

# CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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**Presidential Election - 2010**

**Media Communiqué No. 20**

**21<sup>st</sup> January 2010**

**Western Province**

## **Alleged Shooting in Gampaha District**

According to Western Provincial Councilor Mr. Kithsiri Manchanayake (UNP), at approximately 3.00am this morning, a group of unidentified persons who arrived in 5 or 6 vehicles, attacked the party office as well as home of UNP supporter Mr. Premadasa, located at Kalumada, Divulapitiya. According to Coordinating Secretary to Mr. Manchanayake Mr. Anura Jayantha, the attackers fired several shots in the air, at which point Mr. Premadasa's family had fled their home. The attackers had then damaged the doors, windows, furniture and electrical goods in Mr. Premadasa's house, and fled the location.

Divulapitiya Police OIC Mahinda Udugama told CMEV that the Police had visited the location and that damage had been caused to the house and furniture. He added that the party office was unlawful. When questioned regarding whether shots were fired, OIC Udugama told CMEV that they had received information that shots were fired, but that they found no bullet casings at the location. When questioned regarding the identities of the attackers, OIC Udugama stated that he felt that the complainants may be withholding information regarding the identities of the attackers out of fear. OIC Udugama refused to provide CMEV with the complaint number and also refused to confirm if the incident was lodged in the Elections Information Book or in the Crimes Information Book.

When contacted, Mr. Premadasa told CMEV that between 10.30pm and 11.00pm, a group of persons who arrived in vehicles had torn up cut outs and decorations of the party office. Mr. Premadasa had then gone to the Divulapitiya Police and lodged a complaint regarding this attack. A Police team including the OIC had arrived at the scene, examined the damages and obtained statements related to the incident.

Subsequently, between 11.00pm and 12.00 midnight, approximately 6 persons had arrived at Mr. Premadasa's house and threatened him, stating that they would kill Mr Premadasa and his family if they vote for General Fonseka. Mr. Premadasa had recognized one of the attackers as Mr. M. Siripala, the President of the UPFA Kalumada Sub Office. No complaint was made to the Police regarding this threat.

According to Mr. Premadasa, between 1.00am and 1.30am approximately 10 to 12 persons had arrived at his house in 5 to 6 vehicles, fired several shots in the air, and then fired 4 shots at the door of his house. Mr. Premadasa and his family were hiding at the time but had seen the incident take place. The attackers then proceeded to destroy furniture and electrical goods as initially reported.

While no bullet casings were found on the location, the CMEV monitor has confirmed, that there were clear indications of bullet holes on the walls and door of the house, despite the statement made by the OCI of the Divulapitiya Police that there was no evidence of a shooting.

## **Eastern Province**

### **A series of Threats and Intimidation in Trincomalee**

According to UNP Organizer for Trincomalee Mr. Sundaram Sivapalan, he and his associates had received a series of threats from UPFA (Karuna) supporters on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of January.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of January at approximately 4.00pm Mr. Sivakumaran and Mr. Paneerchelvam were pasting NDF posters at Kappatturai in the vicinity of the Hindu Kovil, when 3 unidentified persons who arrived at the scene carrying weapons, had pointed a gun at Mr. Sivakumaran's forehead and chest, and threatened that he should not work for NDF. The attackers had also given Mr. Sivakumaran approximately 150 posters of the incumbent President and asked him to paste those instead.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, at approximately 10.00am, a group of 7 unidentified persons had come to Mr. Sivapalan's house located at Inner Harbour Road, and asked in Sinhalese who Sundaram Sivapalan was. Mr. Sivapalan had said he did not know who Sundaram Sivapalan was, at which point the unidentified persons left the location.

Later that evening, at 7.00pm, 2 unidentified persons had arrived at Mr. Sivapalan's house, and taken photographs of the house. Mr. Sivapalan added that unidentified persons had arrived at his house looking for him and taken pictures of the house on previous occasions as well, but he could not remember details of date and time.

