Divayina” news paper. His feature series titled “The story of the left” was a popular series. He also contributed to the popular “08<sup>th</sup> Page” of Divayina news paper that was edited by Sunil Madhawa Premathilake. Dayananda was also the joint Secretary of the Independent Writers’ Front that was initiated by reputed poet Monica Ruwanpathirana. After the demise of Dayananda, this writers’ front became inactive. He was a regular speaker on forums organized by anti- Indo Sri Lanka student fronts in the universities. He was shot dead near the fuel filling station in Kompannevediya (Slave Island)

on the day he was going home with the news that his wife had given birth to their first baby. Dayananda was the eldest in a family of five children from Matara.

**N. C. M. Ismail – Media personnel (46 years)**

**Died / December 1988 (??)**

A resident of Valachchennai in the Eastern Province, N.C.M. Ismail, born in the year 1942, was a provincial correspondent to both Veerakesari and Thinakaran. A teacher by profession, he worked as a provincial correspondent for about 10 years.

He is said to have fallen victim to a shell that exploded close to him and another, while they were one day talking on a street in the Valachennai town, during the time the LTTE was confronting the IPKF.

**S. Selvarajah – Media personnel**

**Assasinated / 1988**

S. Selvarajah is from Myliddy in the KKS area and was the Jaffna correspondent for Thinakural of the Lake House group of news papers.

He had been assassinated by the LTTE during the time the LTTE and the IPKF was bogged down in heavy confrontations in 1988.

There was no one who could give more details about his assassination.

**1989**

**D. N. S. Pathirana – Media personnel**

**Assasinated / January 24**

D.N.S. Pathirana was the proof reader for the official news paper “Haraya” of the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) and at times he also helped in editorial work.

He started his political activities as a student of the Vidyalankara Pirivena and then became a fulltime political activist for the NSSP. Born in Deniyaya in the South he was married and had two children, a son and a daughter at the time of his assassination, by suspected JVP gunmen.

After his assassination his family had left to Moneragala, the village of his wife.

**Ananda Navaratne – Writer**

**Assasinated / 1989 January 25**

Born in Kandy, Ananda Navaratne was a fulltime political activist of the NSSP in Kandy and was also an editorial member of the party journal “Haraya”. He was a poet and writer who accepted a negotiated settlement to the ethnic conflict and had written poems and articles on the conflict. He had published a Sinhala language book on the conflict titled “National Question”.

He was assassinated while at his residence in Kandy. His father and three brothers, all NSSP supporters, were also gunned down along with Navaratne, by suspected JVP gunmen who stormed his residence.

Navaratne was married at the time of his death.

### **B. M. Weerakoon Bandara – Cultural activist Assasinated / 1989 February 09**

Popularly known as “Weerakoon Mahathtaya”, Weerakoon Bandara was a local social activist who worked with no political party differences. He was popular in Madahapola, Kurunegala as one who took the side of the poor.

He was an officer of the Agriculture department.

He considered developing a knowledge based society as a priority and thus organized different study forums on many different topics, for which he invited resource persons from relevant areas.

He was assassinated at his residence in front of his wife and 03 children by suspected JVP gunmen.

### **N. G. Premaratne (Upali) – Street Drama performing artiste Assasinated / 1989 February 11**

Prenaratne who was popularly known as ‘Upali’, was a capable ‘Street drama’ performer. He was one of the founder members of the “Veera Puran Appu” community farm and the “Veera Puran Appu” street drama group initiated by T.B. Wijesuriya.

A pro left political activist who was against racism and ethnic violence, he and his group of street drama artistes traveled all over the country performing on invitation at public rallies and at progressive events.

He was assassinated by suspected JVP gunmen who stormed his place in the colony of Katugampola, Ma-eliya in Yapahuwa. He was married with 02 children.

### **Sarath Seneviratne - Street Drama performing artiste Assasinated / 1989 February 11**

A bachelor, Sarath Seneviratne’s occupation was in contributing to the “Veera Puran Appu” street drama group. He wasn’t affiliated to any political party, but was very much involved with many progressive social organisations.

He was also assassinated for his activities in the street drama group and lived in the Katugampola colony in Ma-eliya, Yapahuwa.

### **J. A. Maithripala Jayaweera (Loku Aiya) - Street Drama performing artiste Assasinated / 1989 February 11**

Jayaweera was a young married person with four children and was fondly called “Loku Aiya” (Elder brother) by the villagers of the Katugampola colony. He was a performer with the ‘Veera Puran Appu’ street drama group.



Starting his political activities with the Sri Lanka Freedom party (SLFP), he was the local branch President of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP) at the time of his assassination. Jayaweera was assassinated on the same night the two other street drama artistes, Premaratne and Sarath.

**T.H. Gamini Senaka Bandara (sagara) – Writer**  
Assasinated / 1989 March 06

Senaka Bandara was an activist in left politics for some time and had written to many journals of the left. He had initially been active with an underground political group in the 70's during which time he was associated with a journal "Gini pupura" (Embers of fire). He used the pen name "Sagara" for his writing. He first entered the provincial stage through a drama that focused on the land issue in the central hills. He was a very conspicuous voice against insurgent politics in the area and at the time of his assassination, was an active member of the SLMP youth organisation. He also used the name K. B. Ihalagama. Senaka Bandara was assassinated by suspected JVP gunmen while at his wife's parental home.

**K. Thanabalasingham – Writer**  
Assasinated / 1989 March 24

Thanabalasingham was known as a writer by the name 'Kumar Thanabal'. He was shot dead at the Murukandy junction on the Nallur road. Although it was reported in the Uthayan news paper of Jaffna, no corroborative evidence was found.

**Sunil Navaratne – Journalist**  
Assasinated / 1989 March

Sunil Navaratne had been a fulltime activist of the NSSP and had worked as the Maskeliya correspondent for the weekly news paper 'Haraya' that was published from 1985. NSSP deployed its full time activists to collect information on disappearances during the 1988 period onward. Sunil Navaratne was collecting information on disappearances in Matara district and is reported to have been assassinated by the security forces.

**T. Mahalingam – Journalist**  
Assainated / 1989 May 11

Mahalingam was a retired teacher who had also qualified as an Attorney at law. He was one time working as the Point Pedro correspondent of the English mainstream news paper "Sun" and later became the Point Pedro correspondent of the "Island" news paper.

Mahalingam was married with 03 children and was living in Nelliady, a village in Karaveddy. He was gunned down by suspected LTTE gunmen while at his residence and the family members have subsequently left the country.

**P. D. Wimalasena (49 yrs) – Manager, Govt Printing Press  
Assasinated / 1989 May 27**

Born in Makuludoowa, Wimalasena started his adult life as an employee of the Government Printing Press in 1958. He joined the LSSP and became an active trade union member. In 1963 he was elected the General Secretary of the Government Printing Press Trade Union that was affiliated to the LSSP and in 1966, became its President. He continued as President of the union till his assassination and was also the General Secretary of the All Ceylon Government Trade Union Federation of the LSSP. It is said Wimalasena spearheaded the project to print school text books at the government press when the Government Printer declined to print them as the printing machines at the government press had little capacity to undertake such a massive task. He had mobilised the machine operators at the government press to repair some of the machines on a voluntary basis to enable the text books to be printed at the government press. That provided the first text book that was priced at 25 cents and later was expanded as the free school text book scheme by the government.

At the time of his assassination, he was the manager of the 'Star Press' owned by the LSSP. He was shot while at this printing press on May 27, 1989 by suspected JVP gunmen.

**Ivan Jayasekera – Journalist  
Assasinated / 1989 June 24**

Jayasekera was a founder member of the SLMP and at the time of his assassination was the SLMP organizer for the Maharagama electoral seat. While he wrote to many journals, he also edited and published a journal by the name "Maharagama". He was shot dead by unknown gunmen on 1989 June 24.

**Thevis Guruge – Chairman ITN  
Assasinated / 1989 July 23**

Thevis Guruge was the second announcer to have joined the "Radio Ceylon", the forerunner to the present SLBC. He retired from service as the Director General of the SLBC. He was instrumental in starting the programme "Workers' Hour" in the Radio Ceylon at a time there was no TV and the radio was a very strong communicating medium. He also produced a programme called "Monthly Drama".

After retirement he was appointed Chairman and Director General of the SLBC once again. During the insurgency, he was appointed the Competent Authority of the state owned Independent Television Network (ITN) and also functioned as the government Censor of news when emergency regulations were enforced in July 1989.

He was shot at while he was returning home after visiting the Temple at Narahenpita in the morning of 1989 July 23. The assassination was said to be the work of the JVP, but later, there were doubts about who the actual assassins are.

## Premakeerthi de Alwis – Radio and TV Presenter Assassinated / 1989 July 31

A very popular radio and TV presenter, Samaraweera Mudiyansele Don Premakeerthi de Alwis was born on June 03, 1947 in Colombo. He joined the SLBC as a Relief Announcer in 1967 December and at the time of his assassination, was Programme Producer on News and Current Affairs.

He learnt his basics in journalism, contributing and editing magazines at school in Ananda College, Colombo. His ambition was to become a popular singer and thus joined the children's programme of the then Radio Ceylon. He was picked up by Karunaratne Abeyssekera, a giant in his time in the radio business and was tasked as a copy reader for the children's programme from 1961 January.

