

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Presidential Election 2015

Postal Voting Communiqué 03

24th December 2014 Colombo, Sri Lanka- Second day of the postal voting continued today with a few incidents reported. At present 61 incidents have been reported with 27 Major Incidents and 34 Minor Incidents. Major Incidents include assault, threat and intimidation, misuse of state resources, incidents related to election officers and the intimidating presence of party activists and supporters. Minor Incidents relate to election offences.

The day commenced with a clash at Sirikotha, headquarters of the United National Party (UNP). CMEV was informed that a group of about 1000 persons had protested in front of Sirikotha at about 10.45 in the morning, demanding information on the alleged secret pact between the Common Opposition Candidate Maithripala Sirisena and UNP leader Ranil Wickramasinghe. At the time of the protest, around 1500 people were at Sirikotha attending a workshop for teachers.

CMEV was informed by Mr. Ivan Silva, Assistant to Mr. Rajiv Senavirathne who is the Chief of Operation Room at Sirikotha, that the protest was organised by the National Freedom Front and backed by its leader Wimal Weerawansa. According to Mr. Silva, persons suspected with ties to the NFF namely Mr. Jeewantha Jayathissa, Mr Mahinda Samarathunga, Mr. D.M. Senavirathene, Mr. Anura Atapattu, Dr. Wasantha Bandara, and the husband of UPFA Pradeshiya Sabha Member, Mrs. Priyanka Kothalawala were present during this protest. It was reported by an eye -witness that the above mentioned persons arrived at the scene in vehicle number GI8272.

CMEV was informed by Mr.Prasad Manju, Media Secretary to Mr. Weerawansa that the protest was organised by Dr. Wasantha Bandara representing the Jathika Sanwidana Ekamuthwa.

The Anti-riot Squad and officers from Mirihana Police Station were brought in to disperse the gathering and control the crowd. The fight between the two groups had resulted in damage to property including a Buddha statue located in the premises. According to Dr. Bandara about seven or eight persons were taken to Colombo South Teaching Hospital in Kalubowila.

Several other incidents were reported on the 2nd day of postal voting-

24th December, Mullaitivu Regiment, Civil Security Department Vishwamadu, Mullaitivu District

A CMEV monitor reported that people were unaware as to how to vote and had given their ballot papers to Mr. A. Sundaramurthy, ARO (Assistant Returning Officer) to vote on their behalf. CMEV monitor observed the ARO casting three votes during this period. Lt Colonel J.P Ganegoda is the certifying officer who was present during this period. CMEV monitor reported that 477 had already cast their vote with 931 names being in the list. CMEV monitor further reported a general lack of awareness among voters in the area.

24th December, Sri Lanka Army Camp, Puthukuduirrupu, Mullaitivu District

CMEV monitor reported a discrepancy in the list of voters in the centre where 254 persons had registered to vote. A list with 367 names was with Mr. P.D.L.D. Alwis, Second Commanding Officer, the certifying officer.

24th December, Anamaduwa, Puttalam District

CMEV was informed that two newly opened election offices of the UNP in Adigama and Palama Serukale were attacked around 9.30pm yesterday (23rd December). The CMEV monitor observed the destruction of election material, furniture and offices. Mr. Range Bandara, MP informed CMEV that the office was opened last morning and that the attack was carried out by group of supporters of United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) North Western Provincial Councilor Mr Sanath Nishantha.

24th December, Kollannawa Umagiliya Playground, Colombo District

A stage and meeting area that were in the process of being prepared for a rally of the Common Opposition Candidate Maithripala Sirisena was attacked by a group of people at 12 40 a.m. on the 24th. CMEV was informed that around 8-10 persons were preparing the stage and surrounding area for a meeting that was to be held on the following morning (24th). There had also been more people around the playground and on the roads leading to it. Two jeeps and one van displaying posters of President Mahinda Rajapaksa had arrived and parked next to a jeep belonging to the Wellampitiya Police Station. One armed individual had got down from one of the vehicles and shot about 17 rounds from the firearm in the direction of the stage and its roof. Sub Inspector of the Wellampitiya Police Station Mr. Tennakoon and nine other police officers along with the group of people who were preparing the stage had to run for cover.

The Manager of Y FM, Mr Sajith Nandana Rathnayake, who was at the location described the vehicles as one white van plated J.G. 7783 and two jeeps with unmarked red plates and tinted windows. He also noted that the vehicles had soon thereafter fled the scene towards Dematagoda. Mr Prasanna Solangaarachchi, Kotikawatta–Mulleriyawa Pradeshiya Sabha Chairmani informed CMEV that the police officers at the location did not do anything to stop the incident.

CMEV is informed that further investigations are being carried out by the Chief Inspector Amarabandu of the Wellampitiya Police Station.

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.

All CMEV reports and communiqués can be accessed online at www.cmev.org



Dr. P. Saravanamuttu

Co – Convener