Mr. Sivapalan and Mr. Paneerchelvam told CMEV that they have not lodged Police complaints regarding the above incidents, as their homes and offices are all located down the same road, and they fear for their safety.

### **Unexploded Grenade found near UPFA bus in Trincomalee.**

According to Eastern Provincial Councilor and UPFA Organizer Ms. Ariyawathi Galappaththi, at 7.00am on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January at Nachchikudah, China Bay, an unexploded grenade was found on the ground near 1 of 4 busses that were brought for the purpose of transporting UPFA supporters to the President's rally that was due to take place in Kanthalai. The buses were brought there on the night of the 18<sup>th</sup>, and remained parked there till the following morning.

According to Ms. Galappaththi, the conductor of the bus had informed her of the grenade, at which point she called 119, and the grenade was removed from the location by the China Bay Police.

According to PC L.L.S. Wickramathunge of the China Bay Police, a complaint has been lodged regarding this incident, bearing the number EIB 34/25. He did not furnish any further information regarding the incident.

### **North Central Province**

#### **Arson in Anuradhapura**

According to UPFA supporter Mr. M.P. Sisira Kumara Jayasundara, at approximately 2.00am this morning, he had seen his book shop and communication centre on fire, when he looked outside upon hearing a loud explosion. Mr. Jayasundara also maintains a UPFA party office in the building adjoining the two buildings, which were burnt. As they stepped out of the house in order to investigate the situation, they had heard a vehicle leaving the location, but did not see it. Subsequently, Mr. Jayasundara told CMEV that an eye witness to the incident has been found, and that he states that a petrol bomb was lobbed at the building, resulting in the fire.

Mr. Jayasundara stated that he believes the attack to be politically motivated, adding that he suspects the attackers to be JVP supporters. He told CMEV that he had stated that he suspects the JVP during the lodging of his complaint (GCR 2/2010) to the Mihinithale Police. However, when contacted the Mihinithale Police told CMEV that the complainant did not state who they suspect of the attack, and that the Police could not therefore consider it politically motivated. The Officer refused to provide his name, and also added that there was no damage at all to the party office located in the adjoining building.

However, according to the CMEV monitor, the party office has suffered minor damages, and a board stating "results of Fonseka's good governing" is presently at the location of the arson. This board had not however been at the location in the morning.

Mr. Jayasundara told CMEV that he had recently changed from the UNP to the UPFA and that he had also been assaulted by 5 JVP supporters (Three-wheel Sarath, Bandara, Anura Bandara, Balasuriya and Damith) on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January (complaint number at Mihinthale Police EIB 3/2010) subsequent to the change.

When contacted, Mr. Prasanna Sudesh of the JVP Main Office in Anuradhapura told CMEV that they had heard of the incident, that they were not involved, but that the Police currently suspects their supporter Three-wheel Sarath of the attack. He added that Three-wheel Sarath was in Thambuththegama at the time of the incident.

## **Uva Province**

### **Arson in Monaragala**

According to UNP supporter Ms. Manel Jayasekera, at 1.00am this morning, her shop was burned by unknown persons. Ms. Jayasekera added that on the 20<sup>th</sup> January at approximately 10.00am, Samurdhi Officer for Buththala Medagama Ms. Indrani, Mr. Chandana, Mr. Sena and Mr. Jayantha had arrived at her shop, and attempted to paste a poster of President Rajapakse. Ms. Jayasekera had asked them not to, at which point Ms. Indrani and associates had scolded Ms. Jayasekera and left the location. Ms. Jayasekera therefore suspects that Ms. Indrani and associates may be responsible for the arson. The shop had been destroyed in the fire.

According to Buththala Police SI Dharmapala, a complaint has been lodged in this regard, bearing the number CIB 2/126/227. When questioned as to why the incident was lodged as a CIB as opposed to an EIB, SI Dharmadasa told CMEV that investigations are currently underway, and that they could not determine which book it belongs in until such investigation is complete.

