

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Uva Provincial Council, Jaffna MC & Vavuniya UC Elections-2009

Election Day Report

08th August 07:00pm, Polling in the elections to the Jaffna Municipality, Vavuniya Urban Council and Uva Provincial Council was relatively incident free with voter turnout figures of 20%, 49% and 62% in the three areas respectively.

Of the areas polled, attention focused on the Jaffna Municipality, on account of it being the first post war poll in a predominantly Tamil area. In this respect, the voter turnout of 20% should be seen in terms of an effective 40%, given that the actual number of voters present and able to vote in the municipality was not the figure on the electoral register, but roughly half that number. Some 41,000 polling cards were retained at the Post Office. These could not be delivered to the prospective voters, as the latter were not present to accept delivery of them at the addresses given on the polling cards. Provision was made for these voters to obtain their polling cards from the Post Office until 3pm today, polling day.

The low turn out figure in Jaffna can be attributed to a number of factors, primarily that of voter migration, voter preoccupation with livelihoods and quality of life, the impact of the IDP situation and voter disinterest in the elections as either being unnecessary and irrelevant at this point in time, a foregone conclusion in terms of result or held in accordance with political priorities other than their own.

CMEV wishes to underscore this last point and its bearing on the low turnout. In particular there are outstanding issues with regard to the adequacy of information made available to the IDPs, with regard to voter registration as well as the access of political parties to potential voters in these camps. CMEV fully recognizes the number of factors militating against political activity in the camps and agrees that they reinforce the argument about the inappropriateness of elections at this time.

In the Uva Provincial Council election, CMEV received a number of allegations pertaining to the misuse of state resources by the ruling alliance and in particular on behalf of its chief ministerial candidate Shasiendra Rajapaksa. The misuse of state resources in this way is a recurrent bad practice in all elections and reinforces the argument of CMEV, its constituent organizations and other civil society organization about the pivotal importance of the implementation of the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution and the establishment of independent commissions for the arms of the state that are responsible for protecting and strengthening the integrity of the electoral process.

CMEV received reports of 2 major incidents and 2 minor incidents in Jaffna MC Elections and reports of 3 major incidents and 2 minor incidents in the Vavuniya UC elections during Election Day. There were two incidents of assaults against candidates of the SLMC in Vavuniya, one incident of assault against ITAK supporter in Puttalam(Jaffna MC) and one incident of assault against EROS supporter in Vavuniya. CMEV also received reports of two incidents of campaigning during Election Day in Vavuniya.

In the Uva Provincial Council elections, there were 14 incidents in total from the Badulla district and 20 incidents from the Monaragala district during Election Day. There were 7 major incidents in the Badulla district and 4 major incidents in the Monaragala incident. These incidents included two incidents of assault in Badulla district and 1 incident of assault in Monaragala district. There were 3 incidents in which election officials did not allow CMEV monitors to enter the polling station in the Badulla district. There were 2 similar incidents reported from the Monaragala district. There was 1 incident in the Badulla district where the polling agent was found distributing campaign material for UPFA candidates. There was also 1 voter related incident in the Monaragala district. Some of these incidents are described below.

Assault of Candidates

At 12pm, SLMC candidates Mukkankoolu Ravichandran (Preferential No. 09) and Abdul Latheef Mohamed Munawfar (Preferential No. 02) who were on their way to the polling station on a motor bike, were assaulted by supporters of UPFA Minister of Resettlement Rishad Bathiudeen at the V/Muslim Maha Vidyalaya, Pattanichchipuliyankulam (Polling station No. 1). According to Ravichandran, the assailants had travelled in a Toyota Hi- Ace van bearing the registration number 251 - 5092. A.L.M.Munawfar also informed the CMEV monitors that the assailants had attempted to run him over with the vehicle and had identified the assailants as supporters of Minister Rishard Badurdeen (ACMC), known as Rizni, Rafees, Rifthiyan, Majeed, Haroun, Safree and Nassen. Police Constable T.Wimalajith at the police post at the Vavuniya Base Hospital Police confirmed to CMEV that Mukkankoolu Ravichandran admitted to the hospital with minor injuries. Minister Rishad Bathiudeen when contacted by the CMEV said that he was informed of such an incident, but he was not connected with the incident in any way. He also said that it is a personal conflict between two individuals.

