

# CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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தேர்தல் வன்முறைகளைக் கண்காணிப்பதற்கான நிலையம்

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**Presidential Election - 2010**

**Media Communiqué No. 13**

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**1700Hrs**

CMEV has received information of a shooting at the UNP party office near the Minnas Private Hospital, Madurankuliya, Puttalam District at approximately 3.50pm. According to the spokesperson of the Puttalam Base hospital Mr. Saman Kumara of Thonigala, Anamaduwa has died as a result of his injuries, while 4 other persons were also admitted to the hospital. 3 of these persons were transferred to the Kurunegala Hospital. The party affiliations of the victims as well as the shooters remain unknown at the moment.

## **Sabaragamuwa Province**

### **Assault with Firearm by Minister in Rathnapura**

At approximately 9.00am this morning, 2 UNP supporters Mr. Michael and Mr. Devanada of Balangoda Wikiliyawatte were assaulted, allegedly by Minister of Textile Development Mahinda Rathnathilaka and his security staff who bore firearms. According to Mr. Devananda, Minister Rathnathilaka assaulted him and threatened to kill them if they paste posters for the UNP.

According to Mr. Devananda a UPFA party office was opened in Depalamulla Junction at 9.00am this morning, and the inauguration was attended by Minister Rathnathilaka. Subsequent to the inauguration Minister Rathnathilaka had also visited Wikiliyawatte, where he had witnessed that several posters of President Rajapakse had been destroyed and replaced by those of General Fonseka, at which point the Minister had shouted out loud that no UPFA posters should be

ripped off in the future. At this point Mr. Devananda's brother Mr. Michael had questioned the Minister saying they too should have the right to engage in political activities. Upon hearing the argument, Mr. Devananda who was in the vicinity had also arrived on the scene wanting to know what happened. At this point, the security officers of the Minister had placed a gun at the neck of Mr. Devananda and Minister Rathnathilaka had struck Mr. Devananda on both ears and on his back, saying you'll are Tamils and UNP supporters and you won't vote for us.

When contacted, OIC U.G. Senevirathne of the Balangoda Police told CMEV that an incident has taken place and that a mobile team was sent to the location. However he stated that he did not know who was responsible for the assault at the time. IP Jayathilake of the Elections Branch had also been sent to the location. A complaint has been lodged bearing the number EIB 90/27 with regards to this incident. He added that Minister Rathnathilaka had arrived at the Police station and that the two parties had resolved the issue.

When contacted, Mr. Rathnathilake told CMEV that he did visit Wikiliyawatte, and that he saw that a few UPFA posters had been ripped. He stated that he merely shouted at them loudly asking them not to rip posters in the future, but that he did not assault either of the complainants.

Member of the Balangoda Pradeshiya Sabha Mr. Vijaya Kumar who was also with Minister at the time of the incident, told CMEV that no assault took place and that the Minister merely shouted out loud at the UPFA posters being ripped.

### **Misuse of State Resources in Ratnapura**

CMEV has received a copy of a letter sent to Grama Niladhari Officers of the Balangoda and Imbulpe AG Divisions on a Ministry letterhead, by Minister of Textile Development Mahinda Rathnathilaka. The letter invites Grama Niladhari Officers to participate in a special meeting called for the purpose of ensuring a very special victory for the incumbent President Mahinda Rajapaksa, that was due to be held at 2.00pm this afternoon at the Balangoda Urban Council Auditorium.

The CMEV monitor visited the location and learned that the meeting had been cancelled due to low participation. When contacted, the Divisional Secretary for Balangoda Mr. Gunarathne Edirisinghe told the CMEV monitor that he had instructed the Grama Niladhari Officers not to participate in the meeting as it was unlawful.

CMEV attempted several times to reach Minister Rathnathilaka but he did not pick up the phone.

### **Assault in Kegalle**

At 8.30pm on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, an NDF supporter Mr. A.G.K.K. Seneviratne was assaulted, allegedly by Chairman of the Deraniyagala Pradeshiya Sabha Mr. Anil Champika Wijesinghe (UPFA), who struck Mr. Senevirathne below his right eye using his pistol. According to Mr. Senevirathne, 4 other persons were with the Chairman, though he did not recognize any of them.

Mr. Senevirathne told CMEV that he will not be lodging a complaint as he fears that Chairman Wijesinghe would come after him if he did. He also felt that the Police were influenced by those in power and therefore would not take any action in this regard.

A WPC of the Deranigala Police confirmed to CMEV that no complaint has been lodged regarding such an incident.

