



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT - DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA
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MEDIA RELEASE

Special police unit to probe incidents of kidnapping

A special police unit is to be set up to investigate into incidents of kidnapping, abductions, disappearances and ransom demands. This step was taken following a meeting held at Temple Trees today (15) presided by the Defence Secretary.

One Minister, several deputy ministers and Members of Parliament including MPs from the UNP and JVP participated in this meeting, where the Acting Secretary to the President, Senior Advisor to the President, the IGP and several senior police officers were also present.

The Defence Secretary Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa instructed the Inspector General of Police to set up a special police unit to investigate into the incidents of kidnap, abductions, disappearances and ransom demands which are reported to be rampant in Colombo and suburban areas causing fear among members of the Tamil community. The President had expressed his grave concern over such incidents the Defence Secretary said.

Members of Parliament present at the meeting thanked the President for the initiative taken to appoint foreign observers to look into these matters, in addition to the Sri Lankan probe already appointed by him, and said that they would extend their fullest support to the police in its attempt to curb such incidents. The Defence Secretary also said there was evidence that on certain

occasions such offences had been committed with the sinister motive of causing embarrassing the President and tarnishing his image.

Commenting on the situation the IGP said that the in case of a certain media person being abducted, adequate information was not provided to the police even after the person's eventual release. It was the duty of the general public to provide adequate information to the police in such incidents, he said. It has been reported that although a person from Vavuniya is alleged to have engaged in extortion of money from Tamil entrepreneurs in Colombo, after the arrest of this person such incidents were not heard from other areas. However it was alleged that there was another group committing the same offense. The IGP said that he would take immediate action to have such people taken into custody.

The Defence Secretary pointed out that there are undesirable elements who are trying to show that the suspects taken into custody on reasonable grounds were cases of kidnapping, and instructed the police to takes steps to expedite such inquiries.

When it was pointed out that the reason for most of the Tamils facing inconvenience is the non-availability of national identity cards, Defence Secretary Rajapaksa said that special arrangements will be made to issue identity documents to persons in need of them.

In another discussion was held today, also chaired by Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, with the relatives of persons kidnapped in Colombo and its suburbs, in order to obtain information in connection with these incidents. Several leading entrepreneurs in Colombo, especially from Sea Street, Pettah, participated at this discussion. The participants thanked the government for the action taken to set up a special police unit to

inquire into these matters of increasing concern to the Tamil people.

Those who participated in today's discussions included Defence Secretary, Acting Secretary to the President Mr. Gamini Senarath, Senior Advisor to the President Mr. Basil Rajapaksa, Minister for Community Development and Elimination of Social Inequality, Mr. P. Chandrasekeran, Deputy Minister for Professional and Skills Training Mr. Muttu Sivalingam, Deputy Minister of Health Mr. Vadivel Suresh, Deputy Minister of Education Mr. Satchithanandan, UNP MP MR. T. Maheswaran, JVP MP Mr. Ramalingam Chandrasekeran, and MPs Mano Ganeshan, Sellasamy and Jegatheeswaran. In addition to IGP Chandra Fernando, other police personnel included DIGs Pujitha Jayasundera, Wijetilleke, K. B. Pathirana and Illangakoon, and the Director of the CID.

President's Media Division.

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