

Media personals detained by the Sri Lankan Government

Colombo, 08.03.2008

S. Sivakumar, the editor of bimonthly Charinikar and the spokesman of the Colombo based media watchdog Free Media Movement, was detained by the Terrorist Investigations Department (TID) Saturday. FMM Convenor Sunanda Deshapriya told media that Police has detained Sivakumar on Saturday to record a statement. The detention comes following the arrest of journalist J.S. Tissanayagam and Jasikaran, an owner of a press Friday.

On Thursday, N. Jasiharan, owner of a press and a journalist working for a multimedia outlet, Outreach Sri Lanka, was arrested with his partner, Valarmathi, without any valid reason. K. Wijesingha, a reporter of the Outreach was also taken in for questioning, but nothing was heard of him till Friday midnight.

On Friday, the TID detained J.S. Tissanayagam, the editor and writer of Outreach Sri Lanka website, under emergency regulations. Udayanan, a Visual Editor of Outreach was taken in for questioning Friday afternoon.

A cameraman, identified as Ranga, was also questioned on Saturday by the TID.

Sivakumar who had been called Friday by TID for interrogation, on being asked by BBC Tamil Service correspondent on Friday about TID detaining the media persons, said:

"The police have called me for investigation and yesterday (Thursday) around 7:00 p.m they went to the Outreach office and searched it. After the search they took its owner Jasikaran for interrogation. Later they had taken Tissanayagam, the editor of Outreach too and detained him."

"Are there any specific accusation registered according to the police?" the BBC correspondent Manivannan asked.

"So far it is not known, but Jasikaran has a printing press near Outreach office and the police searched it too and took away various printed materials from there.

"Besides, he (Jasikaran) had been the Batticaloa correspondent of Charinikar magazine and the police took away past copies of Charinikar magazine with them.

"Friday the police had come in search of me to the office of our magazine and not finding me they had taken away one of my relatives with them on condition that he will be released when I appear at their police station."