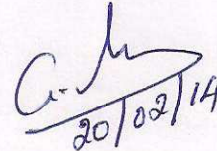


Statement on Behalf of Perarivalan @ Arivu

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in commuting death sentences of Arivu, Santhan and Murugan yesterday has recognized the implicit pain, suffering and dehumanizing effect arising out of prolonged imprisonment by death row prisoners. It bears mention that Arivu, Santhan and Murugan have already spent 22 years of their lives in single cell confinement. In fact, they have faced 16 years of their lives under the shadow of a noose. During these long years while facing the grim possibility of an imminent execution, each day they have suffered terrible stress, anxiety and gradual disintegration of their mind, body and soul.

We welcome this judgment and thank the Supreme Court for applying the unequivocal and undisputed strand of humanitarian jurisprudence which has been in existence since 1983 when for the first time it outlawed executions which are preceded by years of incarceration on death row. Since then in much of the civilized world where death penalty is still in use, courts have disallowed the governments from carrying out executions where convicts have suffered long years of imprisonment on death row. This judgment of the Supreme Court has strengthened our faith in rule of law and due process.

Now that the Supreme Court has commuted these death sentences, we also trust that the law of remission and early release will take its course and will be duly and justly applied to the cases of our brothers. We appeal to all political parties, media and fellow citizens with folded hands, not to politicize this issue and allow the law to be justly and duly applied to all the convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi Assassination case. We pray to all concerned to not play politics with the future of our brothers. Those who claim to be guided by the best interests of the convicts and have sympathy for their cause, should be the last people to allow the bogey of politics to be raised which will eventually come to haunt our brothers. It will be all we ask for is dispassionate application of law as it stands to our case. We reiterate that we have full faith in the instrumentalities of law and justice and justness of procedure as applicable to the convicts in this country. Please don't create a political spectacle out of our misfortune.



[G. ARULSELVI]

[Sister of Perarivalan @ Arivu]