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Abduction of N Kandeepan and T Tharmasri by Sri Lankan Army

Kandeepan (30) and Tharmasri (28) live in the same house and work for the Danish Demining Group (DDG) in Jaffna. Kandeepan and Tharmasri both leave for work at the crack of dawn on a motorbike and return home by 2.00 pm. It is the practice in Northeast to start demining work just before sunrise and finish around midday so that workers do not have to stand in the hot sun all day.

On Wednesday 11th of January they left for work as usual at 5.30 am. Occupants from their house say that they heard Kandeepan receiving three calls that morning. Kandeepan was heard saying that he is leaving soon.

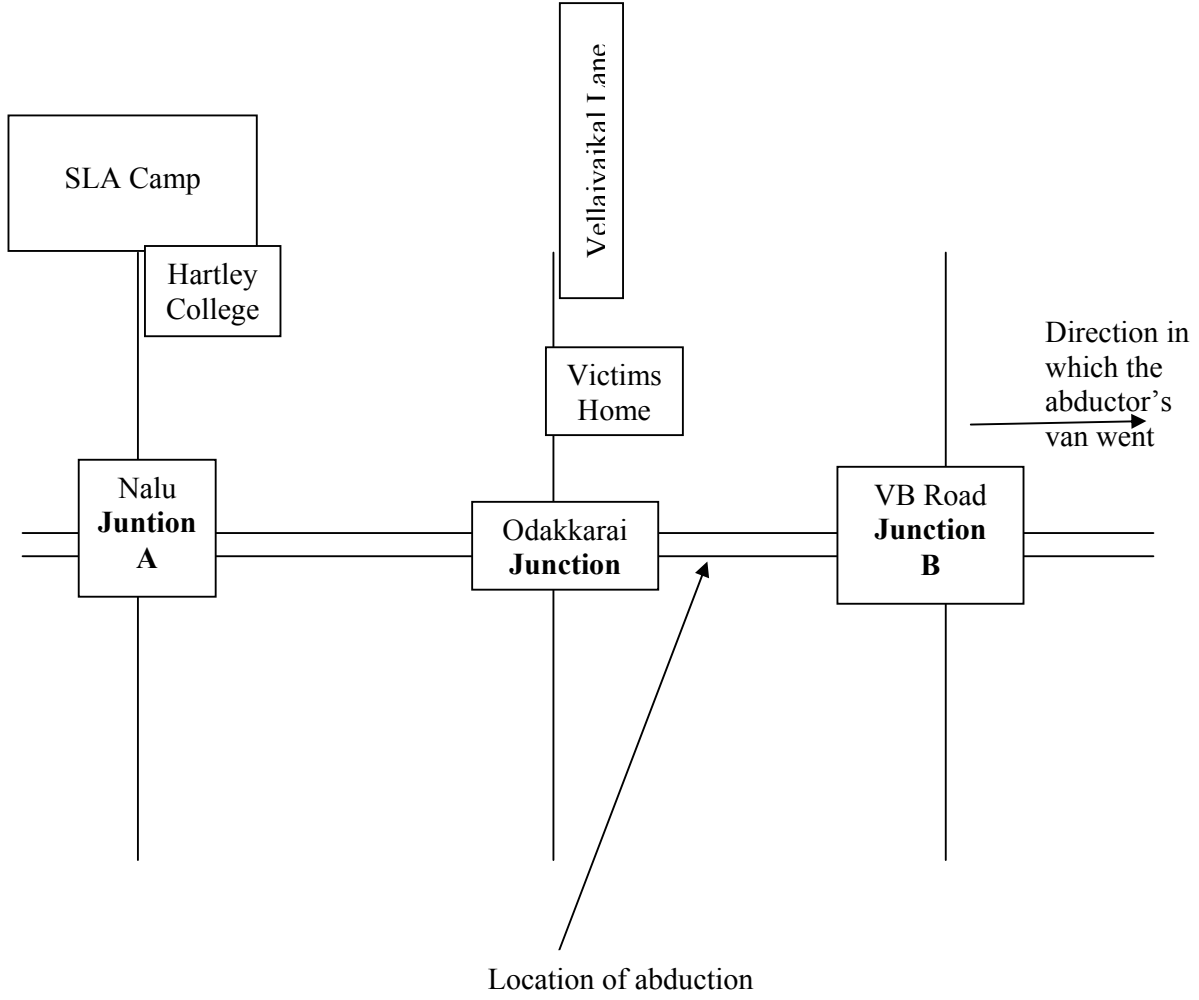
Less than one hour later someone in the neighbourhood brought the National Identity Card and the mobile phone belonging to Kandeepan and handed it over at Kandeepan's home. The neighbour said that it was found on the road. Family went out to investigate what has happened and the following was told by several people in the neighbourhood as witnessed by them. The attached map is useful to follow the description given by Kandeepan's neighbours.

Residents close to the location where Kandeepan and Tharmasri were abducted say that they saw several Sri Lankan army (SLA) soldiers standing on the road in that early hours of the morning just before the two men were abducted. People said that they thought the SLA was planning an early morning roundup.

Travelers who arrived at the Nalu Junction (A on the map) and the VB road junction (B on the map) said that they were turned away by the SLA preventing them from entering the strip of road between A and B. They also said that they saw a white van parked at both these two junctions.

When Kandeepan and Tharmasri were traveling on this strip of road between Odakkarai junction and VB Road junction (B) there were no other civilians on that strip of road except the SLA soldiers who were roaming.

According to the residents on this strip of road they heard noises and voices. When they attempted to look out the SLA threatened them to keep inside. Kandeepan and Tharmasri were then forced into the white van while the two resisted the attempt. As the white van drove away with the two men Kandeepan had thrown his National Identity Card, his mobile phone and other belongings that were in his pocket on the road.



As soon as the two men were abducted in the white van the SLA soldiers, manning the road, started walking back to their camp shown on the map. Residents saw the soldiers walking back.

Other people have told the family that they saw the white van driving to the military camp in the Pallapai high security zone.

When the family went to lodge a complaint at the police station (see map) and told the police what they have heard from the residents, the police there have asked the family for evidence that the two men were abducted. Later they also suggested that someone else may have abducted the two men.

Details of the missing persons:



1. Name: Narayanamoorthy Kandeepan
Age: 30
Marital status: Single
Address: Power Station Road, Odakkarai,
Pointpedro, Jaffna
Occupation: Deminer & Tailor



2. Name: Thambaih Tharmasri
Age: 28
Marital status: Married to Kandeepan's sister
Address: Power Station Road, Odakkarai,
Pointpedro, Jaffna
Occupation: Deminer

Kandeepan studied at the Sithivinayagr School. After sitting his GCE OL examination he started working in a tailor's shop. There he learnt tailoring and later started his own tailoring shop. He trained his two younger brothers to be tailors and they were all working in his "Kandeepan Tailor Shop".

Kandeepan helped with the matchmaking between his sister and Tharmasri and they were married only seven months ago. Tharmasri and his wife (Kandeepan's sister) also live in the same house with Kandeepan, his parents and his siblings. Kandeepan's family said that his sister, who is pregnant, is in a state of shock, unable to talk or eat.

The villagers and indeed the people of the entire Jaffna peninsula recognize the pattern of this abduction to several others that have happened recently. There are good reasons for the family's fear. None of those who have been abducted in this manner have been found so far.

Dr N Malathy
(NESOHR Secretary)