



William's Desk

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Secretary
Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission
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Re: SRI LANKA: A woman faces death threats

Dear Secretary of the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission,

Name of the victim: Ms. Warnakula Gunawardhana Sellapperumage Mangalika Jayasooriya, of 120/1, Bogamuwa, Kalagedihena in the Gampaha District

Alleged perpetrator: Police officers attached to the Weeragula and Veyangoda Police Stations and Fraud Bureau of Sri Lanka Police

Date of incident: 9 May 2010

Place of incident: Veyangoda and Weeragula Police Stations

I am writing to express my serious concern over the case of Ms. Warnakula Gunawardhana Sellapperumage Mangalika Jayasooriya, of 120/1, Bogamuwa, Kalagedihena in the Gampaha District. Mangalika is facing death threats after her properties have been forcibly grabbed by the henchmen of a powerful politician and a deputy minister of the ruling government of Sri Lanka. Mangalika who was a domestic helper worked in Hong Kong and Singapore learned that these politician and his henchmen had grabbed her properties, including the land and house and her business premises. She returned to Sri Lanka and made several complaints to the Weeragula Police Station and Veyangoda Police Station none of which were investigated due to the influence of this deputy minister. Later she made a complaint to the Fraud Bureau of the Sri Lanka Police at Wellawatte in Colombo but that also was not investigate due for the same reason. When she questioned the Officer-in-Charge of the Veyangoda Police Station he revealed that due to the influence of the Deputy Minister of Petroleum Industries, Sarana Gunawardana,

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investigations cannot be initiated.

Ms. Warnakula Gunawardhana Sellapperumage Mangalika Jayasooriya is married and the mother of a young girl named, Jayakodi Mohotti Appuhamilage Sewmini Dakshika (7). Mangalika worked in Hong Kong and Singapore as a domestic helper for more than 11 years. After her marriage she was able to acquire several properties in her name. Those properties were at Kalagedihena, Veyangoda in the Gampaha District.

Even after her marriage she had to work in Hong Kong due to her economic difficulties in the family.

On 23 March, 2010, she got a message that Mr. Rohan Liyanage of No: 186/1, 20th Mile Port, Alithgama, Bogamuwa, Yakkala, had occupied her house with a group of men and had removed the doors, door frames, bath room fittings and building material etc. On hearing this she directed Mr. C. Lakmal, her nephew to make a complaint to the Weeragula Police Station on 5 April 2010 but the Police held no inquiry as Mr. Rohana Liyanage was said to be a close associate of Mr. Sarana Gunawardhana, a Member of Parliament for the Gampaha District of United People's Freedom Alliance and the Deputy Minister of Ministry of Petroleum Industries. The police officer had told her nephew that as the matter involved people with political power, should he take action he would be transferred or dismissed.

In early April 2010 Mr. Alankarage Anura Kithsiri Alankarage of No: 12, Raniswala, Godella Watte, Kalagedihena, another close associate of the same group threatened the tenants of the three shops owned by Mangalika. In this regard on her instructions Mr. Ranjith Udayakumara, a friend of the family and C. Lakmal both made two complaints each to the Veyangoda Police Station but the Police took no action. Around 24 April Mr. Kithsiri had chased away the tenants, removed their furniture, equipment and their personal belongings from the shops. When Mangalika learnt about it she directed her relations to lodge complaints to the Veyangoda Police Station, but again the police took no action.

Mangalika returned to Sri Lanka on 7 May and on the morning of 8 May she went to the Weeragulla Police Station in Gampaha and complained that she have received death threats from Alankarage Anura Kithsiri Alankarage and Rohana Liyanage over her two properties.

The Officer-in-Charge (OIC) yelled at her and said that merely because she was threatened the

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police could take no action. He refused even to record her complaint. In the same evening at around 5 pm Mr. Liyanage, with several armed men had visited the home of her husband's parents at Kalagedihena and told his mother, Mrs. Nandawathie Jayakoddy, that there was no purpose in her daughter-in-law making complaints at police stations: and if she cherished her life she should return to where she came from. He had added that she should give up her claims to the property and if she did not do so she would soon find herself in a coffin. They further threatened of her daughter to be abducted. Mangalika states that is clear that though the police refused to record her complaint it was the police that had informed Mr. Liyanage about it.

On 9 May 2010 Mangalika then went to the Veyangoda Police Station at about 11am to make a complaint against both Mr. Liyanage and Kithsiri of the death threats; the threats to kidnap her daughter and the illegal occupation of her properties. She was able to record her complaint and it was recorded with CIB/25/117.

Whilst she was making the complaint Mr. Liyanage had gone to the home of her husband's parents at around 1pm and asked for Mangalika saying that he had a dispute to settle with her and that he wanted her to sign some documents. She understood that they were trying to take her signature for fraudulent deeds forcefully to transfer the property. Her mother-in-law had told him that she was unaware of Mangalika's whereabouts and he left. She then told Mangalika on the phone about his visit and Mangalika mentioned it to the Police. But the police officers did not take any action in that regard.