His 25 year service period had many ups and downs in life including political victimisations. During the period 1969 to 1977, he was interdicted 12 times from service. He was sent on compulsory leave on 12 August, 1977 and was later re-instated as no charge against him was proved. But was transferred to Rajarata Service Anuradhapura and Ruhunu Service in Matara before being transferred to Colombo again as punishment.

He as a person was a very talented artiste, who broke many barriers in TV presenting with his very non-conformist presenting style that dominated over the visual. His forte nevertheless was as a lyricist.

He was gunned down close to his small rented house in Homagama on the night of 31 July, 1989 after he was taken away by a group of youth who came to his house. A few posters in Homagama by the front organisation of the JVP, the Patriotic People's Front took responsibility for the assassination.

## Kulasiri Amaratunge – Media personnel Assassinated / 1989 August 11

Kulasiri Amaratunge had a long career with the SLBC before he left the country and employed himself in the media abroad. Since his return to the island, he accepted the post of Consultant Editor News, on the invitation of the then Chairman of the Rupavahini Corporation. He was one who worked in both Sinhala and English languages.

This was the insurgency period of late 80's and all State owned media was finding it difficult to maintain their news programmes with all presenters and announcers being threatened with death. Amaratunge thus had to shoulder an absolutely risky responsibility of running the daily news bulletins.

On the Sunday morning of his assassination, before leaving for work he had been reading the news papers in the front verandah of his house when two youth had entered asking whether they could use his fixed line phone. They had shot him and made their escape. It is strongly suspected the JVP is responsible for his assassination.

## Chandanie Sagarika Gomes (28 yrs) – TV presenter and performing artiste Assassinated / 1989 September 18

Sagarika Gomes was a very talented girl from her school days and had won the first place in national schools competitions for folk singing. Her talent was noticed by reputed musician Edwin Kottegoda and was thus tutored by him.

She took part in many and varied children's programmes broadcast by the SLBC and blossomed as both a performing artiste and a singer.

She came on stage with Prof Ediriweera Sarachchandra's famous musical drama "Vessanthara". She also took part in other famous stage plays like Sri Wickrama, Samudhra Devi, Siri Sangabo and Pandukhabaya too.

Born in 1961 October 19, Sagarika became a TV announcer/presenter for the Rupavahini Corporation during the height of the insurgency. On the fateful night of her assassination, a group of armed men had entered her house in the evening and had ransacked her room, before she came from work. When she came, they had taken her away saying she has to be questioned. Her body was found lying on the beach close to her home in Dehiwala. It was just about a month before her wedding to an Army officer.

As that was a period the patriotic fronts were threatening media personnel, the immediate reaction was to suspect JVP involvement in the killing. Nevertheless, there was also serious suspicion about a hired gang carrying out the killing.

## Rajini Rajasingham Thiranagama – University academic cum Writer Assassinated / 1989 September 21

Rajini Rajasingham Thiranagama is one who contributed against 'killer politics' to many journals. She is a co-author of the book "Broken Palmyrah" published by the Jaffna University Teachers' Human Rights. She was against the oppressive politics that did not allow dissent and dialogue for her people's freedom. She was an accepted and popular activist among human rights, feminist and cultural activists both in the North and the South. She was a medical doctor by profession and worked with the Jaffna University as the Head of the Physiology department. As a student counselor she was extremely popular and a poster after her assassination said, "We did not bury you. We cultivated you". She did her postgraduate work in the UK and had the opportunity to continue staying there but she opted to come back to Jaffna, her birth place, to be involved in democratic activities. Though warned by her friends and colleagues in Colombo and abroad about her life, she continued to work in Jaffna. She was shot dead when returning in the evening on a bicycle around 05.00 pm from her duties at the Physiology Department in the university. The first prompt allegation was that it was the IPKF. But subsequently the LTTE is being accused of her assassination. She was married to a Sinhala university academic acquainting 'left politics' and had 02 daughters. The husband and daughters have since migrated to the UK while other family members have left the village.

## I. Shanmugalingam – Journalist Assassinated / 1989 November 06

Shanmugalingam first started his career with "Eelanadu" and was working for "Viduthalai" at the time of his assassination. After the IPKF closed down Eelanadu, Murasolie and Eelamurasu news papers, the EPRLF took over one of the printing presses and launched their Viduthalai news paper. Shanmugalingam then joined Viduthalai and was subsequently claimed to have been shot dead by the LTTE. He was married and 45 years old at the time of his death and was living in Ariyalai.

## M. Amirthalingam – News paper owner, Tamil Trust Fund Assassinated / 1989 (date not confirmed)

Owner (Managing Director) of the Jaffna based "Murasoli" news paper, he was also the pioneer and founder of the Tamil Trust Fund. Murasoli was a news paper that showed a some leanings towards the LTTE, but was sensitive on rights violations. Amirthalingam was also a close sympathizer of the ruling UNP. He was found shot to death says reports, but the exact date was not confirmed. LTTE is suspected of this killing. A native of Karainagar, he was married with 03 children.

## R. D. Pitawela – Dancing Teacher / Performing artiste Assassinated / 1989

A graduate on Aesthetic Studies from the University of Kelaniya, R.D. Pitawela was first appointed as a Dancing Teacher in 1974 to a school close to his native village, Hangunnawa, in Uva Paranagama. He became an active member of the Ceylon Teachers' Union and joined the 1980 July general strike. He then became an active member of the then Revolutionary Workers' Congress (Socialist Equality Party) and was its Secretary in the area. He was well known for his politics in the area and respected as a tireless political activist who walked miles from house to house selling his party news paper. He took to part time dancing in hotels to earn an income since loosing his job from the '80 July strike and traveled to Nuwara Eliya often for performances. He was dragged out of his house one night, tied to a lamp post and shot dead. It is common knowledge in the village, he was gunned down by JVP suspects.

## Sarath Chandraratne – Singer Assassinated / 1989

A popular local singer, Sarath Chandraratne was an active member of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP). He was popular in the area in his nick name "Mahathun Malli". His income was from a small boutique he ran in Rambe junction, Ma-eliya, Yapahuwa. This place became a popular haunt for SLMP sympathizers. He was shot dead in his boutique one night, by unidentified gunmen.

## M. Navaratnam – Media personnel Assassinated / 1989

A teacher by profession, M. Navaratnam worked as a local correspondent for both Eelamurasu and Murasoli news papers published in Jaffna. Eelamurasu was said to be close to the LTTE. He was gunned down during the time the IPKF was in Jaffna. In Jaffna media circles it is commonly said the assassination was carried out by the EPRLF that worked closely with the IPKF. He was a native of Thelippalai and was resident in Aarlei.

## 1990

## Lakshman Perera – Drama producer Assassinated / 1990 January 27

Lakshman Perera was a Member of the Dehiwala-Mt. Lavinia Municipal Council from the then ruling UNP and was known to have been very close to former Minister Athulathmudali, MP for Ratmalana. He was also known to Richard de Zoysa, the TV presenter / dramatist. Prior to his abduction on 27 January, 1990 and disappearance he was said to have been producing a stage drama scripted by Richard de Zoysa, titled "Who is this ? – What is he doing?" a slogan used in President Premadasa's election campaign. He was residing in Major L.V. Gunaratne Mawatha, Dehiwala.

## Richard de Zoysa – TV presenter cum dramatist Assassinated / 1990 February 18

A very popular TV presenter, a newscaster and a stage dramatist who was also known as a teledrama actor, was known to have furnished information on disappearances and human rights violations to the Inter Press Service (IPS).

He was abducted by a group of men in police uniform who came to his mother's residence in Welikada, close to the police station on 17<sup>th</sup> February night, where he was living with his mother, Dr. Saravanamuttu. Following morning his badly mutilated body was found washed ashore on Moratuwa, Korlawella beach, a town in Colombo district. It is said he was to leave the country the next day with a full list of human rights violations and to serve with IPS.

His mother later volunteered to lead the "Mothers' Front" a movement that campaigned against abductions and disappearances. She later identified one of the men who came home on that fateful night as police officer Ronnie Pieris from a recorded TV programme that went on air about 03 months before Richard de Zoysa's abduction and worked tirelessly to initiate legal action against this officer. This chief suspect of the Richard de Zoysa murder case was one who died from the suicide attack that killed President Premadasa on 1993 May 01<sup>st</sup>. Richard de Zoysa's death became the focus of subsequent campaigns for the right of expression and media freedom. The "Yukthiya" news paper launched a mass campaign against media suppression on 1994 February 21 in remembrance of Richard de Zoysa and Rajini Thiraganama.

## Kumaraguru Kuhamurthi – Media personnel Assassinated / 1990 September 16

Kuhamurthi, employed as a clerk at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), worked as a human rights activist in his personal capacity. Thus he was an active member of the Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE). He was a reporter on human rights to the Saturday Review weekly tabloid, published in Jaffna. With good connections in Jaffna, he was often a facilitator for journalists who made trips to Jaffna in search of information. A few days before his abduction, he had participated in a seminar on human rights at the Mt. Lavinia hotel, when he was arrested by the Mt. Lavinia police, but was immediately released with other participants interfering.

On 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1990 he was returning on his scooter after work in the evening when a group who had come in a van, blocked him on Jawatte Road, not far from the SLBC, forcibly removed him and escaped. He was considered murdered, but the body was never found. The abduction and forced disappearance of Kuhamurthi is credited to an armed group that worked for the then government.

