

## **"Star-Ledger," reports Brunswick police in New Jersey probing into a new suspected terrorist front of LTTE**

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By Walter Jayawardhana

**Newark, New Jersey, 26 December, (Asiantribune.com):** A Sri Lankan group purported to be representing as South Asian Community Association and held a memorial meeting to eulogize dead Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fighters including suicide bombers as heroes told a New Jersey, based newspaper "*Star-Ledger*" located at Newark, that they did not have any connections with a terrorist group.

The group called South Asian Community Association rented an auditorium of the south Brunswick middle School in New Jersey, USA for a memorial to eulogize the dead LTTE fighters including those suicide bombers who targeted unarmed civilians and raised the flag of the LTTE and sang the anthem of the group on December 02 as was reported by the pro-LTTE news website.

The meeting was addressed by known leaders of the LTTE in the United States, Visuvanadan Rudrakumaran and Dr. Naglingam Jeyalingam.

The LTTE or Tamil Tigers, about whom those addressed the meeting praised are listed as a terrorist group by the State Department of the USA.

Some have complained that the meeting held at this government school which was claimed by the pro-LTTE *TamilNet* website to be around 500 in number, also raised funds for the banned organization.

*The Star-Ledger* newspaper of New Jersey which published two consecutive news articles about the group that rented the Brunswick school reported that, "South Brunswick police officials said last week, investigators were looking into allegations that the Princeton Junction-based South Asian Community Association is linked to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which is designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department."

The police investigations started after some residents of Brunswick reported to the police that the organizers of the meeting were actually represented a front organization for the LTTE.

US based LTTE leader Visuvanadan Rudrakumaran, addressing the school meeting reportedly said that while the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty (AEDPA) amended by the Patriot Act and Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act prohibits providing material support to designated organizations but "the Statute does not prohibit being a member of one of the designated groups or vigorously promoting and supporting the political goals of the group," according to the the pro-LTTE news website.

In fact Rudra Kumaran who is also a lawyer reported to had given his interpretation to a recent verdict delivered by a California Federal judge favoring the LTTE.

In its latest report the *Star Ledger* newspaper said, "Leaders of a community group accused of having ties to a terrorist organization after they rented space earlier this month in a South Brunswick middle school, denied this week their organization supports terrorists and said police have not contacted any of its members.

"No one has contacted me," said Ram Ranjan, an organizer of the SACA. "Ranjan's name appeared on the rental contract between SACA and the South Brunswick School District.

But South Brunswick Police Detective James Ryan said, "The investigation has progressed. I can't comment further than that."

"A link was made between the SACA and Ranjan because he serves as state coordinator of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, which raises money for medical services, schools and orphanages and the victims of the LTTE, not the LTTE, Ranjan said.

"The LTTE assassinated 48 people in 2005, including Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, according to the State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism. The group was also blamed for killing 49 members of the Sri Lankan security forces in the same year."

Although the LTTE controls extremely small amount of enclaves in Sri Lanka, in the jungles of the Vanni in the North and few square miles at Vakarai in the East, Rajan told the *Star-Ledger* newspaper it controlled two thirds of the land mass of Sri Lanka.

The *Star-Ledger* further reported : "Ranjan, who came to New Jersey in 1994, explained that the LTTE controls two-thirds of Sri Lanka, and because the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization works in those areas affected by the war, "people think we support the LTTE," he said.

"The SACA rented the cafeteria and auditorium Dec. 2 at Crossroads North Middle School for a "Hero's Day" celebration. Ranjan said the event is equivalent to Memorial Day.

"It's a celebration to honor those people who died in the civil war in Sri Lanka," he said. "It's a solemn event. We praise the people who died. There are speeches and dancing."

However, Ranjan has failed to publicly reveal whether in the said Memorial Day celebration organizers included the thousands of innocent Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese civilians killed by the LTTE in the so called civil war. He further failed to clarify whether the organizers included the thousands of the other Tamil groups cadres killed by the LTTE. Also there were no details according to Ranjan's version whether thousands of Sri Lankan armed forces killed by the LTTE were also included in the said Memorial Day celebrations organized and held by the group called South Asian Community.

"The Sri Lankan civil war has lasted for more than 50 years and more than 70,000 Tamils, or natives, have been killed, said Balan Balasingam, a member of the SACA and a South Brunswick resident who has lived in America for 20 years.

"Schools Superintendent Gary McCartney said everything was in order when the SACA filled out paperwork to rent the space, including the \$2,240 rental fee and the required \$2 million insurance policy. The association used the space without incident," he said.

But McCartney received two e-mails, one Dec. 7 and another Dec. 11, from different people who claimed 'there were ties between the SACA and the LTTE.' McCartney turned over the e-mails to the police department.

Ranjan said the SACA, which formally organized two years ago, has sponsored the celebration for the last 13 years at various locations in South Brunswick and the surrounding community. However, he said the group in the past has had to change locations at the last minute because people think the SACA supports the LTTE.

"From time to time, we feel there are certain groups in the U.S. who try to use the terrorist factor by providing those allegations," said Balasingam.

Paran Thiru, a member of the SACA from South Brunswick, said he wants people to understand that they should not be associated with terrorists. "We are hard-working,

taxpaying, peace-loving people," Thiru said.

Siva Thangavelan, who came to America 10 years ago and lives in South Brunswick, said the SACA started the Hero's Day program by saluting America.

"The first thing we did was raising the American flag and play the national anthem," Thangavelan said. "How can we be terrorists if we salute the flag?"

But Tangavelan according to a report, failed to tell the newspaper that they raised the LTTE terrorist flag together with the US flag and sang the anthem of the terrorists at the function.

In an earlier report the *Star ledger* said: "South Brunswick School Superintendent Gary McCartney said no red flags were raised when the district received the application from the South Asian Community Association and he didn't become aware of a possible connection to the LTTE until Friday when he read an e-mail concerning a possible link.

McCartney received similar e-mail on Monday from a different person, and he called the police department to investigate. He said both authors of the e-mails asked to remain anonymous. McCartney was unaware Ranjan is the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization's state coordinator until he was told by a reporter yesterday.

"I want to know if there's an affiliation," McCartney said. "The best decisions are made when you have more information."

The South Brunswick Police Department is investigating the al legations, said Detective James Ryan. Police Capt. Harry Delgado is a member of the school board.

"We are aware of the allegations being made about the event and we are looking into it," Ryan said.

McCartney said district officials followed the appropriate protocol in approving the application through the school's business office.

The *Star Ledger* newspaper further said, "The contact for the South Asian Community Association -- Ram Ranjan -- is the state coordinator for the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, a long-standing international aid group to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE. The U.S. Department of State lists LTTE as a designated foreign terrorist organization."

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