

Disappeared journalist's wife declares loss of faith in Sri Lanka's judicial process and turns to supernatural forces

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Sixth months after the disappearance of her husband, Prageeth Eknaligoda, Sandya Eknaligoda and her son held religious ceremonies at the famous Kalli Amma Kovil, a Hindu temple at Modara, Colombo on 24 June 2010. Mrs Eknaligoda prayed to supernatural forces for help in finding the whereabouts of her husband, who disappeared on 24 January 2010. Sandya has repeatedly declared that she holds the government responsible for her husband's disappearance.

Her voice, praying to the Kali Amma on behalf of her husband, was played over some media channels. After the religious event she told the media that her plea to the authorities to investigate her husband's disappearance has not brought about any positive results. She said she has lost faith in the authorities and will from now on hold religious ceremonies all over the country to pray for the help of supernatural forces.

Over the last six months, several government spokespersons have talked to the media on this issue, including several ministers. They all promised a speedy solution to the problem through effective investigations. The Inspector General of Police and his spokespersons have also made similar promises. However, while these assurances were being announced, the government propaganda machinery stated that Prageeth Eknaligoda had not in fact disappeared, but was in hiding and would soon return.

Sandya Eknaligoda's declaration of no faith in the legal process echoes the general feeling of many persons. The failure of the legal process is a result of the general totalitarian tendency in the country where public institutions are prevented from functioning in a normal manner. Under such circumstances people turn to supernatural forces or to the underworld to resolve their problems.

The government claims that Sri Lanka has an effective judicial system and does not need any inquiries from international agencies about human rights abuses. However, people turning to supernatural forces for help indicate that people have no faith in the local systems of justice administration.