He was married and his wife was pregnant at the time of his abduction. She later gave birth to a baby girl. The whole family left their village in Jaffna, after the abduction.

**Sona Pathmanathan – Media personnel**

**Assassinated / 1990 September 27 (??)**

Pathmanathan was an employee of the Uthayan news paper, in its distribution department. He died from a shell that fell on the Uthayan office on 27 September, 1990 that damaged the building and injured four others. Y. Jeganathan of the administration and A. Sunther Raja a machine minder lost a hand each while a security guard was seriously injured. The other was an outsider who had come at that time.

**U. L. Dawood – Writer (50 yrs)**

**Assassinated / 1990**

Dawood, a resident of Eravur in the Eastern province, was the principal of Alighar Muslim College at the time of his murder. He had contributed articles to news papers and had often focussed on children. The book "Muslim Kadei Malar" a collection of articles and letters by Muslim writers also has contributions from Dawood. After fighting broke out between the IPKF and the LTTE, he had to find refuge in a camp. There he had voiced his protest against discriminations against Muslim people. Information gathered disclose that gunmen had arrived at the camp had taken him outside saying they have an investigation against him and had then gone off after shooting him. Most claim it was the LTTE that killed Dawood.

**Ahamed Lebbe – Author**

**Assassinated / 1990 December 26**

Ahamed Lebbe was an author who was presented with the State Literary award in 1978. He started his career as an Assistant Teacher, was promoted as a principal and then as a Director of Education. At the time of his death, he was the Additional District Secretary of Batticaloa. He had written short stories and novels and published a short history of Valachchennai, titled "Valachchennai Varalaaru". After his demise, a collection of his short stories was published by his friends titled, "Mookkaadu".

On 26 December, 1990 he died from a landmine explosion on the Polonnaruwa – Valachchennai road, while traveling on duty. He was married and had 05 children at the time of his death. Muslims believe he was targeted by the LTTE to prevent him from becoming the District Secretary of Batticaloa, an appointment that was due to him.

1991

## Velupillai Anandan – Writer

Assassinated / 1991 February 21

Anandan, born in 1949 April 08<sup>th</sup> in Batticaloa, was a reputed a Tamil literary personality. He was a Postal Clerk working in a post office in Sammanthurai, Ampara. He contributed literary reviews to news papers too. Fluent in the Malayali language he had translated about 30 Malayali short stories into Tamil language. He also has about 100 poems in his name. He was one in the van that was attacked in Pudukudiruppu (**my knowledge is that this village is in Mullaitivu**) on his way home from Sammanthurai to Batticaloa. There had been over 20 passengers in the van that was fired at close to the check point in that village. This was a period when violent activities were high in the East. On the previous day, it said, 02 Muslim Civil Defense Force persons were killed by the LTTE in the same village. With the driver being hit first, the van had gone off the road and collided on a lamp post. One person who managed to jump out of the vehicle escaped being hit and escaped. Others who were shot to death and some who were wounded had been set on fire inside the van, say informants. Anandan was one of those victims. A collection of his poems titled "Anandan Kavithahal" was published by his friends in year 2000.

## So Soosaipillai Norbert alias Dominic – Writer

Assassinated / 1991 May 17

Dominic was born in 1948 May 02<sup>nd</sup> in Palayattu, Trincomalee and was educated at St. Joseph Vas College in Trincomalee. He graduated from the Colombo university with a bachelor's degree. He first served in the Surveyor General's department and later in the Education department as a clerk and in 1982 left his job to take up full time politics with the PLOTE. In a short time he was appointed to the PLOTE politburo. He was a writer even before he became a full time political activist. He was a frequent writer to the magazine "Theerthakkarei". A magazine by the name "Thinakarei" in the plantation sector edited by him carried his name as Francis Xavier. He wrote articles to news papers and magazines under the name "Thesavan". He was identified as a creative political writer when he published a novel in India, titled "Puthiathoru Ulaham" (A new world). This novel is said to discuss the dictatorial politics of most armed groups of that time. He went underground in India from 1985 to 1991 having opposed the totalitarian internal politics of PLOTE. In 1991 May he returned to Jaffna and organised a small political group called "Thee-pori" (The burning amber) from members who had opposed the internal dictatorship of PLOTE. After a few days Dominic along with 04 university students and a few others were abducted by suspected LTTE cadres on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1991. According to one who escaped from this abduction, Dominic was murdered in June. He was living at that time in Kokuvil, Jaffna.

## Selvinithi Thiagarajah – Freelance journalist cum cultural activist

Assassinated / 1991 August 26

Selvi, as she was popularly known, was a final year undergraduate of the Aesthetic faculty of the Jaffna university. She was the editor of the Tamil women's magazine, "Tholi". She also worked for the women's centre "Purani" in Uduvil, that helped women, affected from war. She was also a stage drama producer and a literary critic. She had been warned for her open criticism of a drama staged by the LTTE at the university. She was taken by the LTTE into



their custody on August 26<sup>th</sup> from her room in Athisothy Lane, closed to the university around 7.30 in the night.

Having come to know she was being targeted by the LTTE, Selvi had informed her parents she would be taken away by the LTTE and stayed in her room awaiting their arrival. At the time of her detention by the LTTE, Selvi had been producing two dramas, one on children and the other about the role of women during period of struggle. This was based on the Palestinian experience and was to go on stage the next day.

According to informed sources she had been assassinated some where in February, 1993. In 1992 the International Pen award for the sacrifices made to safeguard the right of expression was given to Selvi. The organisers had requested the LTTE to allow her receive the award in person or to allow them to meet her where ever she is to present the award, for which there had been no response by the LTTE.

It is said the LTTE had returned the clothes she was last wearing when she was taken by them to her parents as a message that notified her death, or raher her murder.

### S. Thillainathan - Cultural activist Assassinated / 1991 August 26

Thillainathan was by profession a teacher. He was a very talented street dramatist and a performing artiste. He was the bread winner as the eldest in a family of 03 brothers and 03 sisters. Resident of Jaffna city, his first appointment was in Vettikulam in Vavuniya, in a very difficult school in the village Pavattakulam. Every vacation and holiday, he had come to Jaffna to join his colleagues and work in cultural activities. He was a founder member of the university cultural group. In 1991 August, Thillainathan was in a very depressed mind with his long time fiancée committing suicide, unable to bear the pressures of her mother who wanted her to give up social responsibilities to get into the traditional Jaffna married life. Yet Thillainathan was involved with Selvi and Manoharan with their drama work. He was also srved with a death threat for criticising the LTTE. He was also taken away from his residence on the same day the other two, Selvi and Manoharan were taken away. H had also been taken to Tunukkai and tortured before death. In 1993 August one day, the LTTE had sent his clothes to his home, conveying of his death.

### K. Manoharan - Cultural activist Assassinated / 1991 August 26

Manoharan, who was a final year under graduate of the faculty of Scince, Jaffna university, was taken by the LTTE on the same day Thillainathan and Selvi was taken away by the LTTE. He was a native from Ilavalei and was the only son of a widow. They came from a very poor background and it was Manoharan's perseverance that took him that far in education. He was also one among Selvi and Thillainathan who were involved in cultural activities. He was in the cast of the drama that was to be staged the following day. Manoharan was in the LTTE black list for providing information to the University Teachers' Association on human rights violations in his village area. He had been taken away from the hostel in Ariyalei and it is said Manoharan was in the Tunukkai camp. He had been tortured to death say informed sources. There is no information as to what came about his mother since his death.

## 1993

**Anthony Quintus Fernando – Media personnel**  
Assassinated / 1993 May 02 (??)

Anthony Quintus has worked for the Sinhala publication of the Cathlic news paper "Gnaarartha Pradeepa" for some time, as its correspondent for the Galle Parish. This being the oldest news paper in Sri Lanka published since 1866 June, it now calls its local correspondents as "self service correspondents" in a parish.

Anthony Quintus is the 6<sup>th</sup> in a family of 7 and had a very difficult early life. In 1990 he got an appointment as an Assistant Teacher and was posted to the school he started his education, the Sacred Heart's Convent. A few weeks before his death he conducted a workshop on children's literature for over 100 children.

He was a victim of the suicide attack on President Premadasa at Armour Street on 01<sup>st</sup> May, 1993 and succumbed to his injuries on 02<sup>nd</sup> May, after an emergency operation.

## 1994

**A. Sabhalingam – Writer / Freelance Journalist**  
Assassinated / 1994 May 01

Sabhalingam, a reputed writer, is one of the intellectuals who took the initiative in recording events related to the Tamil national struggle. HE was a frequent contributor to the Canada based magazine "Thyagam" and was critical on LTTE activities. The magazine itself had come under threat from the LTTE, said informed sources. He was domiciled in France, having left Sri Lanka for fear of death.

He was arrested in 1973, while a student at the University of Katubedda and was detained in Anuradhapura and Bogambara, Kandy prisons. He lost his left arm after a fall from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Bogambara prisons.

Sabhalingam entered politics through the youth front "Ilanjer Peravar" of the TULF. He is said to have started writing a book on coercive politics and its growth within Tamil politics after the LTTE moved into crush other Tamil groups. A recent article before his assassination that appeared in the magazine "Thyagam" had been critical of Prabhakaran and had traced the early period of the LTTE.

