

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Presidential Election - 2010

Media Communiqué No. 21

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Western Province

Bomb Attack in Colombo

At approximately 4.50am this morning, an explosive device was thrown at the home of the Secretary and National Organizer of the SLFP Mahajana Wing Mr. Tiran Alles, located at Galpoththa Road, Nawala, resulting in severe damage to his vehicle and house. Mr. Alles and his family were unharmed.

According to the OIC Welikada Police CI Neville de Silva a complaint has been lodged in this regard bearing the number EIB/07/25. SSP Mirihana Division Deshabandu Tennekoon, the nature of the explosive has not yet been confirmed, and the forensic report is pending. It has therefore been identified as an explosive device. The Kotte Municipal Council Fire Brigade said that two fire engines were deployed to contain the fire.

When contacted, Mr. Alles told CMEV that at approximately 4.50 am, his Security Officer Mr. Nalaka Liyanage had heard the sound of a vehicle outside the gate and had seen something being thrown over the wall, subsequent to which there was a large explosion. Mr. Alles added that he suspects President Rajapaksa and Chairman of the JNP Mr. Wimal Weerawansa of being behind the attack.

This attack comes in the wake of statements to the media yesterday (21st) by Leader of the SLFP Mahajana Wing and Member of Parliament Mr. Mangala Samaraweera, alleging a plot by the Rajapaksa regime to assassinate Mr. Alles.

Southern Province

Attempted Murder and Assault in Matara

According to Southern Provincial Councilor Mr. Gayan Sanjeewa (UNP), at 1.45am the vehicle (64-209) in which Mr. Sanjeewa was traveling in, was shot at by a group of unidentified persons who arrived in 3 vehicles (white car, white van, black double cab), resulting in damages to the vehicle. The attackers had initially shot at the

vehicle from behind, while Mr. Sanjeewa was in the back seat, and subsequently shot twice at the rear right door of the vehicle. Mr. Sanjeewa told CMEV that he firmly believed that it was an attack on his life, but Mr. Sanjeewa was not injured in the incident.

However, as Mr. Sanjeewa's vehicle sped forward in order to escape the attack the assailants had subsequently assaulted a supporter Mr. Muditha Gayashan who was not traveling in a vehicle, resulting in Mr. Gayashan suffering bruising. Mr. Gayashan is currently receiving treatment in ward 3 of the Matara Hospital. Mr. Sanjeewa and his supporters were in the process of decorating the road leading from Kamburugamuwa to Matara with campaign material when the attack took place.

When contacted, Official of the Elections Branch Matara Police SI Chaminda told CMEV that the vehicle had 3 bullet holes and the weapon used was a T-56. He added that as the attackers' vehicle numbers were not identified by the victims, the vehicles had not been traced as yet, but that investigations are underway. A complaint bearing the number EIB 388/83 has been lodged at the Matara Police by Mr. V.A. Lalith Anuruddha, Personal Secretary to Mr. Sanjeewa.

Mr. Anuruddha confirmed to CMEV that the initial shots were fired from the back of the vehicle targeting Mr. Sanjeewa. He added that he also heard the attackers yelling to each other to kill Mr. Sanjeewa. Mr. Anuruddha and Mr. Sanjeewa both told CMEV that they suspect the UPFA of the attack, though they did not name a specific person.

When contacted, a staff member of the UPFA Matara Office told CMEV that they had not heard of the incident, and that they were in no way involved. The staff member refused to provide his name or designation, and no longer picks up CMEV's calls.

Eastern Province

Grenade Attack in Batticaloa

According to SLMC supporter Mr. Buhari Mohommed Mubharak, at 3.00am this morning, a grenade was lobbed at the front of his home located at Chemmanodai, Ottamawadi, by unidentified persons, causing damage to walls and windows of the house. No one was injured in the attack. Mr. Mubharak added that neighbours had seen a motorbike leaving the vicinity of the premises. He added that he called 119 at 3.05am, the Army arrived on the scene at 3.20am and the Valachchenai Police arrived on the scene at approximately 3.40am. Mr. Mubharak also stated that while he had not seen the attackers, he suspected UPFA supporter Mr. Y.S. Mansoor may be involved as Mr. Manoor had on several occasion tried to get Mr. Mubharak to work for the UPFA.

When contacted, Elections OIC of the Valachchenai Police SI Bandara Balasuriya confirmed the grenade attack to CMEV, adding that the damages were not severe.

Valachchenai Police CI Kodisinghe told CMEV that a complaint has been lodged in this regard bearing the number EIB 98-109. CI Kodisinghe told CMEV that Mr. Mubharak seemed very afraid and did not initially name the suspects, but that he subsequently spoke of several threats from UPFA supporter Mr. Y.S. Mansoor. The complaint for the incident was initially recorded as a GCR, but moved later to the EIB.

North Central Province

Shooting in Anuradhapura

According to North Central Provincial Councilor (UNP) Mr. Prasanna Mahindaratne, at 1.05am this morning, a group of unidentified persons had arrived in a van, parked in front of Mr. Mahindaratne's house located in Kalundegama, broken the lights on the gate, and fired approximately 30 shots at his house. The majority of the shots had struck a canter (NCLD 4377) that was parked in front of the house, while approximately 4 shots had struck his house. One of these shots had entered a room through a lattice. No one was injured in the attack.

Mr. Mahindaratne called 119 right away, but the Police only arrived at the scene at approximately 2.30am. Mr. Mahindaratne stated that 3-4 soldiers from the Kalundegama Army Training Camp located in the vicinity of his house, had visited his home this morning, and that they had identified the weapon as being a T-56, based on the bullet casings and the one bullet that entered the house. He added that the soldiers had stated that this particular type of bullet was only used by the Police. Based on eyewitness description of the attackers by his Secretary Mr. Alexander, Mr. Mahindaratne suspects Mr. Ajith Kumara, Secretary to the Non Cabinet Minister of Petroleum Resources Mr. Duminda Dissanayake, and Mr. Shaman Pradeep, a UPFA supporter, are responsible for the attacks.

Mr. Mahindaratne added that he had not named the suspects in his complaint to the Police, citing previous incidents of partiality. CMEV previously reported an incident on the 17th of January, in which the suspects named in this incident, allegedly attempted to assault and then threaten Mr. Mahindaratne with a fire arm, while in the premises of the Thambuththegama Police.

When contacted, the OIC Thambuththegama Police IP Thalwatte told CMEV that the Police visited the location twice, and that the weapon used has been confirmed as a T-56. He said that no attackers were identified in the complaint. He confirmed that Mr. Mahindaratne had requested Police protection citing death threats, but that they were unable to provide such protection without an order from the DIG. CMEV was asked to call back later to obtain information regarding the complaint.

Subsequently, when CMEV contacted the Thambuththegama Police as requested, an Officer who refused to provide his name also refused to provide the number of the complaint, or state whether the complaint was recorded in the Elections Information

Book or the Crimes Information Book, citing orders from above to not provide any info to anyone other than the Police Media Spokesperson.

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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