

URGENT ACTION

SRI LANKAN HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER THREATENED

Since 22 February Sri Lankan human rights lawyer Lakshan Dias has reported being followed and under surveillance by unidentified men who have sought information about him from his wife and neighbours. Colleagues are concerned that he is in danger of enforced disappearance and physical violence.

According to human rights lawyers in Sri Lanka, men on motorcycles and in a white van have been watching Lakshan Dias' residence since 22 February, and have questioned his neighbours and family members about him, creating a climate of fear and intimidation. Lakshan Dias lodged a formal complaint with the Moratuwa Police, Colombo district, on 25 February 2013. It is not known whether the police have acted on his complaint.

One individual who visited the neighbourhood and asked about Lakshan Dias reportedly identified himself to a neighbour as an Inspector of Police, but the Officer in Charge of the Moratuwa Police station denied knowing an Inspector by that name.

Lakshan Dias is a prominent human rights lawyer who has been active in opposing the impeachment of the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka's Supreme Court in January. Several other lawyers have received death threats for engaging in protests advocating independence of the judiciary. Judges have also been threatened and attacked.

Suspected enforced disappearances continue to be reported in Sri Lanka. The use of white vans has often been associated with abduction-style arrests by the Sri Lankan authorities. Torture in custody and arbitrary detention, including in secret or unofficial places of detention, has also been reported in connection with such arrests.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Calling on the Sri Lankan authorities to investigate the reported surveillance and intimidation of Lakshan Dias;
- Urging them to ensure that lawyers are able to exercise their right to freedom of expression to advocate for human rights without fear of harassment, threats, intimidation, arbitrary arrest, or enforced disappearance.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 APRIL 2013 TO:

Inspector General of Police

N K Illangakoon
New Secretariat, Colombo 1
Sri Lanka
Fax: +94 11 244 0440 (keep trying)
Email: igp@police.lk

Salutation: Dear Inspector General

Defence Secretary

Gotabhaya Rajapaksa
Ministry of Defence and Urban
Development
15/5, Baladaksha Mawatha,
Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Fax: +94 11 254 1529 (keep trying)
Email: secdef@slt.net.lk

Salutation: Dear Defence Secretary

And copies to:

Secretary

Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission:
No. 108 Barnes Place Colombo 07,
Sri Lanka
Fax: +94 11 268 9558 (keep trying)
Email: sechrc@slt.net.lk

Salutation: Dear Secretary

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

Name: Lakshan Dias
Gender m/f: m

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**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**

