

Sallay defamation case: District Court reissues summons on Yasmin Sooka and others

The Colombo District Court has again issued summons against Yasmin Sooka and two other United-Kingdom-based respondents, including a website operator, to be present in court in February 2022, when it took up a civil defamation case filed by State Intelligence Chief Suresh Sallay.

Additional District Judge A.D. Chathurika de Silva ordered that summons be reissued when it was brought to her notice that the defendants were not represented in court.

In this case, Major General Sallay, has sought Rs. 1 billion as damages from South Africa-based human rights lawyer and activist Yasmin Sooka, the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) and a website operator for false, malicious, defamatory statements made against him.

The statements accused the

plaintiff of forcing a government doctor in custody, to give false evidence by denying him medical treatment and threatening him.

It states that the doctor who is now in USA alleged he was asked to give false evidence in a staged news conference by the plaintiff.

In the plaint, the SIS chief, has stated that he is a decorated military officer (RWP, RSP, USP, NDC, PSC, MDEFS) with an illustrious career, currently holding the rank of Major General.

He has also pointed out that he joined the Sri Lanka Army in 1987 and has been granted several promotions. He has been serving as the Director of the State Intelligence Service. Maj. Gen. Sallay is also a member of the task force for the eradication of Covid-19.

He complains that on June

1, 2020, the first defendant Ms. Sooka, referring to him, had made statements that were published by the 2nd defendant in Sinhala, English and Tamil in the website he operates.

He says the 2nd and 3rd defendants had published and caused to be published on the website statements which he described as false, malicious and defamatory.

Maj.Gen. Sallay has accordingly pleaded that he has suffered loss and damage which he estimates at Rs. one billion or its equivalent in US dollars.

Counsel Hiran de Alwis with Attorneys-at-law Pasan Weerasinghe and Medani Navoda instructed by Attorney-at-law Lakshika Bakmiwewa appeared for Maj. Gen. Sallay.

The case will be taken up again on February 22 next year.