On 01<sup>st</sup> May, 02 Tamil youth, one from Switzerland and another from Sri Lanka had visited him in his Paris flat for a short snack and had shot him in front of his wife and the two children, before escaping. In London a protest rally was organised, attended by many intellectuals, journalists and social activists, which demanded the arrest and punishment of the assassins.

**Kanakaratnam Sriskandarajah (K. S. Rajah) – Radion Journalist & Producer**  
Assassinated / 1994 December 03

Better known as K.S. Rajah, was selected to the University of Peradeniya, but opted to a radio journalist career and discontinued his studies to join the SLBC as an announcer. He was a relief announcer before his permanent appointment in the Tamil Commercial Service. He is

said to have surpassed the reputation of Mylvaganam who was considered the programme producer with the hisghest rankings. He later became the Propaganda Officer of th SL Film Corporation, but continued as a relief announcer. He is said to have left for India without notice to his employer and had been on stage as an announcer with SL Tamil groups, according to infomed sources. After returning to SL he had produced popular programmes for the SLBC as K.S. Rajah. He is also credited for the discussion programme "Makkal Kural" (Voice of the people) that is claimed, was sponsored by the EPDP. A native of Karainagar, he was living with his family in Borella. His body was found near the Bandaranayake statue, in Galle face, Colombo. He was around 40 years at the time of his death.

## 1995

Karunaratne Saputhanthree (52 yrs) – Journalist

Kirama Piyasoma (41 yrs) – Journalist

Edwin Weerasinghe (45 yrs) – Photo journalist

Assassinated / 1995 April 29

Karunaratne Saputhanthree, Associate Editor, Silimina news paper, Kirama Piyasoma, its News Editor and Edwin Weerasinghe, a photographer were to join the media tour to Jaffna in order to work on a feature about the shooting down of the first Avro plane in Jaffna by the LTTE. Saputhanthree was an experienced journalist, working with Silumina news paper from 1973. He was married with .....children. Piyasoma was married with 02 small children and so was photographer Weerasinghe who also had 02 children. All 03 journalists died when the Avro they were flying to Palaly was shot down by the LTTE on April 29, 1995..

S. S. Ganeshapillai (Varani Yuran) – Radio artiste

Assassinated / 1995 August 30

Ganeshapillai was popular among the Tamil listners as 'Varani Yuran'. He was also a very competent script writer. He was a very talented comedy artiste in radio plays that poked fun on issues like social injustice, caste, dowry, land issues and provincialism. It is said he had written about 100 satirical plays for children.

A native from the village of Varani in Kodikamam, he was residing in Maradana, Colombo. It is said he had also been running a business on foreign labour recruitment. It is said the LTTE had shot him dead in the night on August 30<sup>th</sup> for programmes the SLBC carried against the LTTE. One of his two daughters who was living in the villahe Varani, was not allowed to come to Colombo to attend the father's funeral by the LTTE. It is also said, people feared to visit her house even to condole.

## 1996

Sudeepa Purnajith – Cartoonist & lay out artiste

Assassinated / 1996 July 28

Young Purnajith was a lay out artiste with the 'Nava Yugaya' weekly news paper published by the Lake House and was a popular cartoonist too. He was also an international award winning postal stamp designer. A bachelor, he was resident in Panadura. He travels to work and back by train, daily. On this fateful day, while travelling back home by train, he fell victim to the bomb that exploded in the train killing many others.

**Kandiah Gajendran – Journalist**  
Assassinated / 1996 October 27

Gajan as he was known, Gajendran was the editor of the weekly Tamil news paper "Eelamurasu" published in Paris. This news paper was considered sympathetic to the LTTE. He was shot dead in a place called La Sabelle (check spelling) along with Kandiah Perimbanathan, considered the head of the LTTE International Finance division. The killing is obviously attributed to an anti – LTTE group.

**1997**

**Thirunavakarasu Tharmalingam – News paper Agent**  
Assassinated / 1997 October 02

Tharmalingam owned a bookshop and was also a news paper agent in Jaffna. A Justic of Peace, he was appointed an organiser of the SLFP in Jaffna. He had been shot at through a window, while having dinner under an oil lamp. Initially it was said a group working with the government security forces is responsible for the killing, as the area is under military guard. Thereafter with police investigations, it said, the LTTE is responsible for the killing. The story narrated says the LTTE has come in a boat which landed in Kolombo thottam, used an accomplice to disconnect power in the area and had shot Tharmalingam, before escaping.

**1998**

**Sashy Krishnakumar – Freelance journalist**  
Assassinated / 1998 September 29

Krishnakumar was a graduate from the Peradeniya university and worked for the Palmyrah Development Board in Jaffna. He has been writing as a freelancer to many journals and news papers like Veerakesari, Eelanadu and Thinakaran. His speciality was contributions on art and literature. Krishnakumar was instrumentl in forming the 'Cinema Circle' in Jaffna, as an avid screen fan. He was the strength behind the programmes that screened films directed by Lester J. Pieris, Vasantha Obeysekera and Dharmasena Pathirajah. He had been a confidential source for information on human rights violation in Jaffna. He was a main source of confidential information for the column "The neighbour's diary" written to the "Yukthiya" news paper. On that fateful day, he was flying to Colombo on a 'Lion Air' domestic flight from Palaly, Jaffna that left around 01.40 pm. The plane is said to have been shot down by the LTTE over Iranamadu, killing all 49 passengers, who were all Tamil people and the crew of 03.

**1999**

**Rohana Kumara – Journalist**  
Assassinated / 1999 September 07

Rohana Kumara is a native from a village called 'Ganepella' in Yatiyanthota. From his school days he is said to have shown an interest in drama and films. His first experience in drama was a Sinhala stage drama he produced while in his village with friends called "Lustful Dreams". There after he migrated to Colombo in search of employment and ended up as a journalist. He had started with the fringe media and then became the Editor of the popular weekly tabloid on film called "Thira Tharu" in the late 80's.

After the cinema tabloid folded up, he took to publishing politically and personally charged, unorthodox, off cut weeklies, "Gindara" (Fire) and "Satana" (Fight) as news papers, which became popular with a section of the readership in search of quick, sensational news. His news paper "Satana" initially backed President Kumaratunge, but later became awfully critical of her. He was gunned down when he was returning home in a 3 wheeler, close to his house in Mirihana, Nugegoda, on September 07<sup>th</sup> 1999, around 10.00 pm. Reports indicate the assassins had come in two Toyota vehicles. An underworld figure, "Thara Ajith" accepted responsibility for the contract killing. He was arrested at the Baddegana residence of another similar person, Baddegane Sanjeewa, who by then was a member of the Presidential Security. Before long both Sanjeewa and then Ajith were gunned down, closing the investigations on the assassination of Rohana Kumara. His wife had to leave the country due to threats.

**Anbutharajah Nadarajah (Ramesh) – Media personnel**  
Assassinated / 1999 November 02

As editor of the "Thinamurasu" news paper published by the EPDP, Nadarajah was better known as 'Ramesh'. A resident of Jaffna, he was also an EPDP Member of Parliament from the Jaffna district.

Nadarajah was shot dead in his vehicle down Station Road, Wellawatte in broad daylight. As "Thinamurasu" was critical of the LTTE, it was initially considered a killing by the LTTE. Yet on close scrsutiny of other events, it is suspected the killing of Nadarajah could be an inside job. It was revealed Nadarajah as the editor had run into conflicts with the EPDP and wasn't complying with the party in running the news paper.

**Anura Priyantha Cooray – ITN Light technician**  
Assassinated / 1999 December 18

Anura Priyantha Cooray is from Kalapaluwawa, Rajagiriya, bordering the city of Colombo. He worked as a lighting technician for ITN. On 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1999 he was assigned to the camera crew that was sent to cover the final presidential campaign rally of President Kumaratunge, at the Town Hall, Colombo. Cooray was one among 13 other victims of the suicide blast that targeted President Kumaratunge, from which she very narrowly escaped, but lost an eye. Few more media personnel were injured from this suicide blast. Cooray was married and was a father of a single daughter.

## Indika Patthiniwasam – Sirasa Camera Assistant Assassinated / December 18

Patthiniwasam was a camera assistant working with the Sirasa media network. A resident of Embuldeniya, Nugegoda and the only child in the family, Patthiniwasam was married and was father of an infant son.

He was a member of the Sirasa media crew assigned to cover the last public rally of Presidential Kumaratunge in her campaign trail for the next presidency. Patthiniwasam fell victim to the suicide blast that targeted President Kumaratunge.

## Bastian Anthony Mariadas – Radio Artiste / December 31

The SLBC established its "Vanampadi" programme from the Irattaperiyakulam, Vavuniya transmitting station, after the security forces captured the Jaffna peninsula with the conclusion of the "Riviresa" operation. Mariadas worked as a freelance artiste for this programme. On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999 when the whole world was getting set for the dawn of the new millenium, the Vanampadi programme was ready to broadcast the festivities from a church in Vavuniya. Mariadas was an energetic organiser of the programme that night and was visited from Colombo by the programme controller Jeevaratnam Kumar. The programme was to begin at 10.30 in the night and due to pre-publicity given the St. Anthony's Church in Vavuniya had a large crowd. After all the spade work for the programme was over, Mariadas accompanied his boss Jeevaratnam Kumar to the church and left the church to get himself dressed for the occasion. When the programme was about to begin, a gunman pumped Mariadas with some bullets killing him. It is said, the target was the programme controller from Colombo. Vanampadi programme that before had broadcast news about shelling the Holy Madu shrine, had been warned by the LTTE says some sources. On that it is said, the LTTE was responsible for the killing of Mariadas.

