



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Sixteenth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International Movement of Catholic Students), a non- governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[14 February 2011]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **Sri Lanka: End forced disappearance of human rights defenders and protect the life of Mr. Pattani Razeek disappeared on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

The Pax Romana, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC, would like to express its grave concern for the disappearance of Mr. Pattani Razeek on 11th February 2010. Despite regularly receiving information concerning widespread and numerous cases of attacks, threats and even forced disappearances of the Human Rights defenders in Sri Lanka, the Human Rights Council has failed to take effective action to have a tangible impact on the prevention of further abuses on the ground. The Pax Romana shares concerns expressed by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and urges the Human Rights Council (HRC) to take immediate action to protect life of Mr. Pattani Razeek and other Human Rights Defenders who have been disappeared.

### **Background of Mr. Pattani Razeek:**

Mr. Razeek is a well known human rights defender in Sri Lanka and Asia. At the time of his disappearance, Mr. Razeek was the Managing Trustee of Community Trust Fund (CTF) <http://www.ctfsrilanka.org/> and was an Executive Committee Member of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) <http://www.forum-asia.org/>

### **Description of the incident:**

Mr. Razeek was last seen near the Jumma Mosque in Kaduruwela, Polonnaruwa (a town in the North-Central Province of Sri Lanka) around 3.30 p.m on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010. Mr. Razeek was in Polonnaruwa in a van together with other staff of CTF, when their van was intercepted by a white van. Mr. Razeek alighted from their vehicle, approached the men in the white van and exchanged greetings in Arabic with them, indicating that the men are Muslim. After talking to them for some minutes, Mr. Razeek went back to his colleagues and told them that he will be joining the group in the white van that according to him was heading to the Eastern provincial town of Valaichchenai.

### **Actions taken by family and concerned individuals and groups:**

- Mr. Razeek's family lodged complaints with the Police in Pollonnaruwa (place of incident), and Mundalama (place of residence)
- Mr. Razeek's employer, CTF lodged complaints with the police in Puttalam (place of employer, CTF) and Pollonnaruwa
- Police have filed a case in Magistrate's Courts in Puttalam
- A complaint has been lodged with the National Human Rights Commission
- Appeals have been made to the President of Sri Lanka, Secretary to Ministry of Defense, the Attorney General and Inspector General of Police
- Protests, and poster campaigns have been held in Mr. Razeek's hometown and in the Puttalam district.
- Complaints have been sent to UN Special Rapportuer on Human Rights Defenders and UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances

- Appeals have been issued by international human rights organizations

### **Reluctance to question and arrest key suspects and follow up on available leads:**

The Coordinator of the Minister Hon. Rishad Bathirudeen, Mr. S. R. M. Irashad had made a public statement, following Mr. Razeek's disappearance, claiming that Mr. Razeek was an intermediary to the transfer of funds from CIA to the LTTE sometime in the past and that Mr. Razeek is detained in the custody of the Defense Secretary.

Police B report filed in the Puttalam Magistrate Courts has clearly identified Mr. Shabdeen Nowshadh, a former employee of CTF and a close associate of Minister Rishard, as the main suspect in the disappearance, based on evidence gathered by Police that Mr. Nowshadh made a call from Mr. Razeek's mobile phone number to his (Mr. Razeek's) after the disappearance of Mr. Razeek. Police had even requested the Puttalam Magistrate to ensure that Mr. Nowshadh doesn't leave the country. Mr. Nowshadh has also admitted that he had met Mr. Razeek on the day and area Mr. Razeek was last seen. Mr. Nowshadh had made an application for "Anticipatory Bail" which was rejected on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010 and he applied for a revision in High Court Puttalam. The next hearing date of the revision will be on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011. Local people believe the police is not taking action to question or arrest Mr. Nowshadh due to his political connections (he has admitted to courts he is a close acquaintance of Minister Rishard and is needed by the Minister for election and other work). Mr. Nowshadh had been seen in public places several times since this was disclosed in mid 2010.

Further, according to a news item given in *Lankadeepa* a Sinhala newspaper dated 02<sup>nd</sup> July 2010, the police have stated that an extremist Muslim group has abducted Mr. Razeek. The family and colleagues of Mr. Razeek are also unaware of any Police investigation into this allegation.

### **Background information:**

There were several calls asking for ransom to release Mr. Razeek, but after the family had indicated they are ready to consider even this, the calls for ransom had stopped.

Leaflets had appeared indicating Mr. Razeek as a CIA agent, womanizer and having an affair with a female Trustee of CTF. One leaflet had appealed to Minister Rishard to intervene and punish CTF Trustees.

### **Recommendations:**

The Pax Romana calls upon the Government of Sri Lanka to sign and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances and accept the competence of the committee under the article 31 and 31. And the Pax Romana urge the Government of Sri Lanka to:

- Immediately arrest and question the primary suspect identified by the Police, Mr. Nowshadh.
- Investigate the statement made by Mr. Irashad that Mr. Razeek is detained in the custody of the Defense Secretary.
- Follow up and investigate the statement made by the Police to a local newspaper that Mr. Razeek has been abducted by an extremist Muslim group.