CMEV attempted to get in touch with Ms. Indrani in order to obtain a statement, but was unable to do so. Upon being contacted, the Coordinator of the Buththala UPFA party office Mr. R.M. Sunil told CMEV that he had heard of the incident of arson and that their supporters had gone canvassing the previous morning, but denied that they were in any way involved in the arson.

### **Update to Murder in Matale**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, CMEV reported a Murder from the Matale District, in which the body of NDF supporter Mr. Lingeswaran of Warapitiya was found by the Kandy - Matale railroad in the Deiyaniwila area.

According to the Kandy Railway Station Officials, Mr. Lingeswaran's body was found on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of January at approximately 9.15pm, at an approximate distance of 100metres from the end of the platform, in a train yard area around which trains travel at low speed. The body was facing upwards, stuck beneath railway communication signal cables, with heavy bleeding from the back of the head, just above the neck, and pools of blood beneath his buttock and leg areas. The Officials added that based on their previous experience of witnessing train related

accidents over the last 25 years, based on the position and details of the how the body was found, it did not seem plausible that Mr. Lingeswaran was either struck by or fell off a train. They added that they had also not received any reports of an accident that night, which was not the norm. They stated that if an accident had occurred, the injured person or corpse is transported by the same train to the nearest station, and handed over via a report from a guard or the engine driver according to procedure. According to the Officials, the location that the body was found at cannot be reached by vehicle, but they added that if someone carried a body from the roadside, they could dump the body and return to the roadside in under 5 minutes. The Officials added that Mr. Lingeswaran held what appeared to be an election related leaflet in his hand, though they were unable to provide details.

The autopsy was concluded on the 20<sup>th</sup> morning by the Kandy JMO Dr. Senevirathne, who initially told CMEV on the 20<sup>th</sup> afternoon that Mr. Lingeswaran had died as a result of being hit by a train. When a CMEV monitor visited the JMO's office on the 21<sup>st</sup> in order to obtain further information, the JMO told him that the report will be submitted to courts and refused to provide any further information. The Chief Clerk at the JMO office told CMEV that as previously stated, the conclusion is that it was an accidental death.

When contacted based on a fax received from Leader of the Opposition Municipal Council Matale Mr. Daljith Aluvihare, UNP supporter Mr. A. Somasundaram and Matale Pradeshiya Sabha member Mr. Senaka Aluvihare told CMEV that they recalled seeing Mr. Lingeswaran between 8.30pm and 9.00pm on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January at the Matale Godapola bus stand, where which is where General Fonseka's rally was held.

Mr. Senaka Aluvihare told CMEV that General Fonseka arrived at 8.00pm, and at approximately 8.30pm Mr. Lingeswaran spoke to Mr. Aluvihare, informing him that he'll be stepping "outside" for a bit. He had seen Mr. Lingeswaran walking away from the bus stand, into a large crowd of people. He added that Deiyavila (where the body was located) was 28km from the rally location, and can be reached within ½ an hour.

When contacted, the Inspector of the Matale Depot Mr. Kulathilaka told CMEV that 60 busses worked on the route on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January and that public transport was not halted on the 15<sup>th</sup> as was stated in the fax by Mr. Daljith Aluvihare. He also confirmed that Deiyavila could be reached in approximately ½ an hour if a vehicle departed from the vicinity of the Godapola bus stand.

While the Duty Officer of the Kandy Police Crime Branch initially told CMEV on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January that Mr. Lingeswaran's body was found on the 18<sup>th</sup>, CMEV has now learned from the Kandy Railway Station Official who was on duty on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup>, that the body was discovered on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of January at approximately 9.15pm, at an approximate distance of 100metres from the end of the platform, in a train yard area, around which trains travel at low speed. The date and

time of discovery of the body was subsequently confirmed at 15<sup>th</sup> January at approximately 9.15pm, by a duty officer of the Kandy Police Crimes Branch.

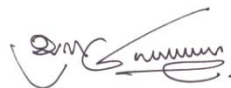
Pending further clarification CMEV will continue to record this as an election related Murder.

**All CMEV reports and communiques 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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