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Inhuman politics with a human tragedy **An appeal for international intervention**

NorthEast Secretariat on Human Rights (NESoHR) wishes to draw the attention of Human Rights lovers in particular and the international community in general to the human tragedy behind the incidents following the killing by aerial bombing of 51 students in the district of Mullaittivu. The consequential misery three of those injured students have been subjected to in the hands of the Sri Lankan Intelligence officials dictates that all human rights lovers intervene in this matter and cause redress and justice to these victims of state terrorism.

Three of the injured students, Ms.Sripathy Kasthuri, Ms.Balasingham Sumithra and Ms.Thmbimuttu Thayalini were transferred to Kandy for specialized treatment with the assistance of the ICRC. On arrival at the Kandy medical facility, these students were said to have been placed under police custody under the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and removed to an undisclosed location for interrogation.

Ms.Balasingham Sumithra is said to have been taken away from Kandy and is now under the custody of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Colombo.

Ms.Thambimuttu Thayalini and Ms. Sripathy Kasthuri were sent back to Vavuniya hospital where the former died. Post-mortem inquiry at Vavuniya District hospital revealed that the student died due to medical negligence while in Kandy. On a judicial order, the body has now been sent to Colombo for further investigations. The latter has been sent to Colombo allegedly for further treatment while remaining under the custody of the CID.

These students have not committed any offence but were only victims of an indiscriminate aerial bombing which the Sri Lankan government claims, was targeted at LTTE combatants. NESoHR realizes the urgent need to raise this matter at the international level, for it is evident that a plot has been hatched to obtain confession from these students under conditions of isolation and duress to cover up the crime committed by the Sri Lankan Air Force.

Mitigating circumstances that surround this episode and experience with Sri Lankan governmental tampering of evidence to concoct 'prima facie' prosecution necessitates immediate international investigation of these cases. NESoHR vouchsafes the fact that the students killed and injured in this horrendous aerial bombing were in fact innocent students and therefore wishes to place this plea for immediate and effective intervention by Human Rights activists all over to bring justice to these victims and cause their release from CID custody.

Rev.Fr.M.X.Karunaratnam
Chairperson,
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