## 2000

## Selian Perimbanayagam – Journalist cum Writer Assassinated / 2000 September 10

Perimbanayagam, a writer, is a native of Kalawanchikudi, Batticoola and for some time had worked in the editorial of the Thinakaran news paper of Lake House. In 1994, he left the job to contest local government elections from TELO and contested the Batticoola MC for mayoralty. There after he had worked towards obtaining nominations for parliamentary elections from the SLFP. After his stint as the Mayor, he had on and off worked as a reporter for the SLBC. He had always introduced himself as a writer and had been the President of the East Lanka Journalists' Association. His writing on the cyclone that swept the East in 1983 is a recognised work. He has some other contributions too under his name.

He was gunned down at a friend's residence, on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2000 when, it is said he went to meet this friend, a political organiser, to discuss about his nominations from the SLFP. His friend, S. Manoharan Pillai was also killed along with Perimbanayagam at the residence of Pillai in Pandiruppu, Kalmunai, a coastal village in the East.

**A. M. Nihamathullah – Journalist**  
Assassinated / 2000 September 16

Nihamathulla was a resident of Maradamuna Grama 3, in the Kalmunai divisional secretariat area. He had been the local reporter for the Thinakaran news paper. For two years before his death, Niyamathulla had been the Media Secretary of Minister A.H.M Ashroff. During that period too, he had continued as the Thinakaran correspondent for his area. He had especially covered sports in the area. He was one who accompanied Minister Ashroff in the fateful flight from Colombo that crashed killing all in the special flight. He was married and had 02 daughters.

**Mylvaganam Nimalarajan (39 yrs) – Journalist**  
Assassinated / 2000 October 19

A native of Jaffna, Nimalarajan was well known to the Colombo based media in his pet name "Nimale". He was one journalist in the North who had a very close rapport with the Sinhala media and was the Jaffna correspondent for the Sinhala and Tamil services of the BBC, Ravaya news paper, Veerakesari and Sooryan FM. Nimalarajan was also a very credible source of information on all developments in the Northern theatre of conflict. And he was very sharp on all that was happening in the North, in his reporting. He was the Secretary of the Northern Journalists's Association. A young married man, Nimalarajan had 03 children, Nivetha, Nishanthi and Neela. On the night of 19<sup>th</sup> October, Nimalarajan had been in his room working on a news report, when gunmen had shot him through the window, lobbed a handgrenade and escaped. Nimalarajan had succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital and his mother, father and a relative received injuries from the grenade blast.

As his residence was in the high security area in the city, government forces and in particular the EPDP was accused for the killing. The EPDP head, Minister Devananda in fact made an attempt to justify the murder by tainting Nimalarajan as a Tiger informant. After his funeral, his wife and children had left the country.

**2004**

**Aiyathurai A. Nadesan – Journalist**  
Assassinated / 2004 May 31

A native of Karaveddi, Jaffna, Aiyathurai A. Nadesan had come to reside in Lake Road, Batticoola, after his marriage. His employment was in the Internal Revenue Department as a Senior Officer. He was correspondent for the popular national Tamil news paper 'Veerakesari' and was recognised as a reputed journalist who also wrote analytical political articles. As a journalist he was known as G. Nadesan. The initial 'G' is said to have been borrowed from his wife's name. He was a Committee member of the Tamil Journalists' Association and Vice President of the Eastern Journalists' Association. As a writer he had won the Eastern Literary Academy award and in year 2000 won the Excellence award for the Best Tamil Journalist from the Editors' Guild.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May in the morning, on his way to work, Nadesan had stopped at the news paper shop on Bar Street, about 200 ms from his office to buy his news papers. When he was

leaving the shop, gunmen who had come on a motor bicycle had fired four shots killing Nadesan and escaped. He had four children.

### Kandaswamy Aiyer Balanadaraj – Writer Assassinated / 2004 August 16

Popularly known as "Bala" he had published a few short story collections and was known as a very creative writer, while also working as a freelance journalist. Coming from a high caste "Brahmin" family, Balanadaraj is a native of Urimpirai and had studied at Hindu College, when he joined the EROS organisation. He had started as a journalist writing to the LTTE journal "Viduthalai Puligal". He had the opportunity of becoming a Hindu cleric, but opted to work for the rights of his people. He joined the LTTE and started work as a political activist. As one who had a 'left' leaning, he had to leave that political work and finding life difficult was forced to go underground for some years. In year 2000 he came to Colombo and joined the EPDP. He became its Media spokesman and worked for the EPDP news paper "Thinamurasu". His pseudo name in that paper for which he wrote political articles was "Ambhi Mahal" ( Ambhi's son). Another was 'Irayaran'. On ugust 16<sup>th</sup> in the morning when he was on his way to the EPDP office, he was gunned down in Wellawatte by two who had come on a motorbicycle. The LTTE is held responsible for his killing.

### Lanka Jayasundera – Photo journalist Assassinated / 2004 December 11

Young Lanka Jayasundera worked as a photo journalist for the 'Lankadeepa, Wijeya, Sirikatha and Tharunaya' of the Wijeya group of news papers. He was assigned to cover the much hyped musical festival in which Indian celebrities including Sha Ruk Khan was to perform at the Race Course stadium in Colombo, organised by the Sirasa media group. There were protests from Sinhala Buddhist elements for holding the musical festival on the 3<sup>rd</sup> month anniversary of the popular Buddhist monk, Gangodawila Soma thero. As the festival was organised over a year, the organisers had explained the musical festival can not be postponed. The musical show drew a huge crowd. A bomb was thrown at the crowd killing two and injuring many. Journalist Jayasundera was one who died from that bomb blast. The 22 year old Jayasundera comes from the Southern village Muruthapitiya, Hakmana.

## 2005

### Dharmaratnam Sivaram – Editor TamilNet Assassinated / 2005 April 28

Internationally known as "Taraki", Dharmaratnam Sivaram was a journalist who excelled in both Tamil and English as a journalist. Sivaram was from Batticoloa and entered the Peradeniya University to read for a Humanities degree in English, but left the university after 02 years before completing the degree, for militant Tamil politics. As a columnist Taraki first started writing to the Island news paper in 1989 and then wrote to the Tamil national news paper "Veerakesari". He was specialising as a military columnist and became a very widely



read analyst on the subject in relation to the North – East conflict. He was abducted by a group of men who came in a vehicle, when left a restaurant opposite the police station in Bambalapitiya on the Galle Road with a friend, around 10.30 in the night on 27<sup>th</sup> April. His slain body was found the next morning near a scrub on the Japan – Friendship Road along the Diyawanna Lake, adjoining the parliament complex, declared a high security zone. A para military group working with the government is held responsible for killing Sivaram. He was honoured posthumously in 2006 with the Editors' Guild award for the Most Popular Journalist among Colleagues and Readers for the service he rendered as a journalist. At the time of his death, he was a columnist with the Daily Mirror and the editor of the pioneering Tamil website "TamilNet" started in 1998.

### Kannamuttu Arsakumar – Media employee Assassinated / 2005 June 29

"Bobby" as he was popularly known among his folk in Vivekanandapuram, Kokkadacholi, Arsakumar was a news paper dealer who handled distribution and sales of the LTTE news paper "Eelanadam" from the LTTE controlled Kokkadacholai to Akkaraipattu in the Ampara district in the East. This news paper was started after the 2002 February cease fire agreement and is said to have sole over 5,000 copies per publication. On June 29<sup>th</sup> when he was returning from Akkaraipattu after distributing news papers in the morning around 08.40, he had been shot dead near Matupola ([check this name again](#)) in Kalmunai.

### Relangee Selvarajah – Radio Announcer Assassinated / 2005 August 12

Relangee Selvarajah was born and educated in Jaffna and was first employed as an announcer at the main bus stand in Jaffna town. Her interest and talents in many fields of art, secured her a job with the oldest and the most respected radio station of the country, the SLBC in Colombo. In 1978 her role in a Sri lankan Tamil film was nominated for the Best Actress performance. Relangee was also a freelance presenter with the state Rupavahini and presented the popular Tamil programme "Uthaya Dharshanam" every Sunday morning. She served as a senior announcer with the SLBC till 2000 and left the SLBC to start a business of her own with the husband, S. Selvarajah.

On 12<sup>th</sup> August, she and her husband were shot dead by pistol wielding assassins around 01.00 in the afternoon while in their shop "Kinross travel Service". Her programmes in the SLBC were said to be the cause of her death, that the LTTE is held responsible for. It is also said the assassins would have known them before and her husband had been with the PLOTE before.

### D. Selvaratnam – Security guard Assassinated / 2005 August 29 (??)

Selvaratnam was a security guard at the "Sudaroli" news paper. He dies from a blast that occurred from a bom thrown to the news paper office in Grandpass, Colombo around 6.10 pm on 29<sup>th</sup> August. This attack was explained as an attempt to suppress Tamil news papers and journalists. Group(s) working with the government was suspected for this attack. Two other employees of the news paper and a visitor was injured from this bomb blast while 03 vehicles were also damaged.

