



**Networking for Rights**

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**உரிமைகளுக்கான வலையமைப்பு**

**Exile network for media and human rights in Sri Lanka**

Press release/ 11 February 2011

**Sri Lanka: An year has passed since HR defender Patti Razeek disappeared**

Disappearance of journalists and human rights defenders continue unabated in Sri Lanka today. One year ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2010 Pattani Razeek, a member of the Executive Committee of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development and one of the Trustees of the Community Trust Fund based in Puttalam was intercepted at Polonnaruwa by a white van while he was travelling with members of the staff of the Community Trust Fund. Pattani Razeek, is reported to have disembarked from his vehicle and gone up to the white van to check why his vehicle was intercepted. Following a conversation he had with the occupants of the white van, he had told his staff that he would be travelling in the white van up to Valaichena and had asked his staff to meet up with him there. That was the last time they saw him.

NfR expresses its serious concern that disappearance of Mr. Razeek has not been investigated by the authorities and he has been missing for a year by 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

It is presumed that Pattani Razeek had been abducted on account of his legitimate and peaceful work in the field of human rights. Though the members of his family had promptly made a complaint to the Police, he has not been found so far. However, the Police had filed a 'B' Report to the Magistrate of Puttalam in response to the complaint of Razeek's disappearance. It is said that the 'B' Report indicates that one Shahabdeen Nowshard, a former employee of the CTF and a person connected to a leading Muslim politician, is alleged to be responsible for the disappearance. The Police had based their suspicion on Nowshard as he had been found to have made a telephone call using Razeek's mobile telephone after he had disappeared. Following this, Nowshard had made an application to the Magistrate

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for 'anticipatory bail' which had been refused. He had then appealed to the High Court of Puttalam for a revision of that order. This appeal is to be heard on the 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2011.

NfR holds the view that the Police are not pursuing their search for Pattani Razeek seriously on account of the political connections of the suspect Nowshard. In the meantime it is reported that the family members of Razeek had been receiving telephone calls asking for ransom for the release of Razeek.

Abductions, disappearances and demands for ransom have become very common in Sri Lanka these days leading to a sense of insecurity among the people. Such incidents are rarely investigated seriously by the police. It is urged that the State should take serious note of such incidents and bring the perpetrators to book. Not taking action against the perpetrators only indicates the absence of the rule of law in Sri Lanka today. Besides, the Police and the Military are under the direct control of the Ministry of Defence which is headed by a supposedly efficient Secretary. Allowing such incidents to go uninvestigated and unchecked would lead to the inevitable conclusion that the State has a hand in these incidents.

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