

25 August 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

Video evidence of extra-judicial executions in Sri Lanka

We, 'Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka', wish to bring to your attention this disturbing video clip. We are not in a position to disclose the way we received it, but we can say that the video was captured during the month of January in 2009.

The Sri Lankan government justifies the internment of approximately 280,000 Tamil people, for over three months now, on the basis that they are 'screening' for LTTE cadres. These camps still remain out of bounds for independent media and human rights observers. Apart from these known camps, it is widely believed that there are over 10,000 Tamils are held in undisclosed locations. Further, as a recent BBC report reveals (http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/news/story/2009/08/090824_idp_vans.shtml) the interned Tamils have to regularly experience the trauma of the appearance of the 'dolphin vans' in the camps – as these whisk away people – who then disappear.

The video-clip was taken during the period of the war, when international and independent local media were prevented by the Sri Lankan government from covering the conflict zone. This video-clip shows the reality of the behaviour of the government forces during the war which the government called a 'humanitarian operation' to rescue the Tamils. All reports, like that of the BBC above, indicate that there is no reason to believe that there is a change in the behaviour of the armed forces.

For the benefit of those who cannot understand Sinhala – we offer you some of our initial observations. From the casual nature of the conversations and from the fact that it is taking place in an open area and in broad daylight - it can be surmised that these are not extraordinary acts by rogue elements carried out without the permission from the top leadership. The soldiers egging each other on, the insulting jokes and the laughter show that there is a consensus that these cold blooded killings should take place.

Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka (JDS) is an action group of journalists, writers, artists and human rights defenders in exile who are campaigning for democracy, human rights and media freedom in Sri Lanka.

Executive Committee
Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka
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