

URGENT ACTION

HARASSED PRIEST GRANTED FELLOWSHIP ABROAD

Since being summoned for questioning by the Sri Lankan police for hosting a memorial for the war dead, Father Elil Rajendram was successful in securing a court order directing the police not to question him further. In terms of his personal safety, he now has respite from harassment and is out of the country on a short-term Fellowship.

Father Elil Rajendram, a Jesuit priest based in Mullaitivu in Northern Sri Lanka, has been the subject of repeated police inquiries and harassment for his efforts to help families memorialize their loved ones lost during the Sri Lankan armed conflict. He was summoned multiple times in May 2017 for questioning by the Sri Lankan police regarding his role in hosting a memorial for the war dead. As a result of several weeks of surveillance and harassment, there were fears for his safety.

While police investigations of others suspected of involvement in the case were allowed to continue, Father Elil Rajendram was successful in securing a court order on 31 May 2017 directing the police not to question him further. His lawyer has filed a revision appeal in the Vavuniya High Courts. The next Court hearing of the appeal is 9th August. He is now safely out of the country on a short-term Fellowship which will allow him to recover from the harassment he received.

Father Elil Rajendram has expressed his thanks to the Amnesty International members who took action on his behalf. International pressure helped raise the profile of his situation and the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission was able to highlight in court their concerns on issues of freedom of expression and the right to memorialisation.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 116/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa37/6341/2017/en/>

Name: Father Elil Rajendram
Gender m/f: Male

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