

## **World Humanitarian Day**

U.N. General Assembly has designated 19th August,2009 as the first World Humanitarian Day to honour all humanitarian and the United Nations and associated personnel who have lost their lives in the course of their duty and those who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause both during war and natural disasters. One no doubt remembers that on 19th August,2003,Sergio Veira De Mello , the late Special Representative of the U.N.Secretary General and 22 other U.N.Employees lost their lives at the bombing of the U.N.Head Quarters in Baghdad in Iraq.

Northeast Secretariat on Human Rights(NESOHR) takes this opportunity to remember the many humanitarian workers who lost their lives in service to humanity especially during the Peace,war and natural disaster periods in Sri Lanka.

On 29/30,January,2006, ten employees of TRO working in the Northeast of Sri Lanka were abducted at Welikanthai area in the Polannaruwai District. Three women amongst them were later released but Mr.K.Ganesalingam and six others were never released in spite of appeals by many to many. They were later said to have been killed by members of a para- military group working with the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL)

On 4th of August,2006, 17 humanitarian workers of the French INGO, Action Contre La Faim (ACF), sixteen Tamils and one Muslim, were specifically targetted and murdered at Mutur in the Trincomalee District, said to be by a Home Guard and two Policemen in the presence of the Army commandos.

On 20th of August, 2006, Rev.Fr.Jim Brown Thiruchelvam, a Roman Catholic Priest, who did yeomen humanitarian service to the marooned people of Allaipiddy within the jurisdiction of Kayts Magistrates Court was abducted along with his lay Assistant, Wenceslas, alleged to be by the Sri Lankan Navy. To-date their fate is not known.

On 20th September,2007 in a claymore attack, said to be by the deep penetration unit(DPU) of the Sri Lanka Army , near Madhu, Rev.Fr.N.Packiyaranjith and his Assitant were killed while on their way to distribute food to the IDPs.

On 20th April,2008, Rev.Fr.M.X.Karunaratnam, our Chairperson was killed near Mankulam,said to be by the DPU of Sri Lanka Army. He was not only a great Human Rights Defender but worked amongst the IDPs sheltering and feeding them. He was a tower of strength to the poor and oppressed. He arranged Psychological counselling during the Tsunami that devastated the Northeast of Sri Lanka.

We at NESOHR pay our respect to the above and numerous other humanitarian workers around the world who have lost their lives whilst serving others.

-NESOHR TEAM