When contacted, Chairman Wijesinghe told CMEV that he does not know Mr. Senevirathne, nor of such an incident, and that he does not possess a pistol. Chairman Wijesinghe then hung up the phone.

### **Eastern Province**

#### **Misuse of State Resources - Ampara**

According to the CMEV monitor, over 100 busses from depots in several parts of the island have been used to transport supporters to a rally of the incumbent President Mahinda Rajapaksa held in Thirukkivil on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January.

When contacted, Manager of the CTB Kalmunai Depot Mr. MC Subaideen, and OIC of the Sammanthurai Depot Mr. Abdul Raheem, confirmed to CMEV that busses bearing the below stated numbers were used to transport supporters to the rally. When questioned as to whether money was paid for the rental of the busses, Mr. Subaideen asked CMEV to speak with the Regional Manager in this regard.

CTB Regional Manager for the Eastern Province Mr. Nazeer when contacted told CMEV that he was unable to provide the requested information today, but that he would be able to do so on Monday.

CMEV has learned from an individual of the Batticaloa CTB who wishes to remain unnamed, that the order to release the busses had come from the UPFA Organizer for Thirukkivil Mr. Iniyabharathi.

When contacted, Mr. Iniyabharathi told CMEV that the buses were used for the said purpose, but that they were paid for and hired from the Depots. He also denied the fact that over a 100 busses were used. When told that CMEV is in possession of the numbers of 46 busses, he continued to insist that that many busses were not used.

While there had been a lot more busses at the rally location, the CMEV monitor was able to make note of the following numbers.

Samanthurai Depot - NA 4163, 63-2825, 63-3183, NA 2580  
Kalmunai Depot - 63-3618, 63-2466, 63-0496  
Avisawella Depot - NA-5102, NA-3081, NA-3072, NA-5104  
Welisara Depot - NA-3117, NA-4656, NA-4659  
Pottuvil Depot - NA-5076  
Ampara Depot - NA-2570  
Rathnapura Depot - NA-4338  
Mathugama Depot - NA-1121  
Trincomalee Depot - NA-3291  
Horana Depot - NA-3652, NA-6985  
Akkaraipattu Depot - NA-1340  
Moratuwa Depot - 61-1449  
Kaluthara Depot - NA-4730, 63-2346  
Balangoda Depot - NA-6990, NA-3242  
Muttur Depot - NA-5099  
Ambalangoda Depot - NA-4817, NA-2665  
Panadura Depot - NA-2801, NA-4664  
Godakawela Depot - 61-7256, NA-4032

### **Hurt in Akkaraipattu**

According to National Congress Organizer for Akkaraipattu Mr. S.I. Amanullah, at 10.15 this morning, UPFA supporter (National Congress) Mr. A.L. Ubaith was assaulted allegedly by SLMC supporters, resulting in injuries to Mr. Ubaith's head and body. Mr. Ubaith is currently unconscious and is receiving treatment in ward no 5 of the Akkaraipattu Base Hospital according to the CMEV monitor. Though CMEV contacted the Akkaraipattu Hospital in an attempt to obtain information regarding Mr. Ubaith's condition, we were told by the reception to check back later. On a second attempt to reach the hospital the CMEV call was cut off abruptly.

According to Mr. Amanullah, a clash occurred between UPFA supporters, and SLMC supporters who were pasting posters in the Akkaraipattu town, during which Mr. Ubaith sustained injuries.

When contacted, an Officer of the Akkaraipattu Police told CMEV that such an incident had taken place, but that no complaint had been lodged regarding it. Subsequently CMEV spoke to OIC IP Dissanayake of the Akkaraipattu Police, who told CMEV that this was not a politically motivated incident. While the CMEV monitor was visiting Mr. Ubaith in hospital, a Police team was in the process of investigating the matter, and the number RIB 173/172 was obtained from the Police team with regards to the incident.

When contacted the SLMC Organizer for Akkaraipattu Mr. L.M. Uvais told CMEV that a clash did take place as had been reported, but stated that he did not know exactly who was involved in the assault.

## **Southern Province**

### **8 party offices attacked in Galle**

Between 1.00am and 3.30am this morning, 6 UNP and 2 JVP party offices were attacked by unidentified persons. The said UNP offices are located in Paanwelgoda, Thalgahawatte, Athkandura, Mahagoda, Madakumbura, Mahaedanda (UNP Main Office, Karandeniya), and the JVP offices are in Uragasmanhandiya and Kekiriya Kopikade. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> reported attack on the offices located in Madakumbura (UNP), Uragasmanhandiya (JVP) and Kekiriya Kopikade (JVP).

