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NORTH EAST SECRETARIAT ON HUMAN RIGHTS
NESOHR

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NESOHR Case Report issued on 29th January 2006

Abduction of Maheswaran Balraj on 1 January 2006-02-05

Balraj



Name: Maheswaran Balraj (Male) (24)
Marital status: Married with one children
Address: TC Lane, Manipay, Jaffna
Occupation: Welder/Panel beater

Balraj studied at Manipay Memorial School and left school at the age of 19 to start his business as a welder. He lived in one house with his family, his parent's family and his sister's family. He had his business in the garage adjacent to the house. He had repaired the vehicles belonging to the Sri Lankan military, the EPDP paramilitary group, and the LTTE. He was well liked by all. Balraj also was a secondhand vehicle dealer who acted as a broker for people wishing to buy/sell vehicles. Even the police at the Manipay police station expressed dismay that Balraj has been abducted.

Incident

On the night of 1 January 2006 the entire household has gone to sleep except Balraj's sister and brother. Both of them heard noises outside the house and went out with a torch light. There they saw close to 30 men in military uniform with their faces covered with black cloth. They had forced opened the gate to enter the yard of the house. They came into the house and pointed at the door of the room where Balraj was sleeping with his wife and child. By now the entire household has woken up. When Balraj came out of the room still dazed in sleep they dragged him out. Balraj's mother fell at the feet of the abductors and begged them to leave her son. They kicked her away with their feet and she fell a few meters away. Balraj's mother then started to scream and the abductors threatened to shoot if she shouts. The abductor's left with Balraj. His family did not see the vehicle that was used for the abduction because it was parked away from the house.

Many members of the family noted the excessive smell of alcohol coming from all the abductors.

Family's efforts

From 2 January the family has persevered with complaints and searched. Below is a list of efforts made by the family.

- Complained at the Manipay police station.
- Went to the Manipay SLA camp, they denied taking Balraj and expressed dismay that Balraj has been abducted.
- Went to the Annaicoddai SLA camp and they denied taking Balraj.
- Went to SLHRC four times. Family was told that SLHRC has access to the camps to search for missing persons.
- Complained to SLMM
- Complained to ICRC
- Went to the EPDP camp in Manipay 2 or 3 times and spoke to the person in charge by the name Valluvar. Family was advised to go to the Srithar theatre EPDP camp in Jaffna town.
- Went to the EPDP camp in Srithar theatre on 6, 9, 11, 17 and several more times. Family was told that they will be informed if any news comes to hand.

Dr N Malathy
(NESOHR Secretary)