



*Caritas Sri Lanka* - SEDEC



**Social and Economic Development Centre**

(National Secretariat for Justice, Peace & Human Development Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka, incorporated by Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1983)

**Statement issued by the Catholic National Commission for  
Justice Peace & Human Development on the arbitrary arrest of  
Catholic priest and a layman.**

We are seriously concerned about the arbitrary arrest and detention of a Catholic priest Rev. Fr. Praveen Mahesan OMI and Mr. Ruki Fernando under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) on 16th March 2014 in Kilinochchi.

Our information is that Fr. Praveen Mahesan and Mr. Ruki Fernando who are well known human rights defenders were in Kilinochchi to see to the welfare of families of missing persons, including Mrs. Balendran Jayakumari and her 13-year old daughter who had themselves been arrested under the PTA a few days earlier for purportedly harbouring a suspect in a shooting incident in Kilinochchi where a police officer was apparently injured.

We are told that Fr. Praveen Mahesan and Mr. Ruki Fernando are presently being held at the TID Headquarters in Colombo.

We would call on the law enforcement authorities to provide them access to their families and their lawyers while in detention. At the same time, we would urge the authorities to follow due process in the investigations, to conduct the inquiries in a transparent manner which extends fair treatment to the detainees and ensures their safety and, finally to speedily conclude the investigations.

Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney  
Executive Secretary

Justice Peace & Human Development Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conference

March 18, 2014