



Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation

410/112 Bullers Road, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka

Ph: +94 (0) 11 269 3254, 471 6575

Fax: 011 471 6576

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30 June 2006

Detention of Lorry & Driver Transporting TRO Outboard Motors for Tsunami Fishermen

On Thursday 29 June 2006 at approximately 16h30 Sri Lanka Army and Police personnel detained a lorry and its driver, Mutturkumarasamy Uthayakumar (NIC# 681673385V). The lorry was transporting 22 Yamaha 15 HP kerosene engines from Trincomalee Town to a TRO Tsunami “Back to Work” Project for fishermen in Punochochimunai, Batticaloa District.

The private lorry picked up the 22 engines from the Trincomalee TRO Office (the engines were purchased by TRO in Trincomalee Town) on 29 June 2006 and was transporting the engines to Batticaloa via the Trincomalee-Polonnaruwa-Batticaloa route. At the Manampitty Bridge Army Checkpoint the lorry was stopped. The driver, when asked about his destination and the goods he was transporting, produced the letter from the TRO Trincomalee Office stating that the intended destination was Punochochimunai in the Batticaloa District and that the outboard engines were for a TRO Tsunami “Back to Work” project. At that time the Army personnel arrested the driver, impounded the lorry and handed both over to the Polonnaruwa Town Police. I.P. Chandrapala (OSCDSDP) has asked TRO Trincomalee staff to come to the Polonnaruwa Police Station.

The outboard engines are part of TRO’s “Rebuild a Village Project” for the Muslim village of Punochochimunai in the Batticaloa District. The project consists of the building 91 permanent houses, 30 fibreglass fishing boats (with nets and engines), 40 canoes (with nets), a community centre, 286 “Back to School” packages, and the rebuilding of the road from the sea to the village and the internal roads.

TRO appeals to the Government of Sri Lanka, the international humanitarian community and human rights organizations for the release of the lorry, the driver and the outboard engines. These outboard engines are part of a tsunami humanitarian relief project and should be allowed to reach the intended destination without hindrance.

TRO appeals to the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure the protection of all humanitarian workers and the civilian population.

For More Information:
Arjunan Ethirveerasingam
Media Spokesperson
Sri Lanka Mobile: +94 77 674 6594
arjunan100@yahoo.com