Assault of Voters and Supporters

At 8am Mr. H. S. M. Naseer driver of ITAK candidate Mr. Mohammed Aleem Jamaldeen (Preferential No. 02) of the ITAK was assaulted by M. Mujahir and others who are supporters of Minister Rishard Badurdeens. CMEV was informed that the driver was assaulted and the vehicle was damaged. Mr. H.S.M.Naseer subsequently made a report on this incident to the Puttalam Police (CIB 0290/57).

CMEV mobile team reported that at 11.30am Sivakumaran a supporter of the EROS party was assaulted by a group of supporters at the Rural Development Society Kurumankadu (Polling station No. 3) by the Democratic People's Liberation Front (PLOTE) party who arrived in a van. Sivakumaran sustained minor injuries during the attack. During police investigations in connection to the incident Kanthar Thamothersampillai Linganathan, (candidate No 2) the Chief candidate of the PLOTE party rejected all allegations made against his party. The police confirmed this incident to the CMEV mobile team.

A voter was assaulted at Polling Station No.50, Karametiya Junior School Polling Station, Moneragala polling division, Moneragala District at around 3.15pm. The assault was reportedly carried out by a policeman on duty at the station. A CMEV field monitor stated that the assault had taken place due to a dispute between the policeman and the voter regarding the voter's identification document.

A serious incident of assault was reported at Polling Station No. 48, B/Orubediwewa Central College, Mahiyangana Polling Division, Badulla District. At around 11.00 am, about 20 supporters of UPFA candidate Anura Ravindra Widanagamage (Preferential No. 6) had gone in a motorcade to D. M. Muthubanda's (UNP Representative of Rideemaliyadda Pradeshiya Sabha) residence, and assaulted Mr. Muthubanda and his wife. Muthubanda was rushed to Mahiyangana Hospital and has received attention for his injuries in Ward No. 8 under police protection. Muthubanda has complained to the Mahiyangana Police Station. OIC Illangakoone confirmed that the incident had been reported to them. This incident was reported to CMEV by the Secretary to Luxman Seneviratne, UNP M.P, Badulla District. When CMEV contacted Anura Widanagamage regarding the incident, he denied his involvement.

Campaigning during polling hours

Leaflets of UPFA candidates S. H. Somapala (Preferential Candidate No. 11) and Sujeeva Jayasinghe, Attorney-at-Law (Preferential Candidate No. 21) were distributed in front of the Polling station No. 28, B/Yelverton Estate Tamil School, Hali-Ela Polling Division, Badulla District, at around 11.20 am. According CMEV field monitor E. J. P. Chandrakumari and six others were alleged to be responsible for distributing leaflets. The group was twice advised by the police to move away. The Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) was threatened by Chandrakumari, who was the UPFA polling agent this morning at the above Polling Station.

SLMC candidate A. S. Mohamed Sawaheer (Preferential Candidate No. 2) had come to Polling Station No. 48, B/Guruthalawa St. Thomas Vidyalaya, Welimada Polling Division, Badulla District, at around 10.30, in the vehicle No. 51-9305 decorated with his posters and talked to some of his supporters in front of the polling station. A CMEV field monitor had reported that this lasted for approximately half an hour.

Advertisements depicting ballot papers in favour of the UPFA candidate Hema Rathnayaka (preferential No. 24) were thrown in front of the polling station No. 35, B/Soragune Maha Vidyalaya, Haputale Polling Division, Badulla District, at around 10.20 a.m. according to CMEV field monitors.

Leaflets of UNP candidate Harin Fernando (Preferential Candidate No. 23) had been thrown in front of the entrance of the polling station No.28, B/Yelverton Estate Tamil School, Hali-Ela Polling Division, Badulla District, at around 11.40am. The CMEV field monitor, who was a witness to the incident, reported that the vehicle number could not be identified.

A group of supporters of the UPFA candidate Shashiendra Rajapaksa (Preferential No. 13) at Polling Station No. 74, Attamulla Junior School Polling Station, Moneragala Polling Division, Moneragala District, at around 12.25pm, were stamping the betel leaf symbol and Preferential

No. 13 on the palms of the voters arriving at the Attamulla Junior School Polling Station according to CMEV monitor present at the time.

An incident of campaigning was reported by CMEV field monitors at Polling station No.60, Madugalla Maha Vidyalaya Polling Centre, Moneragala Polling Division, Moneragala District, at around 2.40pm, where the road near the main entrance of the polling station was marked with the JVP party symbol (bell) and the Preferential No. of UPFA Candidate Arachchige Wijitha Berugoda (Preferential Candidate No. 04).

