

# CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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## Presidential Election – 2010

### Media Communiqué No. 18

20<sup>th</sup> January 2010

All election monitoring organizations as well as other concerned civil society groups have voiced their grave concern over the escalation of election related violence, the misuse of state property and the flouting of the authority of the Election Commissioner. The latter is especially disturbing following the decision of the Commissioner to withdraw the Competent Authority he appointed in respect of state media institutions and the frustration he has repeatedly expressed over the consistent disregard of his directives.

CMEV reiterates these concerns and highlights the adverse impact electoral violence, abuse of state resources and violations of election laws have on the integrity of the electoral process. Given its mandate, CMEV is particularly concerned with the escalation of violence in the last week and the likelihood of more violence in the immediate lead up to polling day and on polling day. This follows a pattern set in previous elections in which the last week of the campaign records a spike in the incidence of violence, which could persist into polling day as well.

The nature and level of violence in this election can be gauged from the following profile and comparison with the last two presidential elections in 1999 and 2005.

In this election campaign, CMEV has on 19 January 2010 recorded a cumulative total of 667 incidents of election related violence of which 294 incidents or 44% have been categorized as Major. In the 1999 Presidential Election campaign the percentage figure for Major incidents was 48 and in the 2005 election the figure was 37%.

In this election so far 95 or 32% of the Major incidents have involved the use of firearms. The corresponding figures for the 1999 and 2005 elections are 31% and 20% respectively. It should be noted that the figure for this election is higher than that for the 1999 election, which was held in wartime.

This election has recorded 05 Murders, 78 incidents of Assault and 81 of Threat and Intimidation as of 20 January 2010. As a percentage of the total of Major Incidents this works out to 1%, 26% and 27% respectively.

In the 1999 election the percentage figure for Assaults was 41% of Major Incidents and in 2005 it was 45%. Corresponding figures for Murders and Threat and Intimidation in the 1999 and 2005 elections are 6% and 19% in 1999 and in 2005, 2% and 10% respectively.

The district wise profile of the 294 Major incidents recorded is as follows:

Hambantota- 27 or 9% of the total of Major incidents

Kurunegala district 25 or 8%

The Galle district follows closely behind with 19 incidents, Colombo and Anuradhapura districts come next with 18 incidents each.

In the 1999 election, district wise the total of 712 Major incidents broke down as follows:

Kurunegala - 97 or 13%

Colombo - 94 or 13%

Anuradhapura - 63 or 8%

District-wise corresponding figures for the 181 in 2005 are as follows:

Digamadulla - 24 or 13%

Gampaha -19 or 10%

Puttalam- 17 or 9%

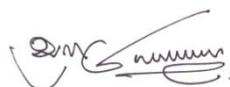
Given the rise in election violence in this, Sri Lanka's first post-war election, CMEV calls on all concerned, especially the two main candidates and their supporters to act immediately to ensure the integrity of the electoral process and the credibility of this election.

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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