



வடகிழக்கு மனித உரிமைகள் செயலகம்
NORTH EAST SECRETARIAT ON HUMAN RIGHTS
NESOHR

கரடிப்போக்கு சந்தி
கிளிநொச்சி
தொ.பே.இல 021 2285986

KARADIPPOKU JUNCTION
KILINOCHCHI
e-mail : nesohr@hotmail.com
www.nesohr.org

NESOHR Case Report issued on 25th April 2006

Extrajudicial killing of five men on 18 April 2006 in Puthoor, Jaffna



Name: **K Gowribalan**
Age: 32
Marital status: Married
Occ: Local Govt worker
Address: Puthoor, Jaffna

Gowribalan is married with three children, all under the age of seven. His youngest child is 4 months old. He worked as an official for the local government in Jaffna.



Name: **T Kaveenthran**
Age: 27
Marital Status: Single
Occ: Three-wheel driver
Address: Puthoor, Jaffna

Kaveenthran was planning to travel overseas in a couple of days.



Name: **B Kannathasan (Kannan)**
Age: 27
Marital status: Single
Occ: Three-wheel driver
Address: Puthoor, Jaffna



Name: **S Kamalathasan**
Age: 25
Marital Status: Single
Occ: Electrician
Address: Puthoor, Jaffna

Kamalathasan has four younger sisters and is the breadwinner of the family.

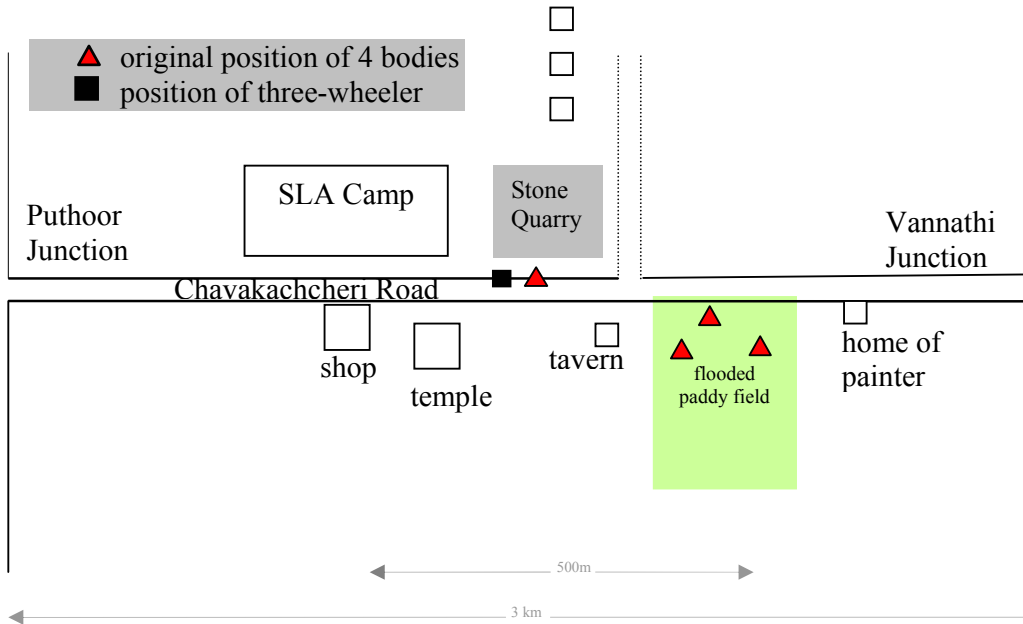


Name: **M Kishorkumar (Kishor)**
Age: 20
Marital Status: Single
Occ: Photographer
Address: Puthoor, Jaffna

The scene

Most of the sites referred to in this report are shown in the map below. Worth noting is the shop, painter's home, and the sites where the four bodies and the three-wheeler were found initially.

This section of the road where the bodies were found is always manned by two Sri Lankan Army (SLA) persons stationed for every 15 metres.



Prior to the incident

Kannan, the three-wheeler driver, regularly drops a painter friend (see map) at his home after work. On Tuesday, 18 April, around 7.00 pm, he was dropping this painter friend at his home as usual. Also in the three-wheeler was Kaveenthran, another friend of Kannan. On the way the friends picked up Gowribalan and Kishor as well for a fun ride. People at the shop (see map) saw the five friends packed inside the small the three-wheeler going to drop the painter friend and they also saw four of the friends, that is less the painter, returning after dropping the painter in the same three-wheeler. People at the shop also saw SLA persons on motorbikes coming from behind the three-wheeler, stopping it and turning it back.

At this time Kamalathanan came on a bicycle stopped at the shop, bought some sugar and was riding back to his home which was nearby.

The bodies

Father of Kannan, the person who was driving the three-wheeler, first started to be concerned when his son did not return by 9.00 pm. He came up to the shop and then walked a bit further. He saw the three-wheeler and the body of his son lying next to it (see map). The father of SLA persons who were in the area at that time said that

immediately went back and brought a few more people. When they asked the SLA to go further down the road to look for the missing friends, the SLA at the sentry point initially refused to let them go and held them for 30 minutes, saying that the SLA is conducting its own inquiry.

Others who have traveled in vehicles along that section of the road said that the SLA at the checkpoints had ordered them to turn off the vehicle lights.

Eventually, the SLA permitted one person from the search party into this section of the road, to search for the missing persons. He found Kannan's body where Kannan's father has earlier found it. Further down in the flooded fields he found the bodies of Gowribalan, Kaveenthran, and Kamalathanan. When he returned to where the rest of the search party was, SLA told the search party to bring the police. When the police came it was 12.00 midnight. Police told them that nothing can be done and asked them to come next day early in the morning. The search party left.

Next morning at 6.00 am, when they returned, members of the search party noticed that the body of Kannan was moved from the road to the field where the other three bodies were earlier seen. However, the body of Kaveenthran was now missing. The search party searched on and finally found the body of Kaveenthran lying on top of the body of Kishor.

All of the dead men had been killed by gunshots through their ears. Kaveenthran had acid poured on his chest and stomach.

The bodies were removed by police and taken to the hospital and were released to the families.

Kishor

Note that the searchers did not find the body of Kishor on 18 April night when they had already found the bodies of the other four men. A friend of Kishor had later reported that he got a mobile phone call from Kishor at 5.30 am on 19 April. According to this friend, Kishor had told him that he was in a very tight situation but did not elaborate. If this friend of Kishor is telling the truth then it corroborates with the fact that the searchers did not find his body on 18 April night.

People have speculated that Kishor had actually escaped death by somehow running away and hiding in the bushes. He must have survived until 5.30 am when he called his friend and later found and shot dead. The body swapping was planned in order to confuse the searchers who saw the body the previous night. To answer these questions it would seem to be common sense to start by tracing the mobile phone call and listening to its recording.

The funerals

The funerals were in Puthoor in Jaffna where most of those killed are from. Many family members and friends from outside Puthoor who came for the funeral were turned back by the SLA at the various checkpoints near Puthoor.

Fear

The fear expressed by those who gave us information was so palpable that it is unbelievable that people are living in such fear. One family gave us a group photo of the deceased because they could not initially find a single photo. They were so scared that the photos of the others in the group photo may be revealed in the NESOHR report that they chased us all the way to the office to take it away from us.

Eventually NESOHR obtained the photos of the deceased from a condolence sheet printed by a community organization. When we asked one person to bring it from Jaffna to Kilinochchi he refused out of fear that the SLA at the border checkpoint may see it and he too will then be targeted.

The level of fear in Jaffna is such that people are scared to grieve for those who are killed in such manner.

Dr N Malathy
(NESOHR Secretary)