According to Mr. Jayantha Jayaweera, an official at the Mahaedanda office, no witnesses to the above attacks were identified. The windows and door of the Mahaedanda office have been damaged, while posters and cut outs in all offices have been destroyed. He further stated that the Police had received an anonymous call regarding the attacks in progress and had visited the locations. The following complaints have been lodged regarding the above attacks. Paanwelgoda - no complaint yet, Thalgahawatte - no complaint, Athkandura - EIB 7/2010, Mahagoda - no complaint, Madakumbura - EIB 8/2010, Mahaedanda - EIB 40/22, Uragasmanhandiya - EIB 118/49, Kekiriya Kopikade - EIB 6/2010.

### **242 Ballot Papers misplaced in Matara**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, a bundle of 242 ballot papers was misplaced by postman Mr. Opita Vithana Pathiranage Susantha in Kahagala, Kamburupitiya. According to Mr. Susantha he was distributing ballot papers within the Kahagala area when he discovered that the bundle was missing.

Upon return that evening he had informed Senior Assistant of the Post Office Mr. Sunil Diddugoda of the loss of the ballot papers. Upon being instructed to return to the location and search for them, Mr. Susantha had spent the whole of the 12<sup>th</sup> searching for the bundle along the route he took on the 11<sup>th</sup>. As the bundle was not located, a Police complaint had been lodged in this regard. The Elections Commissioner has also been informed in this regard.

When contacted, Postmaster Mahinda Dissanayake told CMEV that according to their procedure, Mr. Susantha had signed the relevant documentation confirming the receipt of the bundle, a copy of which is with Mr. Susantha. He further stated that no new ballot papers will be issued to those whose ballots were lost in the bundle according to the Matara District Elections Secretariat. He added that a list of names of those whose cards were lost will be sent to the SPOs of the area so as to enable them to vote. They have also been instructed to personally inform those whose ballot was misplaced regarding the new procedure. He added that list containing the information of the lost ballots will also be sent to the SPOs in order to identify and arrest anyone who attempts to use a missing ballot paper on Election Day.

SI Premadasa of the Elections Branch of the Kamburupitiya Police told CMEV that an investigation is underway regarding the incident. The Police have also informed the Elections Commissioner.

When contacted, Elections Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake told CMEV that complaints have been received regarding the incident and that an investigation has been launched into the matter.

## **North Western Province**

### **Threat and Intimidation in Puttalam**

According to eyewitness to the incident Mr. Rohitha Peiris (UNP supporter), last night, at 11.45pm, a group of 4 UPFA supporters who arrived on 2 motorbikes fired a shot at a light bulb in the garden of the party office, left the location briefly, returned, and fired 3 further shots in the air, and left the location. Several minutes later, a group of persons who arrived in 2 cars (1 person identified as Ravi by a neighbour Mr. M.D.P. Roshan) then tore up posters and destroyed cut outs in the office.

Earlier that evening, the Police have informed a neighbour that the above stated party office should be removed as instructed by the District Election Secretariat. As such, IP Indraratne of the Crimes Branch of the Chilaw Police station told

CMEV that the complaint against this incident will not be lodged in the Election Information Book, but in the Crimes Information Book.

## Central Province

### UNP supporter's home attacked in Kandy

According to UNP Coordinator for Navalapitiya Mr. Anura Perera, at 12.30am today, the home of UNP supporter Ms. Fathima Bawa located at Soysakele Road, was attacked by approximately 10 UPFA supporters (including Belgium Chaminda and Belgium Rimzy as identified by Ms. Bawa). The attackers had identified themselves as the Police in order to gain entry to the house. The attackers had searched the house for General Fonseka's posters, and upon not finding any, had proceeded to damage furniture as well as a computer that was in the house. Ms. Bawa had contacted the Police who had arrived at the scene on two separate occasions.

When contacted, PC Sunil of the Navalapitiya Police told CMEV that a complaint bearing the number CIB 307-141 has been lodged in relation to the incident. When asked why the incident was not recorded in the Election Information Book, PC Sunil told CMEV that the incident was not being considered election related as the house was not a party office.

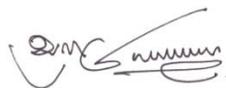
When contacted, the UPFA Coordinator for Navalapitiya Mr. Nandasoma told CMEV that he does not know the identified suspects, and that he believes that this incident was manufactured by the UNP in order to get publicity for General Fonseka's rally that is due to take place this afternoon.

**All CMEV reports and communiqués and the CMEV Incidents Google Map can be accessed online at <http://cmev.wordpress.com>**

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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