**A. L. M. Faleel (Netpittimunai Faleel) – Writer**  
Assassinated / 2005 December 02

The public administrative officer A.L.M. Faleel was "Netpittimunai Faleel" in the literary field. Born in the village Netpittimunai in Kalmunai, Faleel started his life as a teacher and was the Divisional Secretary of Katthankudy in Batticaloa at the time of his death. He had published over 20 books that includes novels, short stories, poems and educational writings. Educational writings are the most important of them. He is said to have paid attention to the land issues of the Muslims in the area and had been warned by the LTTE according to information collected. On 02<sup>nd</sup> December, a Friday, he was shot dead in his office in the afternoon when he was about to leave for his prayers by two motor cyclists who fled on it. He was a father of 02 children.

**K. Navaratnam – Media employee**  
Assassinated / 2005 December 22

Krishnan Navaratnam was an employee at the Housing Development Authority, Jaffna office, but lost his job when he had to flee Jaffna in 1996 and live in the Wannu for a few years. After returning to Jaffna in 2000, he became an agent of the "Yarl Thinakural" news paper. He sold the news paper at the Poobalasingham book store in Jaffna. He was gunned down on 22<sup>nd</sup> December early morning around 5.30 near the news paper office when he came to collect the news papers. He was a father of 05 children. His wife had died about a month later.

## **2006**

**Subramaniam Suhirdarajan (S. S. Rajan) – Journalist**  
Assassinated / 2006 January 24

An employee of the Ports Authority, Suhirdarajan, better known as S.S. rajan worked as the Trincomalee correspondent of the "Sudaroli" news paper. He was born in Pandiruppu, Kalmunai. He was the first to report the killings of 05 youth on the beach close to the Trincomalee Navy head quarters on 02<sup>nd</sup> January, when the State and most other media said they were tiger accomplices and died from an explosion of a bomb they were carrying. On 24<sup>th</sup> January, he was shot in his head when he was on his way to work. The killing had taken place in the high security zone close to the North East governor's office, in Uvermalai, Lower Street around 06.40 in the morning. He was the father of two little children, Sadusan a son and Vidursha a daughter.

**S. T. Gananathan – Partner, Tamil News and Information Centre**  
Assassinated / 2006 February 01

S. T. Gananathan was an entrepreneur and partner of the Tamil News and information centre. He was also the Chairman of the Multi – purpose Co-operative Society of Jaffna. He was gunned at the Mampalam junction in Ariyalai, close to the Ariyalai army camp. He was 64 years at the time of his death.

**Bastian George Suresh – Media employee**  
Assassinated / 2006 May 03

Suresh was the Circulation Manager of the "Uthayan" news paper published in Jaffna. He was the victim of an armed attack by 06 men who walked in to the Uthayan office on 03<sup>rd</sup> May, while the "International Media Day" was being celebrated at the BMICH, Colombo. Uthayan office down Kasthuriar Road in Jaffna, is within a very sensitive high security area in the city. Six men armed with T 56 rifles that had entered the office and spent time speaking in Tamil and Sinhala, is said to have inquired after journalist Kugadasan. They had spilled bullets all round killing George Suresh and Ranjith Kumar, injuring 03 others in the Circulation division – Uthaya Kumar, Dayaharan and Sathis –totally damaged the computer section and caused damage to some printing machinery too. Suresh was married with 01 child.

**Rajaratnam Ranjith Kumar – Media employee**  
Assassinated / 2006 May 03

A resident of Kaithady, Jaffna Ranjith Kumar was residing at No. 14/5, Navathkuli Junction. He was the second victim of the armed attack on the Uthayan news paper office by 06 armed men on the International Media Day. He was a young married person.

**Nihal de Silva – Writer**  
Assassinated / 2006 May 27

Nihal de Silva is a Gratien Award winner in 2003 for his novel "Road to Elephant pass" and is considered a very amicable, casual person within the English literary society in Colombo. His other novel titled "Ginirella Conspiracy" was woven round JVP politics in the universities. At the time of his demise, he was writing his next novel titled "Arthi" and remained incomplete.

He fell victim to a landmine explosion in Wilpattu, while on a safari tour with 05 other friends on 27<sup>th</sup> May. All in the vehicle including the wild life tracker died from the explosion. He was married with 02 children and lived in Bambalapitiya.

**Sampath Lakmal de Silva – Journalist**  
Assassinated / 2006 July 02

Lakmal de Silva, an unmarried young freelance journalist living with his mother in Boralegamuwa, a Southern suburb of Colombo, was in contact with one or two army personnel for his defense related writing. On 02<sup>nd</sup> July, he had received a call very early in

the morning around 05.00 from one of his friends in the army and had thus left home. Late in the morning his body was found about 04 km away from his residence and close to Galle Road Dehiwala, on Jayawardne Place, with gun shot injuries.

### **Mariadasan Manoranjan – Media employee Assassinated / 2006 August 01**

Mariadasan Manoranjan was a salesman of the news paper, "Yarl Thinakural" in Jaffna. He was from Achchuveli, and lived on Sanganei Street. He had left home around 03.45 in the morning on his bicycle, was cleared by an army check point, while on the way to collect the news paper. He was caught in a remote controlled landmine close to the co-operative store in Navagiri, while returning from Jaffna on the same route that he took to go to Jaffna that morning. He is the second son in a family of two sons and a daughter.

### **Pathmanathan Vismananthan – Singer and musician Assassinated / 2006 August 02**

Vismananthan was the pioneer and leader of the musical group "Angaran". He was also a singer and worked as a stage presenter for shows. He lived close to the Jaffna Perumal kovil. On 02<sup>nd</sup> August he was shot dead around 01.25 in the afternoon, on the Navalar Road, Jaffna, opposite the "Namathu Eelanadu" news paper office. This area is a very high security area under gosl security.

### **Sathasivam Baskaran – Media employee Assassinated / 2006 August 15**

Baskaran was a driver with the Uthayan news paper in Jaffna. He had left the news paper office in the morning of 15<sup>th</sup> August to deliver news papers when the cufew in Jaffna was lifted from 10.00 in the morning to 01.00 in the afternoon. While on the way back in the van, which also bears the logo of the Yuthayan news paper, had been shot at around 11.30 killing Baskaran and damaging the vehicle, at the Puttur junction on Point Pedro road in Achchuveli. He was married with four children.

### **Sinnathamby Sivamaharajah – Media owner Assassinated / 2006 August 20**

Sivamaharajah was a bachelor from Kollankaadi village that was cleared by the government security forces to acquire it as a very high security area, who then moved to a house in Telippalai, close to the Durga Amman kovil, to live alone. He was the managing director of the Namathu Eelanadu news paper, Director of the Tamil Information Centre, was the President of the Jaffna Multi-purpose Co-operative Society and held many honorary posts as well. He was at one time a MP and a senior member of the political party Ilankai Thamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK).

He was found shot in his sleep in his bedroom on 21<sup>st</sup> August morning, when neighbouring people went looking for him as he did not turn up as usual for the morning kovil prayers and as there were gun shot sounds the previous night.

## 2007

**S. Raveendran – Media employee**

**Assassinated / 2007 February 12**

Raveendran is from Central Kopai and worked as the night Manager of the printing press at Namathu Eelanadu news paper. He was shot dead by gunmen who came to his house on 12 February. He was a father of a single child.

**Subramaniam Ramachandran – Media personnel**

**Assassinated / 2007 February 15**

Ramachandran who worked as a reporter for the two Tamil news papers, Yarl Kural and Valampuri published in Jaffna, was also a private tutor in Arsadi, Karaveddy and Vadamarachchi. He was abducted by an unknown group when he was returning on his push bicycle after tuition classes, at the Kalahei junction, Vadamarachchi on 15 February. He is suspected to have been assassinated after abduction from an area that comes under the security forces. He had two children.

**Subhash Chandrabosh – Media personnel**

**Assassinated / 2007 April 16**

A resident in Thirunavakkulam, Vavuniya, Chandrabosh owned a small printing press and was the editor and publisher of the literary magazine, "Nilae". He also worked for the London based magazine "Tamil World" as a freelancer.

He had followed a one month course in journalism from the College of Journalism, and there after under gone practical training at the Veerakeari news paper, before going back to his village.

Father of a 08 year son, he had been shot dead at his residence around 7.30 pm on 16 April, by a group of armed men. The son who had rushed to neighbouring houses pleading for help had not got any assistance, as the neighbours who heard gun shots feared to come out, according to the son. The little boy says those who came spoke in both Sinhala and Tamil languages.

**Selvarasah Rajeev Varman – Media personnel**

**Assassinated / 2007 April 29**

Rajeev Varman, born in 1982, was a young journalist who worked for the Jaffna published Uthayan news paper. He wrote especially about crimes. Previously he worked for the Eelanadu news paper. He was living with his parents and had an elder sister and two younger brothers. They lives in East Avarankal area in Puttur.

On 29<sup>th</sup> April, when he left the news paper office, he was gunned down at the Stanley Road – Rasavithottam Road junction on Navalar Road, close to the news paper office around 10.00 am, by two who had come on a motor bicycle. This is a high security area in the Jaffna town with security barricades around.

