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**Summer Camp for Children of Torture victims
Celebration of Rights – Camp with a difference**

RCTV (Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims of People's Watch - Tamil Nadu) is conducting summer camp for the 5th consecutive year, for around 250 children, who are either victims or children of victims of various forms of torture like violence against women, police excess and caste related violence. The camp is being held at the Mahatma Hr. Sec. School in Alagar Koil.

In the first summer camp that was held in Madurai in the year 2002, around 25 children took part and in the summer camp that took place in the year 2003 in Yelagiri, around 139 children took part. In the summer camp that took place in 2004 in Alagar Koil 150 children took part. In 2005 168 children took part. This year, which is the 5th year, the summer camp will be held from 10.05.06 to 20.05.06.

The inaugural program began with a song rendered by Perumal, a student receiving educational assistance from People's Watch - Tamil Nadu's RCTV. He then shared the experience he had years back as a participant of a summer camp and said that he was now passing on skills like *Thappattam* and other folk art forms that he has acquired over the years to children in Tamil Nadu. Mr. C. J. Rajan, Senior Coordinator, Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims delivered the Welcome Address and facilitated the proceedings. The Special Guests who addressed the gathering were Mr. Mahaboob Batch, Director, SOCO Trust, who said in his address that the special aspect of the camp was the participants of previous camps had become organizers of the camp this year, Mr. Lajapathi Roy, Advocate, High Court who requested to children to achieve their dreams and asked them not to forget being good human beings once they had achieved them, Madurai, Dr. Parthasarathy, State Director, EU Sponsored National Program on

Prevention of Torture who encouraged children to ask questions and persist in finding answers for them since the growth of the society lies only in the quest for answers, Dr. Mathiharan, Honorary Director, RCTV and Advisor, Institute of Legal Medicine, Chennai, Dr. Selvamani, Psychiatrist and Dr. Inba Sekaran, Neurosurgeon, Govt. Hospital, Madurai. Mr. Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director, People's Watch - Tamil Nadu also addressed the gathering. In his address he said that from the experience that had been gained by conducting summer camps for 4 years, this year 4 camps were being conducted by the Tsunami Legal Action Committee for Tsunami affected children. Ms. Vadhani, teacher of Mahatma Montessori School welcomed the children to the camp and to the School.

The children were divided into groups and the Special Guests gave each group, banners bearing different child right slogans. These children will be taught arts and crafts, English, environmental science and Computers, Yoga and other sports and games. They will also be engaged in various recreational activities in the course of these 10 days that can help them come out of the trauma of the bitter experiences they and their family might have undergone.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Ms. G. Andal, Senior Counselor, RCTV, Madurai.