

Common candidate and common criminals

Apparently General (retired) Sarath Fonseka has said that he has been treated worse than a common criminal. From the grievances that have been aired through Channel Four we may conclude that one area where the general is not treated properly is in connection with the place where he is kept under arrest. Fonseka has still not been found guilty and until he is found guilty he has to be considered as innocent at least as far as the charges framed against him by the military police (army) are concerned. He is charged before two courts martial and it is said that he will also be brought before the civil courts of the country. In general the so called common criminals who are brought before the courts of the country are remanded during the court proceedings and not kept in the official residences of high ranking officers in the navy.

Sarath Fonseka is an educator. He has educated the public who do not get an opportunity to visit high ranking officers in the navy in their residences as to the conditions that prevail in the official quarters of these unfortunate officers. If we go by what Sarath Fonseka has claimed then these officers live in places worse than what are usually (commonly) referred to as remand prisons. The common criminals who have to spend not more than a few years in the remand must be very lucky when compared with the officers in the navy who have to spend perhaps twenty to thirty years in these houses known as official quarters.

However, the officers unlike the common criminals kept in the remand live with their wives and children and that perhaps compensate for the hardships that the former have to go through in the official quarters. However, Sarath Fonseka has failed to educate the public on the conditions at the official residences of the officers in the army. It is unlikely that the conditions are much better and one could imagine the hardships that the Fonsekas had to go through in their official residences in various parts of the country. It is not clear as to the conditions of the remand but they have to be better than the official quarters where Sarath Fonseka is being kept and the government could consider the option of producing Sarath Fonseka before a magistrate and getting him to be remanded, so as to give him a decent place to meet his visitors at least. I do not know the law, though it is not an excuse to break it, and I may be wrong in law to request the government to produce somebody who is being charged in court martial before a magistrate. However, I am making this request after listening to Anoma Fonseka who is performing much better than even Malini Fonseka, out of sympathy. Though my house and the thirty two year old car are not air conditioned, my office and the car provided by the University to travel between home and office are air conditioned at the expense of the tax payers (I mean especially those who are compelled to pay indirect taxes and not those who pay a tiny bit of what they should pay), and I am in a position to understand both Sarath Fonseka and Anoma Fonseka. The government could have done better by getting Sarath Fonseka remanded at the first opportunity to do so to provide him with better facilities.

The Channel four has come to the rescue of Sarath Fonseka and apparently they have been able to obtain a diagram giving the dimensions of the bed room, the visiting room and the veranda in the house where Sarath Fonseka has been kept under custody by the army. The common criminals also manage to get messages to their loved ones, while being remanded and Sarath Fonseka cannot complain that he has been treated

worse than a common criminal at least as far as smuggling documents are concerned. However, it is uncommon criminals such as Prabhakaran who have had access to Channel Four and Sarath Fonseka finds himself or we find Sarath Fonseka is in the same league as Prabhakaran as far as the channel four is concerned.

It is said that the notes in the diagram containing the above information have been handwritten by Sarath Fonseka himself and unless the government wants to treat the “smuggling” of notes as a common practice of uncommon criminals, an investigation has to be done to determine how a piece of paper managed to leave the rooms of Sarath Fonseka in Colombo and reach the studios of Channel four presumably in London.

Sarath Fonseka when he was a candidate at the Presidential elections was projected as the common candidate. It is clear that he was not the common candidate as he lost by about 1.8 million of votes. If he was the common candidate he should have obtained more than ninety five percent of the total number of valid votes. He was probably the common candidate of the opposition but by now he has ceased to be the common leader of the opposition and has become an uncommon leader of a so called alliance that consists of one party namely the JVP and a few individuals such as Arjuna Ranatunga and Sarath Fonseka himself. Fonseka is such an uncommon leader that he leads an alliance without himself becoming a member of a political party as such. Even at the presidential elections we never considered him as a so called common candidate and we have no doubt whatsoever that he should not be treated worse than a common criminal. He is such an uncommon person like Prabhakaran and he should be treated accordingly.

The westerners have realized the importance of the general lately, especially after the white flag talk at the Dharmashoka College, Ambalangoda after the defeat of Prabhakaran and have decided to save his life at the expense of those of the President, the Defence Secretary and a few others. They give the four star general five star treatment and Channel Four and others in England who are against the Sri Lankan government, the Sinhala people, and who support Tamil racism nakedly (it is reported that the LTTE or some version of it is now a registered political party in England and its colonies in the so called British isles) have come to embrace the general, and they know that after Prabhakaran the general is the most important person in the fight against what they call Sinhala Chauvinism.

As we said at the outset the charges against the general have to be proved and until they are proved he has to be treated as innocent. However, the charges against him are not common in the sense that they are not the charges that are brought against common criminals. A common criminal may be charged against murder or a robbery but the general has more serious charges to face. A common criminal may be charged against some act against a fellow individual or an institute but in the case of the general the charges are concerned with the state and the country. The charges are uncommon and if a person is treated according to the gravity of the charges a person faces then it is clear that the general should not be treated as a common criminal.

Listening to Anoma Fonseka one has to agree that the general though uncommon should be provided with hot water and also with air conditioned rooms. I am neither a medicine man western or eastern, and I am not in a position to comment on the

appropriateness of bathing with hot water and coming back to an air conditioned room after the bath. The gullible English in one of their worst winters may not understand the importance or otherwise of hot water and air conditioned rooms in Sri Lanka but let us hope that unlike the common criminal who is provided with a “tin” to urinate in the night the general is supplied with proper toilet facilities including toilet papers before the Channel Four come out with a scoop in their brand of investigative journalism.