**Sahadevan Neelakshan – Under study, Media personnel  
Assassinated / 2007 August 01**

Neelakshan had completed a course on journalism at the Media Research and Information Centre in Jaffna and then was trained in Colombo for two weeks. On the day after he returned to Jaffna after his training in Colombo, gunmen who had arrived at his residence early morning around 05.10 had taken him out of the house, saying he has to be questioned. His house is within the high security zone in Adiyapadam Street, Kokuvil and it was during curfew time the gunmen had arrived. He was shot dead outside the house. Neelakshan was the editor of a magazine "Shaalaram" and had been the President of the Jaffna Student Movement too. After his assassination, his parents had arranged his brother to migrate out of the country.

**Anthony pillai Sherin Siththiranjana – Media employee  
Assassinated / 2007 November 05**

Siththiranjana is from Uyarappukulam, Anaikotte and worked for the circulation section of the "Yarl Thinakkural" news paper. He had earlier worked for the "Namathu Eelanadu" news paper. He had been abducted on 05<sup>th</sup> November, while distributing the news paper in Eesalai, on the Palaly Road, a high security area. He was married and had one child.

**Vadivel Nimalarajah – Media personnel  
Assassinated / 2007 November 17**

Nimalarajah was residing down Nicolas Lane close to the Kachcheri junction off Nallur Road and worked as a night shift proof reader at the Uthayan news paper. He was returning home after work on 17 November, and was abducted by an armed group around 07.30 near the railway crossing not far from the Uthayan office.

**Isaivisi Sempian (Subhajini) – Voice of Tigers Media personnel  
Suresh Limbiyo - Voice of Tigers Media personnel  
T. Tharmalingam - Voice of Tigers Media personnel  
Assassinated / 2007 November 27**

Isaivisi Sempian, Suresh Limbiyo and T. Tharmalingam are all employees of the LTTE owned "Voice of Tigers" radio station that was located in Kokavil, in the Kilinochchi area. On 27<sup>th</sup> November, around 04.30 in the evening the SLAF targeted this station in air raid. This air raid, damaged many buildings, killing 11 persons and injuring a few more. Isaivisi Sempian was a female announcer and was a mother of 03 children. She was better known as "Subhajini". Suresh Limbiyo worked as a technician and was father of a single child. T. Tharmalingam had worked as an engineer. Four other employees of the 'Voice of Tigers' were injured from this air raid.

## W. Gunasinghe – Media personnel

Assassinated / 2007 December 05

Gunasinghe retired as the Assistant Director of Education, at the Kebithigollewa Education Office, in the Anuradhapura district. He had been the local correspondent of the national Sinhala news paper, "Divayina" for 20 years. He was a victim of the pressure bomb that blasted the bus in Abhimanpura, Kebithigollewa on 05<sup>th</sup> December. This was the second bus that was caught to a pressure mine. Gunasinghe and 16 other civilians died from this explosion.

## 2008

### Pararajasingham (Paranirupesingham ??) Devakumar – Media person

Assassinated / 2008 May 28

Devakumar worked for the Colombo based electronic media, Shakthi FM radio and its TV, as its Jaffna correspondent. He was hacked to death along with another associate of his, Mahendran Varathan, while on their way to Devakumar's home in Marvadi, Vaddukoddai, around 04.00 in the evening. The attack had taken place in Kalunthai on the Kartheevu Road. Varathan dies after admission to hospital. It was later said the LTTE is responsible for the attack and killing as Devakumar was reporting on work accomplishments by the army. His associate Varathan was also later identified as one linked the EPDP. He was married a few months before the assassination.

### Mohamed Maharoof Rashmie – Media Personnel

Assassinated / 2008 October 06

He was known in the media circle, as Rashmie Mohamed. He had worked for the Sirasa TV of MBTV network for 04 years, as its Anuradhapura correspondent. He was also an energetic member of the "Rajarata" media organisation. He fell victim to the suicide attack that targeted the Opposition Leader of the NC Provincial Council on 06<sup>th</sup> October. Altogether, 27 persons were killed from this suicide attack. The attack took place around 08.40 in the morning during the ceremony that decalared open the Opposition Leader's office near the Old Bus Stand in Anuradhapura. He was on duty covering the ceremony. A young married journalist, he was 31 years. His sister and her husband who ahd attended the ceremony also died from the attack. He was residing in a house at Dharmapala Mawatha, in Anuradhapura.

## Few identified from a single source

### K. S. Ratnasingham - Media personnel

Assassinated / Batticoloa – 1986

K.S. Ratnasingham had been a resident in Kannankudha area in Vavunatheevu, Batticaloa district. He is said to have worked as a local correspondent for the Veerakesari news paper, according to a person he said he knew him. Nevertheless the news paper source did not have any records to confirm his assassination. It is said he was assassinated in 1986, but again, it is not confirmed. He is said to have had a child too.

**T. Dayanandan – Media personnel**  
Assassinated / Thambiluvil, Ampara – 1985

Dayanandan was a resident of Thambiluvi, in the Ninthavur area, Ampara district. A personal source says he was shot to death in 1985. He is said to have worked for the Veerakesari news paper as a local correspondent. Has not been confirmed.

**Poet from Eravur**  
Assassinated / 1990 August 11

A book "Beneath the Palmyrah" compiled by the Jaffna University Teachers, records the death of a Tamil poet in Eravur, where the LTTE is accused of killing 121 persons during the night of 11<sup>th</sup> August. The orgy had continued till the morning of 12<sup>th</sup>. This incident of the killing of the Tamil poet, though not named, has been documented from an eye witness account of the killing by one who escaped death at this poet's home. It is said a whole family Muslim people, who had some relationship to the Tamil poet had sought refuge at this Tamil poet's home. LTTE cadres who had walked in have shot the poet, when went on his knees to plead that the people in his house be spared. Altogether, 13 persons had been killed at this poet's home. There were no other information to confirm this killing from any other source in the East. The

**Nagalingam Thiagarajah –Batticaloa**  
Assassinated / Media personnel

There is a reference that Nagalingam Thiagarajah had worked as a journalist and was assassinated. No other details are available.

**K. P. Upasena – News paper Agent**  
Assassinated / 1988 May 16

While no area or location is mentioned, it is reported that K.P. Upasena was assassinated for distributing and selling news papers.

**U. C. Karunathilake – Photographer**  
Assassinated / 1988 July 09

Karunathilake had been the Divayina news paper Harispathuwa correspondent / photographer and is said to have been assassinated on 09<sup>th</sup> July.



Nelson Karunaratne – Galewela

Assassinated /Media personnel – 1988 November 23

Karunaratne had been the correspondent for Galewela and is said to have been assassinated on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

Wijesiri Nananayakkara –Mathugama

Assassinated / Media personnel - 1989 April 22

Nanayakkara had been the correspondent for Matugama and is said to have been assassinated on 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

Jinasena Kasturiarachchi – Tangalle

Assassinated / Media personnel – 1989 August 21

Kasturiarachchi had been the Daily News correspondent for Tangalle and is said to have been assassinated on 21<sup>st</sup> August

I. C. Fernando – Menikhinna News paper distributor

Assassinated during the insurgency period

Feranando is said to have beeb a news paper distributor in the Menikhinna area in the Kandy district. There is no details about when and where he was assassinated.

\* All the above 10 assassinations are from the book "Waarana Puranaya" (History of Censorship) compiled by Rajith Keerthi Tennakoon. The writer too has no other recorded evidence on them. Efforts to access more information was not positive.

## **Student political activists of the Inter University Student Federation involved in media and cultural work**

Pathmasiri Trimavithana – Creative artiste

Assassinated / 1988 October 22

Thrimavithana, a young poet from Kahawa, Ambalangoda, was a medical student from Colombo Medical faculty. He was also a good painter and contributed to the JVP sponsored "Veda Sisu handa" (Voide of Medical Students'). An activist who came through the Students' Action Committee, he was the Ratnapura district secretary of the Inter University Students' Federation, a JVP orchestrated front. He was arrested by the security forces and was claimed to have been brutally tortured before death. Details of his horrific killing shocked the society for some time.

**Upali Gamage – Editor, ‘Wedi handa’ journal  
Assassinated / 1990 January**

Upali Gamage, known by his pseudonym "Mahanama" was earlier Rev Premananda and derobed himself to take to full time student activism in the JVP student organisation, 'Socialist Student organisation'. He had worked in the Media Committee of the organisation and was editor of the underground journal "Wedi handa" (Echo of firing) and a few similar journals. He was also a member of the National Committee of the Student Action Front. It is also said he was in the supreme committee of seven that took 'ultimate' decisions. Was arrested in Kottawa, in the Colombo district and had been eliminated.

**Athula Senaratne – Editor, ‘Medical Students’ voice’  
Assassinated / 1990 Sptember 17**

Athula Senaratne was the student leader who worked towards re-organising the Inter University Student Federation, after it was shredded during the height of the JVP insurgency from 1997 to 1989 when most of the inter university student activists were either arrested or eliminated. Senaratne was the Convenor of the inter university student federation and a final year student at the Colombo Medical faculty. He was the editor of the underground journal "Veda Sisu handa" and a leader of the Medical Students' Action Committee. Arrested in March 1990, Senaratne had escaped from detention and had got back to student activism again. He was the political and media head in the JVP student movement. He was arrested again on 17<sup>th</sup> September and had been eliminated.

