

INTERNATIONAL  
TRUTH  
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PROJECT



**JOINT PRESS RELEASE:** New Sri Lankan Ambassador to Geneva was a member of a government-sponsored death squad.

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**Johannesburg:** Switzerland must deny accreditation to the Ambassador designate for Sri Lanka, C.A.Chandraprema, because of his membership during the late eighties of a death squad responsible for the murders of hundreds of people, including human rights lawyers, journalists, university students and school children.

C. A Chandraprema was known as “Thadi Priyantha” at the time and was a key member of the People’s Revolutionary Red Army or PRRA, one of many shadowy armed groups working with the military to target suspects during a Sinhala youth uprising that saw 40,000 killed. PRRA routinely issued death threats to journalists and human rights activists, including staff from Amnesty International, whose reports at the time accused PRRA of being involved in executions and enforced disappearances.

Chandraprema was arrested in Sri Lanka in 2000 in connection with the 1989 assassinations of two human rights lawyers - Charita Lankapura and Kanchana Abhayapala. A senior ex policeman in custody had named Chandraprema as the alleged assassin in an affidavit which is publicly available online. However Chandraprema was released after the Attorney General decided there was no legal grounds to proceed. Since then he has been protected by his links to all the major political parties in Sri Lanka.

*“It is the ultimate irony that a man who has never been properly investigated for his alleged role in the murder of brave human rights lawyers should sit in the Human Rights Council,”* a body intended to protect the rights of victims and human rights activists said ITJP’s Executive Director, Yasmin Sooka. *“Sri Lanka has a past record of intimidating and threatening activists who attend the Human Rights*

*Council - it is simply not safe to have a man like this heading a diplomatic mission in Geneva."*

In recent years Chandraprema became a newspaper columnist. In 2012 he authored a hagiography of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa that denies all the allegations of war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan army against Tamils in 2009 which are meticulously documented in a series of United Nations investigations.

*"Unpunished state criminality is the obscene underside of Sri Lanka's celebrated democracy,"* said Bashana Abeywardene, coordinator of Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka. *"The truth has been buried to such an extent that an alleged former member of a death squad can be proposed as the country's representative to the United Nations and nobody even protests."*

For more information see the dossier on C.A. Chandraprema at <https://itjpsl.com/assets/press/chandraprema-dossier-final-docx.pdf>

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