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How Convincing is CTC's Defamation Lawsuit Against Rohan Gunaratna? *Convicted LTTE operative is former CTC director*

July 12 – (UPDATE: SL-USA) - Will the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC), which has filed a defamation lawsuit against terrorism expert Dr. Rohan Gunaratna for alleging that it is an LTTE front, be able to present a convincing case given that one a convicted LTTE operative currently serving a prison term in the US was its director of communications in 2005?

Sahilal 'Sahil' Sabaratnam is serving a 25-year prison term in the US in connection with a plan to purchase almost \$1 million worth of high-powered weaponry for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Sabaratanam, described by authorities as the financial mastermind of the operation, is named as the Director, Communications (Canadian Tamil Congress, Toronto, Tel: (416) 662-6372 e-mail:ctc.toronto@gmail.com) on the August 29, 2005 press release which was issued to condemn the murder of journalist Sivaram Dharmaratnam (alias 'Taraki).

David Poopalapillai, spokesman for the group, told media at the time that he did not know Sabaratnam.

However, Sabaratnam's 2005 press release bears striking resemblance to the CTC's other releases, including the July 12 release announcing the lawsuit. In addition to having the same graphics, the two releases share identical taglines at the bottom: "Courtesy: CTC." (See images below.)

The CTC filed the defamation lawsuit against Gunaratna on Wednesday for alleged defamatory statements he made in an interview to a Sri Lankan newspaper a few months ago.

In that interview newspaper, Gunaratna had alleged that the LTTE is "operating in Canada under the name of the Canadian Tamil Congress, which is the main LTTE front organization in Canada." The lawsuit also claims that Gunaratna had falsely said that the Canadian government is investigating that the "LTTE is operating under the name of Canadian Tamil Congress."

According to the lawsuit, Gunaratna's statements are defamatory and falsely portray the Canadian Tamil Congress as an entity through which the LTTE has conducted operations in Canada.

In a press release, David Poopalapillai, the national spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress, said, "While the CTC's mission is to work with various levels of government in Canada to address issues of significance to Tamil Canadians, it does not, and never has, functioned as the front in Canada for the LTTE movement.

"The Canadian Tamil Congress brought this lawsuit to combat the harm done to its reputation and ability to address issues of importance to Tamil Canadians as a result of Gunaratna's statements."

Poopalapillai and Umasuthan Suntharamoorthy, who is a director of the Canadian Tamil Congress, are plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

Sahilal Sabaratnam was one of four Canadians arrested on Long Island in August 2006 after engaging in negotiations with an undercover FBI agent to purchase and export ten SA-18 heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles and launchers, 500 AK-47s, and other military equipment for the LTTE. The FBI said he and the other defendants were acting at the direction of senior LTTE leadership in Sri Lanka, including Pottu Amman, the LTTE's chief of intelligence and procurement and the right-hand man to LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. The weapons were to be used by the LTTE to shoot down Kfir aircraft used by the Sri Lankan military.



Prof. Rohan Gunaratna

Rohan Gunaratna (born 1961) is an international terrorism expert. He is the head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. By its size, ICPVTR is one of the largest counter terrorism research and training centres in the world.



CTC's Aug. 29, 2005 press release shows convicted LTTE operative as Communications Director



CTC's July 12, 2011 press release shows same graphics as the 2005 release when Sahal Sabaratnam was listed as Communications Director.

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