

# **Statement of Concern Regarding Missing Vice-Chancellor of Eastern University, Sri Lanka**

Friday 22 December 2006, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 19 December 2006).

We wish to express our deep concern about the apparent abduction of Professor S. Ravindranath, Vice-Chancellor of Eastern University in Sri Lanka. On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December, he left a meeting of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science in central Colombo, and has not been seen since. His family have reported his disappearance to the police.

In September an unidentified armed group kidnapped the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Eastern University, demanding Professor Ravindranath's resignation in return for the Dean's release. The Vice-Chancellor has not been able to return to the University since that incident and had been carrying out his duties from Colombo.

Our colleagues in universities across Sri Lanka have struggled heroically in the face of war and natural disaster in recent years. Eastern University is located in one of the areas most devastated by the civil war and by the Tsunami of 2004. That it is still capable of producing world-class researchers is testimony to the quality and dedication of its academic staff. Professor Ravindranath has played a central part in the work of the University from its foundation in 1981, and his tenure as Vice-Chancellor has coincided with major developments like the opening of the first medical school in the East of Sri Lanka.

As colleagues, friends, and, in some cases, academic partners of Eastern University we urgently appeal for the swift and safe release of Professor Ravindranath, and for the protection and safety of all our colleagues in Sri Lanka.

*Signed (in our personal capacities)*

1. Dr. Michael Woost, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Hartwick College, USA
  2. Prof. Thongchai Winichakul, Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
  3. Dr. David Washbrook, St Antony's College, University of Oxford, UK
  4. Dr. Nicholas Van Hear, Senior Researcher, The Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, UK
  5. Dr. Terrance J. Taylor, Research Associate, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice, University of Missouri-St. Louis, USA
  6. Prof. Donald K. Swearer, Director, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, USA
  7. Dr. Alison Strang, Institute for International Health and Development, Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, UK
  8. Prof. Kristian Stokke, University of Oslo, Norway
  9. Associate Prof. Birgitte Refslund Sørensen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
  10. Prof. Jonathan Spencer, Professor of the Anthropology of South Asia, School of Social and Political Studies, University of Edinburgh
  11. Associate Prof. Hans Skotte, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
  12. Dr. Bob Simpson, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Social Science and Health, University of Durham, UK
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13. Professor John Sidel, Sir Patrick Gillam Professor of International and Comparative Politics, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
  14. Prof. N. Shanmugaratnam, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB), Norway
  15. Prof. Saskia Sassen, University of Chicago, USA and Centennial Visiting Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
  16. Prof. S W R de A Samarasinghe, Tulane University, USA & Executive Director, ICES, Sri Lanka
  17. Dr. John D. Rogers, Bibliography of Asian Studies, USA
  18. Dr. Susan A. Reed, Director, Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender and Assistant Professor, Women's and Gender Studies and Anthropology, Bucknell University, USA
  19. Prof. Velcheru Narayana Rao, Krishnadevaraya Professor of Languages and Cultures of Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
  20. Dr Caroline Paskell, London, UK
  21. Prof. Jonathan P. Parry, Professor of

Anthropology, London School of Economics and  
Political Science, UK

22. Dr. Camilla Orjuela, Göteborg University, Sweden

23. Dr. Ranjini Obeyesekere, Lecturer Emerita,  
Department of Anthropology, Princeton  
University, USA

24. Prof. Gananath Obeyesekere, Professor  
Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, Princeton  
University, USA

25. Prof. Hisashi Nakamura, Department of Economy, Ryukoku University, Japan

26. Dr. Martha Mundy, Reader in Anthropology,  
London School of Economics and Political  
Science, UK

27. Elizabeth Monson, Department of Languages and  
Cultures of Asia, University of Wisconsin-  
Madison, USA

28. Dr. Jody Miller, Associate Professor,  
Criminology & Criminal Justice, University of  
Missouri-St. Louis, USA

29. Prof. Eric Meyer, Vice-President, National  
Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations,  
University of Paris, France

30. Prof. Barbara McPake, Director, Institute for  
International Health and Development, Queen  
Margaret University College, Edinburgh, UK

31. Prof. Susan McGrath, Director, Centre for  
Refugee Studies, York University, Canada

32. Dr. Caitrin Lynch, Assistant Professor of  
Humanities and Social Sciences, Olin College of  
Engineering, USA

33. Prof. Ragnhild Lund, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

34. Dr. Wasantha A. Liyanage, Lecturer in Sinhala  
Language, Department of Asian Studies,  
Cornell University, USA

35. Prof. Jonathan Lewis, Institute for the Study  
of Global Issues, Hitotsubashi University, Japan

36. Assistant Prof. Benedikt Korf, Department of  
Geography, University of Zurich, Switzerland

37. Dr. Steven Kemper, Asian Studies, Bates College, USA

38. Dr. Alf Morten Jerve, Assistant Director, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway

39. Dr. Tariq Jazeel, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield, UK

40. Associate Prof. Jennifer Hyndman, Department  
of Geography, Simon Fraser University,  
Canada

41. Dr. Kristine Hoglund, Uppsala University, Sweden

42. Prof. Ruth Haug, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB), Norway

43. Prof. John Harriss, Professor of  
International Studies, Simon Fraser University,  
Canada

44. Prof. Olivia Harris, Professor of Social  
Anthropology, London School of Economics and

Political Science, UK

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45. Associate Prof. Charles Hallisey, Department of Languages and Cultures of Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

46. Prof. Janet Gyatso, Hershey Professor of Buddhist Studies, Harvard University, USA

47. Dr. Arjun Guneratne, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Macalester College, U.S.A

48. Prof. Anthony Good, Head of School, School of Social & Political Studies, University of Edinburgh, UK

49. Prof. Wenona Giles, Atkinson College, York University, Canada.

50. Prof. James W. Gair, Emeritus Professor of Linguistics, Cornell University

51. Prof. Øivind Fuglerud, University of Oslo, Norway

52. Amani El-Jack, School of Women's Studies, York University, Canada

53. Shukria Dini, School of Women's Studies, York University, Canada.

54. Prof. C. R. De Silva, Dean, College of Arts and Letters, Old Dominion University, USA

55. Assistant Prof. Donald Davis, Department of Languages & Cultures of Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

56. Christina P. Davis, Anthropology Department, University of Michigan, USA

57. Dr. Michael Cullinane, Associate Director, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

58. Prof. A.P. Cohen, FRSE, Principal & Vice-Patron, Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, UK

59. Assistant Prof. Bambi L. Chapin, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Maryland, USA

60. Prof. Ian Bryceson, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB), Norway

61. Associate Prof. Cathrine Brun, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

62. Dr. Robert Boyce, Department of International History, London School of Economics & Political Science, UK

63. Dr. Anne M. Blackburn, Associate Professor of South Asia & Buddhist Studies, Cornell University, USA

64. Dr. Zoltán Biedermann, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

65. Assistant Prof. Bernard Bate, Department of Anthropology, Yale University, USA

66. Dr. Daniel Bass, Adjunct Professor, Religious Studies & Fellow of The Honors College, Florida International University, USA

67. Prof. Yoshiko Ashiwa, Institute for the Study of Global Issues, Hitotsubashi University, Japan