

## Press release

Hamburg, June, 28.23

### **New Guest: Kumanan Kanapathippillai, Photojournalist from Sri Lanka**

The Hamburg Foundation for the Politically Persecuted has accepted the Tamil journalist Kumanan Kanapathippillai as a foundation guest. The foundation is committed to helping people all over the world who courageously raise their voices against injustice and enables them to find refuge and peace in Hamburg for a temporary relocation.

Having grown up during the years of civil war marked by atrocities and endless suffering, Kumanan Kanapathippillai, a 30-year-old under graduate of the University of Media in Jaffna and photojournalist, has been reporting for ten years now on the persistently discriminatory policies to the detriment of Tamils.

From 1983-2009, Tamil separatists of the "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam" LTTE fought against Singhalese government troops for the secession of the Tamil settlement areas in the north and east of the island state of Sri Lanka. The LTTE failed in its major goal of establishing an independent state of Tamil Eelam. Fourteen years after the official end of the civil war, tensions between the Singhalese majority (75 %) and the Tamil minority (15 %) continue.

Because of his reporting on political prisoners and disappeared persons, on demands of Tamil war survivors for justice and prosecution in the military-controlled area of the Tamils, Kumanan Kanapathippillai inevitably came into the focus of the police and military. He repeatedly experienced intimidation, physical attacks, summonses, threats, and attempted arrests.

In The Guardian, The Vice, Tamilguardian and the German-based online news portal JDSLanka, the young journalist has published impressive photo reports - about the vigils of Tamil mothers for their disappeared relatives that have been going on for more than 2,500 days, about land theft and state-supported expropriation of Hindu religious places and their rededication into sacred Buddhist places in order to change the demographics of the predominantly Tamil areas.

His solo photo exhibition titled "Album of Persecution - Justice, Despair, Tears" was shown in Sri Lanka (2019), France (2019) and Germany, Berlin 2019. Likewise, he participated in international photography festivals, including New York, Canada, and London.

He would like to use his one-year scholarship primarily to recover and to bring Sri Lanka back into the awareness of the German public with his images.

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