Voter Transportation

At Polling Station No. 05, Kahagalla Tamil School, Haputale Polling Division, Badulla District, at around 10.30am, supporters of the UPFA candidate M. K. Vishvanathan (Preferential Candidate No. 17) had transported voters to the polling station in Jeep numbers LC-6260 and KI-7867. At this time, the above candidate had been inside the polling station reports a CMEV mobile monitor present at the time.

A CMEV mobile monitor reported an incident of voter transportation at Polling station No. 01, B/Haputale Tamil Central College (Hall No. 1), Haputale Polling Division, Badulla District, at around 11.00am. The supporters of the UPFA candidate M. K. Vishvanathan (Preferential Candidate No. 17) had transported voters to the polling station in the Van No. 62-1936.

A white van bearing the number HF 4952 and pasted with posters of the UPFA candidate Shashiendra Rajapaksa (Preferential No. 13) according to a CMEV field monitor had transported voters into Polling Station No.07, Kandaudapanguwa Maha Vidyalaya Polling Center, Moneragala Polling Division, Moneragala district, at around 12.25pm.

CMEV election monitors reported that at 11am a "Special Service" bus transporting voters to the polling station had the Preferential No. 22 (Party name unknown) depicted on the side of the vehicle near the Jaffna MC J/Colombuthurai Hindu Maha Vidyalaya - Hall No. 1 (Polling Station No. 22).

CMEV Monitors Refused Entry in to Polling Stations

At around 14.40pm, the CMEV mobile monitors were not allowed to go into the Polling Station for their monitoring activities by the SPO. A CMEV field monitor reported that at Polling station No. 58, Dikkendayaya Primary School, Mahiyangana Polling Division, Badulla District, the SPO disregarded the presentation of the Election Commissioner's letter and refused entry to the CMEV monitors.

At Polling Station No. 43, Abayapura Kanishta Vidyalaya, Mahiyangana Polling Division, Badulla District, at around 3.25 pm, a CMEV field monitor reported that the CMEV mobile monitor was denied entry to the polling station for monitoring activities by the SPO. The monitor was removed from the Polling Station and his identification papers were disregarded.

At around 2.30pm, the Presiding Officer of the Polling Station refused entry to the CMEV field monitor despite producing the permission letter provided by the Election Commissioner. A CMEV field monitor reported that the incident occurred at Polling station No.93, Rathabala-

Aragama Junior School Hambegamuwa Polling Station, Wellawaya Polling Division, Moneragala District.

At Polling station No.81, Moneragala polling division, Moneragala district, at around 12.00 noon, the Presiding Officer of the Polling Station refused entry to the CMEV mobile monitor to conduct monitoring activities despite producing the permission letter provided by the Election Commissioner. The incident was reported by a CMEV field monitor at the Nishshanka Central College, Badalkumbura (Hall No.1) Polling Station.

Voter Identification

An incident regarding identification for voters was reported by the CMEV station monitor, at around 10:30am, at Polling station No. 21, B/ Sri Rathanapala Kanishta Vidyalaya, Badulla Polling Division, Badulla District. Five to six voters who presented a valid Driving License as identification were denied their vote. Additionally, the G. N of that division has not issued any temporary Identity Cards to those who have a Driving License. Furthermore, the SPO claimed that the Driving License was not mentioned in the list of valid identification documents in his possession, even though it has been recognized as such by the Election Commissioner.

A further incident of voter identification was reported by a CMEV field monitor at Polling station No.26, Okkampitiya Maha Vidyalaya (Hall No.1) Polling Centre, Wellawaya Polling Division, at around 3.30pm, Moneragala district. 19 voters were prevented from casting their ballot for failing to produce valid identification.

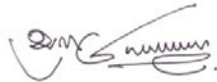
Polling Station No. 50, B/Wewelhinna Vidyalaya, Hali-Ela Polling Division, Badulla District, at around 3.03 pm when about 60 people from the near-by estate came to the polling station with their estate Identity cards. These individuals were not allowed to vote by the SPO and their polling cards were collected by the SPO. This incident was reported to the CMEV field monitor who reported that the polling cards were destroyed by the SPO.

CMEV mobile monitor reported that 50-60 voters who attempted to vote at Jaffna MC Navanthurai St. Nicholas C.C. (Polling Station No. 41) 03.45pm with receipts for their ID card applications protested in front of the polling station. None of them were allowed to vote.

CMEV was formed in 1997 by the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), the Free Media Movement (FMM) and the Coalition against Political Violence as an independent and nonpartisan organization to monitor the incidence of election related violence. Currently, CMEV is made up of CPA, FMM and INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre



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