## **Information on accidents and involuntary disappearances**

**Leena Irene Haputhantri – Poet and Writer  
Died / 1987 May 18**

Leena Irene Haputhantri was a very promising, extremely talented poet and a prose writer, who met with an untimely, unfortunate accident and succumbed to the injuries caused to her head after almost 07 days. She was an accused in the 'Rosemead Case' of the JVP led 1971 insurgency and was in prison for 04 years. After her release from prison, she kept her contacts with the JVP for some time. She had totally disassociated herself from JVP politics by 1986 and had turned into a critic of the JVP too. She was very conspicuous in the Sinhala literary scene as a left oriented, female writer with an extraordinary creativity. She engaged herself in political discussions too while she wrote poems, prose and critiques.

After the murder of Independent Student Union leader Daya Pathirana of the Colombo University on 15 December 1986, most critics of the JVP felt insecure. So was Leena Irene, who was critical of the JVP, since her disassociation with her old colleagues.

She was editing the magazine "Maadya Nireekshana" (Media Watch) published by the Women and Media Collective.

Therefore Leena Irene's friends first allowed suspicions that it could be a planned accident. Nevertheless, subsequent information and evidence proved it was an accident and the vehicle owner was a business man. The accident happened in Rajagiriya near the President's College, although she was residing in her birth place, which was Dambara, in Horana. She was survived by her old mother and two children.

A novel based on much of her life and then a telefilm based on that novel was done a few years later.

## Chandrakumara Wickramaratne – Poet Missing since 1991

There is still some doubt among those who knew Chandrakumara Wickramaratne as "Chandare" as to whether he was abducted and eliminated or whether he committed suicide. He was a very forceful poet, still talked about by his friends. He was accepted as a JVP prop in the literary scene and was one who was not known to have a permanent place to stay. He was often moving around, staying with friends and colleagues. The last seen of Chandare is in early 1991 when some friends claim they meet him travelling in a bus from Kandy to Colombo. Yet they say they were surprised to find him missing, when the bus neared Colombo. He is said to have been clearly frustrated and deeply drowned in personal issues. He was with his mother in the early days when he sang "viridu" poems in buses to earn a living and then tried his hand in small trade. Within all that he kept writing poetry and his contributions to Divayins news paper, "Page 8" edited by Sunil Madhava Premathilake was the most popular. His last contributions had been to a column titled "Notes from a funeral house" in the "Ravaya" weekly. He was from Baddegama area in the Galle district. He was once called the "Gorky of our time" by a famous poet and lyricist rathna Sri Wijesignhe.

## Kulasinghe – Media personnel Date of death not known

Kulasinghe was a journalist in the mainstream media working for the Island news paper. His death is rather awkward. While on his way to work, he had got into an argument with another commuter. When Kulasinghe got off the bus in front of the news paper office the other commuter had got off too and beaten him. Kulasinghe had tripped and fallen hitting his head on the cemented pavement edge. He had died instantly.

## K. Nanda Kumar – Media employee Died / 2001 May 06

Nanda Kumar who worked in the administrative division of the Uthayan news paper, met with an accident on 06<sup>th</sup> May when riding his motor bicycle and died from the accident. But there is still a doubt that the accident was schemed and manipulated. Thereafter on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, editor of the Uthayan news paper, Kanumylnathan met with an accident but survived after serious injuries. There is thus a suspicion that these accidents were schemed and manipulated.

## Rukshika Prasadinie – Media personnel Died / 2006 December 19

Rushika Prasadhinie was an announcer and a correspondent with "V FM". She met with an accident and succumbed to the injuries on 19 December, 12 days after the accident. The accident occurred while she was on her way to report an event, in a vehicle belonging to the radio station. The vehicle she travelled in had collided with a vehicle belonging to a foreign

organisation that had diplomatic influence. She was in the ICU of the Colombo General Hospital for 12 days. Her career was only a few months, when it ended tragically.

## **Few other incidents**

Corporal Sepala Gunathilake – SL army  
Died / 1984 November 03

Corporal Gunathilake who was neither a journalist nor a media personnel of any sort, died from the attack on 03<sup>rd</sup> November that targeted the SL Rupavahini transmission tower on Piduruthalagala mountain peak. Corporal Gunathilake was on duty on that fateful day when the tower was attacked. The attackers had first lobbed a grenade at the Corporal who died from it, but the rest of the platoon of army men had fired at the group, who had withdrawn and deserted. Therefore the group could not light the service thread that would have blown off the basement of the tower. There was no harm on the Rupavahini team. It was suspected the group to be a TELO group.

Ranatunge – Page layout artist  
Assassinated during the insurgency period

Ranatunge who was a lay out artist at Divayina news paper, was confirmed through many personal sources as one of the cadres of the armed group of the JVP. He had not reported for work during those days and was eliminated in 1989 according to many personal sources.

Ananda Mendis – Meetiyaoda Correspondent  
Assassinated / 1988 April 17

Ananda Mendis had been correspondent in the Meetiyaoda area, according to media sources. He had given up his work as a correspondent about 04 years before his assassination. He had been involved in other work, according to those sources. He was shot to death in afternoon of 17<sup>th</sup> April and this assassination is talked of in terms of personal issues.

Few observations on how assassinations have taken place  
(Only those 108 in the main section have been considered)

Out of the 108, there are 103 males and 05 females

Assassinations according to ethnicity

සිංහල 46

දෙමළ 57

මුස්ලිම් 05

එකතුව 10 108

Assassinations according to activity areas

It is not possible to very clearly identify subject/activity areas as some are very prominent in the media as well as in cultural work. Therefore the categorising have been done on the basis of their most conspicuous area of activity. Media includes 04 photographers. As there is no clear definition in categorising of persons in the electronic media, engineers and technicians have been listed under media personnel.

1. මාධ්‍යවේදීන් - 50
2. මාධ්‍ය සේවකයින් - 27
3. හිමිකරුවන්/කොටස්කරුවන් - 04
4. කලා සංස්කෘතික ක්‍රියාකාරීන් - 27
5. මුළු ගණන - 108

### Assassinations according to geographical areas

(Geographical area is decided on where the assassination took place and not on where he/she was resident)

- පළාත
- සිංහල
- දෙමළ
- මුස්ලිම්
- මුළු ගණන
- බස්නාහිර පළාත
- 19
- 08
- 
- 27
- උතුරු පළාත
- 07
- 42
- 
- 49
- නැගෙනහිර පළාත
- 01
- 05
- 05
- 11
- අනෙකුත් පළාත්
- 19
- 
- 
- 19
- විදේශ රටවල
- 
- 02
- 
- 02
- මුළු ගණන
- 46
- 57
- 05
- 108
- 54

## Assassinations according to main issues

1. Ethnic conflict/war and related issues (emergence of Tamil armed groups, internal clashes and clashes between groups are included)
2. Assassinations during the JVP insurrection – both the JVP and State terror has been taken into account
3. Assassinations suspected as due to political and other conspiracies (murders that took place due to exposure of corruption and other similar issues – Wimal S. Surendra, Rohana Kumar and Sampath Lakmal are examples)

These are listed in the table as No 1, 2 and 3

தேய்வ	
ஈஃதல	
தேய்வ	
தேய்வ	
ஈஃதல	
தேய்வ	
தேய்வ	
1	
14	
57	
05	
76	
2	
28	
-	
-	
28	
3	
04	
-	
-	
04	
ஈஃதல	
தேய்வ	
46	
57	
05	
108	

- Aruna Kahandagamage who is listed as one among the 04 Sinhala persons under No. 3 is argued as one who should be listed under No. 01 for ethnic issues
- Nihamathulla listed among the 05 Muslim names under No 01 is argued as not really belonging to that category. The air plane crash is not a solved issue as yet and hence the reason for the doubt whether it should come under political conspiracy or as a technical defect of the plane.

Few conclusions in general

- Of the 108 assassinations, 77 are related to the ethnic issue. They total all murders and assassinations that occurred due to internal rivalry in armed groups, between groups, power struggles and the war. Of them 57 are Tamil
- The year 1989 record the most number of assassinations and killings. That is a total of 22 deaths. Of that 04 are related to the ethnic conflict and 14 have been listed as JVP killings. There are doubts about 02 others.
- No killings and assassinations are reported during the years 1985, 1986, 1992, 2001, 2002 and 2003. According to the theme of this documentation, there is a long period of three and a half years from 2001 to 2004 May when there were no reported killings. One main reason is the cease fire agreement between the GOSL and the LTTE. A cfa was signed between the GOSL and the LTTE, on February 22, after the UNF government was after the 2001 December 10 general elections. During this cfa, while the LTTE is accused of killing selected intelligence officers other killings did not occur.
- The most number of killings in the media field that suppresses media freedom and rights of expression is recorded after the cfa was seriously violated from 2004 to date. The UPFA government that was formed after the 2004 April general elections is now ruling the country for 04 years and 05 months. During this period under the UPFA there are 30 assassinations and killings reported. There are 03 Sinhala journalists / writer and a Muslim writer among them. The rest of the 25 are all Tamil journalists, news paper owners and media employees. There is also a singer in the list. Except that of Lakmal Sampath, all other 29 assassinations and killings are related to the ethnic conflict. Of them 03 Sinhala and a Muslim had fallen victim to bombs. The Tamil persons totalling 25 assassinations and killings, have been to suppress media and to avoid reports on human rights violations. They have been aimed at suppressing the right to expressions, stop information dissemination on Northern life and to curtail media freedom. Few well known Tamil media personalities were also victims during this period.