



## Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation

TRO is a registered charity (Number L 50706) with the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL)

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

6 January 2007

#### TRO Colombo Office Also Raided by C.I.D.

Six members of the Criminal Investigation Division (C.I.D.) of the Sri Lanka Police this morning raided and searched the Colombo TRO office. The police did not produce any warrant but checked the offices and asked for the home addresses of TRO staff. The office is not open on Saturdays due to cut backs forced by the freezing of the TRO bank accounts. The police stated that they would return on Monday.

The Saturday morning raid follows the Friday 5 January 2007 raids on the Trincomalee and Vavuniya TRO Offices.

These raids occur four (4) months after the 28 August 2006 freezing of the TRO bank accounts. During the Friday raids the CID spent the day searching the offices and interrogating and photographing the staff.

The four TRO humanitarian aid workers who were present at the Vavuniya office at the time of the raid were arrested and taken to the Police station. The aid workers were taken to the Police station at 3:30 PM and it was not until 9:30 PM that the last male employee was released.

The CID seized all the documents, project files, accounts details, computers, check books, vouchers, and computer disks. All personnel at both offices were also photographed and videotaped as were the vehicles and the offices' interior and exterior.

TRO is a legal, functioning NGO registered with the Government of Sri Lanka (Registration No. Number L 50706). TRO is the only organization working in some of the most severely affected parts of the NorthEast and the continuous harassment of TRO is having a tremendously negative impact on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected people of the NorthEast.

#### History of the freezing of the TRO Bank Accounts:

- 28 August 2006: TRO learns that its bank accounts have been "frozen"
- 4 September 2006: *Ex parte* hearing in High Court. CBSL petitions for an extension of the freeze for 6 months. Petition was granted by the court without TRO having the opportunity to respond to the petition. Approximately Rs. 80,000,000 frozen.
- 11 September 2006: Due to the fact that TRO never received notice of the case. TRO counsel Mr. Abdur Rahim requests a copy of all documents relating to the case from the Court Registrar. He is told that he needs a letter from TRO stating that he is authorized to act on TRO's behalf.
- 14 September 2006: Mr. Abdur Rahim submits the TRO authorizing letter to the Court Registrar. Mr. Abdur Rahim is told that he must file an official "proxy" with the High Court before the case documents will be released to him / TRO.
- 16 October 2006: Mr. Gammi Sennanayake submits a proxy to the court to represent TRO and requests a certified copy of all court documents relating to the case.
- 18 October 2006: TRO counsel receives a certified copy of the Central Bank's 4 September petition and supporting documentation. TRO has to date still not received any formal notice from the court or the Attorney General's Department regarding this case.
- 16 November 2006: TRO files petition and supporting documentation with High Court.**
- 20 November 2006: Case is to be heard in court but Attorney General's Department raises objections to the High Court's jurisdiction. Both parties are asked to submit arguments on this "point of law" and return to court on 29 November.
- 29 November 2006: Written submissions from TRO and Attorney General submitted to the High Court. Attorney General's submission is only a one page document and he requests additional time to submit further responses to TRO's extensive written submission on the point of law regarding jurisdiction.
- 11 December 2006: Attorney General once again requests more time to submit written responses. Judge sets 15 December as "final" date for submission.
- 15 December 2006: Attorney General submits written submission on jurisdiction question. Judge sets January 16 as next court date
- 16 January 2007: Next court date.

ENDS