
Statement by GOSL on the alleged abductions

Friday, 13 April 2012

Last Updated Friday, 13 April 2012

The Ministry of External Affairs wishes to inform the Diplomatic Missions, the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies and other International Organizations based in Colombo of several matters relating to the sequence of events involving Mr. Premkumar Gunaratnam and Ms. Dimuthu Attygalle. These events have been the subject of extensive media attention during the last few days. Statements with regard to the matter have captured headlines in the media and have been the subject of vigorous comment by leaders of political parties, academics and civil society activists. All these persons have united in making a variety of grave allegations, the gist of which is to impute responsibility to the Government for an alleged abduction.

Mr. Gunaratnam has now re-appeared and has in fact been deported from Sri Lanka because his stay in this country was in breach of Sri Lanka's Immigration laws and therefore illegal. Ms. Attygalle has also re-appeared. The Ministry wishes to emphasize to the diplomatic community the following aspects of the situation: (a) It appears that Mr. Premkumar Gunaratnam has changed his name three times. The first name, Wanninayake Mudiyansele Daskon, appears in his marriage certificate. A different name, Rathnayake Mudiyansele Dayalal, is used in the passport which he obtained from this country. Yet another name, Noel Mudalige, was used when he obtained the Australian passport which he produced on his arrival in Sri Lanka on 4th September 2011. (b) Other circumstances relating to his previous history, which are clearly relevant in assessing the credibility of his statements, will be communicated to the Australian High Commission in Colombo. These are circumstances which have come to light in the course of detailed interrogation by the Police, who have questioned Mr. Gunaratnam and members of his family. (c) There are many features relating to the alleged abduction which throw considerable doubt on the reliability and trustworthiness of the version of the events which have been released to the media. For example, the abduction of Mr. Gunaratnam is alleged to have occurred at 4.00 a.m. on 7th April 2012. A complaint to the Police in this regard was made only at 4.10 p.m. in the afternoon. There was a lapse of 12 hours. (d) With regard to Ms. Dimuthu Attygalle, the abduction was alleged to have taken place at 8.00 p.m. on 6th April 2012. However, the complaint with regard to this matter was made to the Police only at 3.35 p.m. on the following day, 7th April 2012. The interval was therefore almost a full day. It is quite obvious that a genuine abduction would have been reported to the Police far more swiftly. (e) The story of Mr. Gunaratnam stands entirely on its own without corroboration in any manner whatsoever. It suffers from a series of infirmities which significantly detract from its credibility. For example, although there is clear evidence that elaborate arrangements were made by his political group in respect of his security, which had been entrusted in particular to a definite person, it is claimed that at the time of the alleged abduction, he was occupying a room in the upstairs portion of a partly constructed house, which had not been inhabited for a long period. (f) Mr. Gunaratnam's wife who made several public statements about his alleged abduction, had stated categorically to the Police that she had not lived with her husband since 7th November 2006 and had no knowledge of his whereabouts. (g) It is quite clear that Mr. Gunaratnam was staying in this country illegally for more than 5 months. His visa had expired 5 months ago. (h) It is evident even at a glance that there are significant discrepancies between the versions of Mr. Gunaratnam and Ms. Attygalle. The Ministry of External Affairs wishes to state that, while the Government is responsive to constructive criticism, it is important that allegations of a volatile nature should be based on facts properly ascertained and objectively assessed. Whenever a person chooses to withdraw from the community for personal reasons, or with the deliberate intention of causing embarrassment to the Government, it is grossly unfair to arrive at the conclusion that there has been an abduction and to point a finger at the State. This has happened on many occasions and now seems to reflect a recurring pattern. The objective of this is clearly to target Sri Lanka in international fora on the flimsiest of evidence. What is lacking by way of evidence seems to be amply compensated by emotion, surmise and invective. The Government asks nothing more than that objectivity and basic fairness should be the criteria governing reactions to these irresponsible and malicious campaigns. Ministry of External Affairs Colombo 10th April 2012