



Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

31 January 2006

Re: TRO Staff Accountants Kidnapped by Paramilitary at Welikanda, Polonnaruwa District

TRO has been informed that five (5) staff members travelling from the Batticaloa office to Vavuniya for training have been stopped by unidentified paramilitary personnel immediately after the **Welikanda**, (Polonnaruwa District) Sri Lankan Army Checkpoint at approximately 2:00 pm 30 January, 2006.

Fifteen (15) TRO Batticaloa staff members were travelling from Batticaloa. The TRO staff vehicle had registered at the Welikanda army checkpoint and was continuing its journey when a **“white van”** that had been following them obstructed their path and forced them to stop. Five (5) members were dragged out of the TRO van and forced into the **“white van”** the others were assaulted and forced to go back to Batticaloa.

This incident occurred approximately 100 metres after the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) checkpoint on the A11 road from Batticaloa to Polonnaruwa. **TRO Batticaloa Head Accountant Thanuskody Premini** (also currently a university student) and four accountants from the **TRO Children’s Homes (for orphans)** in the Batticaloa District: Shanmuganathan Swenthiran and Thampirasah Vasantharajan of Shanthiveli Murakotanchani, Kailayapillai Ravinthiran of Vanni Nagar Palugamam and another as yet unnamed person were forcibly removed from the car. The other ten (10) persons in the vehicle were recent TRO staff recruits on their way to Vavuniya for training.

TRO has contacted the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), ICRC, various human rights groups, international NGOs, Members of Parliament and other significant actors in the Sri Lankan peace process in an attempt to discover the whereabouts and ascertain the safety of these loved TRO Staff Members.

TRO would like to appeal to the Government of Sri Lanka, the international community and the Sri Lankan Civil Society to make every effort to assure the safe return of these persons to their families. These TRO staff members have been involved in post-tsunami/post-war humanitarian relief and development work with orphaned children and are staff of a registered Sri Lankan Charity.



Picture 1 Thanuskody Premini