

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Presidential Election 2015

Media Communiqué No. 01

On 20th December 2014 at 02.00 hrs:

Brutal attack on Civilians in Batticaloa

CMEV received a complaint from Rev Ampitiye Sumanaratna Thero that a group of civilians protested that their voting rights should be ensured. They attempted to submit a petition to the President in this regard and allege that they were attacked by the Police at around 6.30 p.m. on the 19th December 2014 in front of the Batticaloa Police Station.

A group of Buddhist priests led by Rev Ampitiye Sumanaratna Thero and group of Sinhalese resettled in Keviliyamaduwa village in Batticaloa District had tried to meet President Mahinda Rajapaksha after the meeting held at Hindu College in Batticaloa on the 19th of December with the purpose of submitting a petition demanding their voting rights and a few other basic facilities. They have repeatedly requested permission to meet President Mahinda Rajapaksha. According to Rev Ampitiye Sumanaratne Thero, the request was rejected by the Police. When they tried to reach the location of the meeting, irrespective of Police permission to do so, they were attacked brutally. One of the members of the group had been stripped naked and a few others have been attacked by the Police. Four members including a pregnant women have been admitted to the Teaching Hospital in Batticaloa, according to the report made by Sumanaratne Thero to CMEV.

Ven Sumanaratna Thero said to CMEV that they are not in a position to make any complaint at any Police Station as the perpetrators are Police officers themselves. He further said that they are very helpless at this time and do not know what to do next.

When CMEV contacted C.I. Hettiarachchi, OIC of the Batticaloa Police Station, he categorically denied the allegation made by Ven Ampitiya Sumanrathana Thero. He said that the police did not attack anyone and that the people behaved in a disruptive manner.

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 non-partisan organisation to monitor the incidence of election related violence. Currently, CMEV is made up of CPA and INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'P' followed by a horizontal line and a small mark resembling 'HR'.

Dr. P. Saravanamuttu
Co - Convener