On the 12 May Mangalika went to the Veyangoda Police Station for the inquiry. She was at the station from 10 am to 3 pm and neither Mr. Kithsiri nor Mr. Liyanage turned up. For five hours she was kept waiting at the station for the inquiry. It was clear that the Police deceived her and made her wait at the Police knowing very well that they would not turn up. About 3 pm the police informed her that they received a telephone call from the office of Mr. Sarana Gunawardhana, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Petroleum Industries that Mr. Liyanage and Kithsiri had been sent on an errand for him and therefore they were unable to attend the inquiry.

On 16 May 2010 she again attended the inquiry at the Veyangoda Police Station and again, she was kept waiting at the station from 10 am to 3 pm. The police repeatedly said that they would turn up at any moment but they did not. Finally at 3 pm the inquiry was postponed to 20 May. The same night Mr. Liyanage had come with a group of armed men looking for Mangalika and when her mother-in-law had said that she was not in, they searched the entire house.

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On 20 May 2010, she went to the Veyangoda Police Station for the inquiry for the third time and even after about 3 to 4 hours both Liyanage and Kithsiri did not turn up. She then gave Mr. Kithsiri's mobile number to the police officer. She did not have Mr. Liyanage's phone number. It was 3 pm when the officer finally told her that they would not attend to the inquiry, for the police had received a call from Deputy Minister Sarana Gunawardhana's office that they were unable to do so. No reason had been given and it was obvious they were using their political connections to evade the police investigations. This was also a veiled threat to the police that they should not intervene in this matter. She was kept waiting there from 10 am to 3 pm. When she questioned the OIC about this he said that he would file action against them in court for failure to attend the inquiry. Although she had made repeated phone calls to the police up to date no action has been filed by the police in court.

When she complained to the Officer-in Charge of Veyangoda Police Station about the failure of the two suspects to attend the inquiry and the Police inaction he told her openly that since her complaint was against two persons with political power he was helpless: He added that should he were to take action against them he would have 'to go home without his uniform'. He advised Mangalika to complain to the Fraud Bureau of Sri Lanka Police Department at Wellwatte in Colombo, which she did on 21 May 2010. Her complaint to the Fraud Bureau was recorded as IID/170/113. Here too the police took no action despite repeated phone calls that she made from Hong Kong. The police even refused to give her a copy of the complaint.

Mangalika firmly states that the perpetrators have grabbed her lands and her properties with impunity. Furthermore, to discourage her from making trouble they are now making death threats. The powerful politician behind them is using his influence with the police authorities to stop any investigation. It is believed that he is behind the death threats.

Presently she is in fear of her and that of her child. She is seeking the intervention of the state authorities to investigate what has happened. Although she has appealed for protection for herself and her family none of the authorities have provided any security or even investigated her complaints.

In the early 2011 Mangalika instructed her lawyer in District Court and Magistrate Court in Atthanagalla and Gampaha to initiate legal actions against these perpetrators. She further wrote to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to the Police Headquarters in Colombo on 26 October,

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2011 seeking an independent impartial investigation into these illegal activities and the threats to her life. She further complained to the Special Investigation Unit of the Presidential Secretariat on 22 July, 2011 and the OIC of the Veyangoda Police Station on 14 October, 2011. To-date she has not received a reply from any of these officers of authorities.

After she made these complaints and started legal actions, she received several calls from both perpetrators named Kithsiri and Rohana, from numbers 077 7456014 and 077 2389085 respectively threatening her not to come to Sri Lanka. She was further threatened to withdraw the legal actions filed against them.

Further to these two persons a third person whom identified himself as 'Osmond', called her and ordered her to withdraw from claiming ownerships of her lands and properties and withdraw from legal actions against Rohan and Kithsiri. Osmond further stated that he had shot and killed two police officers at the Attanagalle Magistrate Court while the court was in sessions. Therefore, killing her would present no problem for him. According to her knowledge Osmond is notorious criminal and she further learned that he was one of the people who came to her husband's house in search of her.

Mangalika appeals for proper investigations into the grabbing of her land and properties. She also appeals for protection for herself and her family, especially her daughter. The influence of powerful politicians is blight on Sri Lanka and the people who become victims are virtually powerless to do anything about it.

I request your urgent intervention to ensure that the authorities listed below instigate an immediate investigation into the allegations of death threats, forcefully grabbing the lands and properties by the politically influenced perpetrators, and the prosecution of those proven to be responsible under the criminal law of the country. The police officers involved must also be subjected to internal investigations for the breach of the department orders as issued by the police department.

Yours sincerely,
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