

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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தேர்தல் வன்முறைகளைக் கண்காணிப்பதற்கான நிலையம்

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Presidential Election - 2010

3rd Media Communiqué, 26th January 2010, 1030Hrs

CMEV received reports of multiple explosions in Nallur, Uduppidy, Manipay, Vaddukottai, Chavakachcheri and Tellipallai. CMEV's mobile teams were dispatched to a number of locations where the attacks had reportedly taken place. CMEV teams verified damages at the following locations.

1. A push bike parked overnight in front of the polling station, J/Chunnakam Roman Catholic Tamil Mixed School (Polling Station Nos 28) was damaged.
2. A tea shop has been damaged on Point Pedro Road, behind Nallur Temple, 500m of J/Nallur Station Church of Ceylon Tamil Mixed School (Hall No 1-3 Polling Stations 35-37).
3. A tree has been damaged in front of the Jaffna Municipal Council's Fire Brigade, Point Pedro Road within 500m of J/Nallur Station Church of Ceylon Tamil Mixed School (Hall No 1-3 Polling Stations Nos 35-37).
4. A shop Arasady Road in Nallur within 150m from J/Kandarmadam Saivapiragasa Vidyalayam (Polling Centre No 41).

CMEV spoke with eye witnesses who said that within an hour of the incident a white van passed by the location in Arasady Road and Point Pedro Road.

CMEV contacted the police station in Jaffna, which is investigating one of the attacks following a police complaint. CMEV also received reports of attacks on polling centres including J/Waddukodai Hindu College (Polling Centre No 21) but observed no damages. These incidents are in addition to the hand grenade attack on the residence of Subramaniam Sharma, SLFP Uduppidi Coordinator, in Valvattithurai at around 3.30 am today reported by CMEV earlier.

CMEV was informed that most internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps in Vavuniya and having a vote in other districts were still waiting to travel to their polling centres. CMEV was previously informed by Returning Officers of the areas that transport arrangements would be arranged and IDPs informed of the arrangements. At 11am CMEV was informed that only two busses with IDPs from Ramanathan camp in Vavuniya had left for Killinochchi and many others were waiting by the road outside the camp to be transported to their polling centres.

CMEV monitors report that as of 09:00 am, potential voters in zone 5, 6, 7 and 8 (1,098 registered voters) were still waiting for transport. CMEV raised this issue with Assistant Transportation Officer, Mrs Pathmaraanjini who reported that 48 buses had been deployed within the Vavuniya District and 30 buses to transport voters to areas including Killinochchi and Mullaitivu. Sixteen of the 30 buses had arrived as of 11.30 a.m and the 14 are reportedly on the way.

CMEV was further informed that many IDPs had turned up to vote in Manik Farm camps in Vavuniya though not all were in possession of the specified identity documents recognized by the Election Commissioner. As a result authorities had allowed temporary camp cards issued by the Police to be used as identity documents. Though this measure allows those displaced and affected by conflict to cast their vote, CMEV is concerned that the use of temporary camp cards alone can lead to possible abuse.

CMEV was also informed of a case of a released 'surrendee' from the PRI Technical College currently living in Point Pedro with a relative who is registered to vote at the College but who has not been notified of travel arrangements. The Assistant Election Commissioner Kugathanan informed CMEV that he has no information from the Government relating to the whereabouts of releases and returnees and therefore cannot inform them about transport arrangements.

CMEV is deeply concerned that the spate of violent incidents in Jaffna immediately before the commencement of polling and in the early hours of polling, indicate a systematic attempt to disrupt voting and ensure a low voter turnout in the peninsula. CMEV's concern is reinforced by the simple fact of this election being our first post war national election and the one in which the people of the north have an opportunity to demonstrate their faith in and commitment to democratic processes in Sri Lanka. This is especially regrettable given the imperatives of peace, reconciliation and national unity.

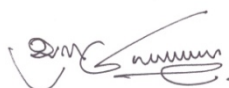
We call on election officials to ensure that the transport arrangements for IDPs are met. It is important that delays in transport arrangements do not affect voter turnout adversely.

All CMEV reports and communiqués and the CMEV Incidents Google Map can be accessed online at <http://cmev.wordpress.com>. Live hourly audio updates/ podcasts in English, Sinhala and Tamil can be downloaded at <http://drop.io/cmevelections>

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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