

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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தேர்தல் வன்முறைகளைக் கண்காணிப்பதற்கான நிலையம்

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Election Day Communiqué 1

Polling for the Presidential Election 2015 commenced at 7am. One incident of an explosion was reported during this period from Point Pedro, Jaffna. CMEV was informed that the explosion was caused due to a hand grenade with no injuries reported.

CMEV received a report of voters being prevented from voting as more than 200 of them living in Nagavillu and Huseniya, Puttalam whose polling stations are in Mannar, are unable to travel there as the buses are blocked by Puttalam Urban Council Chairman, Mr K.A. Baiz and his supporters. From last night, Baiz and his supporters threatened the CTB and private bus drivers and prevented them from going to these villages.

CMEV is concerned that voters are being prevented from exercising their franchise and urge the authorities to take immediate action. CMEV has raised the issue with the Commissioner of Elections, Mahinda Deshapriya urging immediate action. He informed CMEV that he is aware of the situation.

CMEV received a number of incidents where attempts have been made to intimidate of voters. Between 7.30 – 8.30am UPFA supporters at Arafa Primary School, Polling Station 5, Weligama, Matara attempted to force voters to support President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

CMEV also notes several areas where there was no privacy in the voting booths in the polling centers and where voting is visible to persons in the polling station and outside. Areas where this has been reported included Matara (Polling centres 40-41), Pottuvil (Polling centre 64) and Mullaitivu areas (Polling centre 77).

CMEV is continuing to receive reports of campaigning on Election Day despite it being forbidden under electoral law. Some of the reports received include unsolicited SMS messages being circulated and distribution of campaign material in and around polling stations. CMEV received a number of such complaints all against the UPFA including:

- A mass SMS message circulated in Sinhala from the number +94766887347 urging recipients to vote for the betel leaf. CMEV attempted to contact the user of the phone, however no one responded.
- A mass SMS message in Tamil calling for a boycott of the election from the number +778313850. CMEV also received reports of SMS messages in Tamil calling for a rejection of candidate Maithripala Sirisena sent via numbers +775478817 and +770217836.
- Canvassing for the UPFA candidate around the Deraniyagala Kanishta Vidyalaya polling station 23, Deraniyagala, Kegalle at around 8.00 am.
- UPFA leaflets were distributed near the Allepola Maha Vidyalaya polling station 10 in Balangoda, Ratnapura at 7:05 am.
- An unknown party distributed leaflets instructing voters to cast their vote for the betel leaf (UPFA) on the road leading to the Ahaliyagoda polling station 40, Ratnapura at 8:30 am.
- A small group of people had arrived in a three-wheeler (NW AH 3788) at the Bogawalana polling station, No 36, Dambadeniya, Puttalam and distributed printed cards in support of the UPFA.
- About 100 meters away from the Weuda Kanishta Vidhyalaya, No 04 polling station, Kurunegala, group of persons have distributed UPFA cards with the betel symbol.
- From around 7am onwards fake ballot papers marked in favour of President Rajapakse were handed out to voters within 500 meters of the polling station Number 75, Al- Hamra Muslim Maha Vidyalayam, Irakkakandy, Trincomalee. Similar reports were received near Soranathota Primary School (Polling Center No. 14), in the Viyaluwa electorate in the Badulla district.

8th January – voters transported by a private bus to polling stations

CMEV was informed at 8.05 a.m. that ten persons comprising of United People’s Freedom Alliance (UPFA) supporters and civil defense forces picked up voters along the route to Kiribbanwewa Vidyalaya (Polling Center No. 87), Mullaitivu. They were picked up by a private bus bearing the license plate number HT6173.

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.

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



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