



Right of Reply by Sri Lanka
25th Session of the Human Rights Council
Agenda Item 4

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka wishes to exercise its right of reply on statements made regarding the arrest and detention of Ms. Balendran Jeyakumari, and the detention of Mr. Ruki Fernando and Father Praveen.

- a. Investigations revealed that K.P. Selvanayagam a.k.a. Gobi who had been overseas and returned to Sri Lanka was actively involved in reviving the LTTE through regrouping LTTE cadres and recruiting unemployed local youth with the intention of using them for acts of terrorism.
- b. The intention of these LTTE operatives headed by Gobi had been to recover arms cachés hidden by the LTTE prior to their defeat.
- c. The key operative directing the operations, Gobi, had been evading arrest. Following further investigations, the Terrorist Investigations Division (TID) had recovered an arms caché including mortar and RPG type live

ammunition, 3 hand grenades, 2.5 kg claymore bomb and ammunition for T-56 weapons.

- d. Pursuant to this recovery, and a lead obtained on the whereabouts of Gobi, a team of Police Officers proceeded to the residence of Balendran Jeyakumari in Killinochchi. During the search operation Gobi had fired at the Police, injuring a sub-Inspector and escaped.
- e. At this residence, the landlady Balendran Jeyakumari and her 13 year old daughter Vibooshika were present. Since suspect Gobi while being armed escaped, a search was carried out on the said residence. A Menelab F-3 type mine detector was recovered. Therefore, Ms. Jeyakumari was placed under arrest on suspicion of aiding and abetting Gobi in his activities.
- f. As Balendran Jeyakumari had been unable to provide an appropriate caregiver/relative to keep her 13 year old daughter, she was taken along with the mother and produced before the Killinochchi Magistrate. Based on the Magistrate's order, Vibooshika has been placed under the care of Probation and Child Care Services.

- g. The aforementioned arrest was made under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). The ICRC has access to all detainees being held at Boossa.

Therefore, it is regrettable that an elected member of the Northern Provincial Council, Ms. Ananthi Sasitharan, has chosen to misrepresent this case in this august body and depict it as an arrest made of a child who had participated in protests. It is also regrettable that Ms. Sasitharan, despite being a member of a provincial administration, has chosen to make statements in the Council using time allocated to two NGOs. We also note that Ms. Sasitharan, in referring in her statements to the Council to “Tamil *Eelam*”, has failed to adhere to the agreed language of the United Nations, and is in violation of the Constitution she has pledged to uphold as a Provincial Councilor.

The detention on 16th March of Mr. Ruki Fernando and Father Praveen under the PTA were in connection with the aforesaid investigation into attempts to revive the LTTE by operatives, including the recovery of the arms caché at Vishwamadu and the shooting incident in Dharmapuram involving Gobi. Investigations have revealed that Mr. Fernando and Father Praveen had been in Killinochchi engaging with persons connected to Gobi. Their questioning is continuing at present to ascertain the whereabouts of Gobi and other related operatives.

The above actions taken by the Law Enforcement Authorities of Sri Lanka are well within the existing legal framework and following due process.

This development also underscores the need to be vigilant on the activities of the remnants of the terrorist group, considering its bearing on national security.

Thank you