

Former Army Commander / Chief of Defence Staff General Sarath Fonseka was taken into custody by the Military Police last night (8 February 2010) on the basis of alleged charges violating clause 57(1) of the Army Act.

Defence Spokesman Minister Keheliya Rambukwella, addressing a media briefing held at MCNS today said, the military police are conducting inquiries into his alleged connections and dealings of a political nature while being a member of the national Security Council which is the most powerful body in charge of national security. During the period of six months after an Army Officer/Soldier resigns or retires from the Army, he is bound by the Army Act, the Defence Spokesman added.

Elaborating, the Military Spokesman Major General Prasad Samarasinghe said, after compilation of the summary of evidence, the Attorney General's Department will determine whether the detainee will be Court Martialled or not. Answering a question, the Military Spokesman said any one guilty in a Court Martial has the right to appeal against the verdict in the Court of Appeal and finally in the Supreme Court. The former Army Commander/CDS has all the constitutional rights, such as unhindered access to his lawyer and family. He may nominate his own lawyer, Military Spokesman explained.

The civilians already arrested by police in this connection have already been handed over to the CID for further inquiries.