

# CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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தேர்தல் வன்முறைகளைக் கண்காணிப்பதற்கான நிலையம்

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## Presidential Election 2015

### Media Communiqué 12

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 2.00 am:

CMEV is seriously concerned about an assault on two election officers allegedly by supporters of Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Susantha Punchinilame in Trincomalee around 6.30pm on 4 January. The incident occurred in front of the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) party office in Mattakkalli Junction, Trincomalee.

When the CMEV monitor inquired from the Deputy Election Commissioner in the area, Sajith Welgama, he informed CMEV that he was on his way from Mahadivulwewa after shutting down an unauthorised UPFA party office. He had ordered his colleagues to remove all types of election material such as cut outs and posters of President Rajapaksa which were put up inside the Morawewa Buddhist Temple premises. When he arrived at the UPFA party office in Mattakkalli, there was a movie in favour of Mahinda Rajapaksa being shown to the public in front of that office. Subsequently he had requested that the movie not be displayed outside the office and to display it inside the office. It was at this time when the supporters of Deputy Minister Punchinilame assaulted two election officers who had accompanied Mr. Welgama. There was also a power cut when this attack had taken place.

When CMEV contacted the Election Commissioner's office in Trincomalee regarding this incident, they refused to give further details as the investigations were ongoing but confirmed that the incident was true. CMEV had a similar response from the Trincomalee Police Station.

Meanwhile, the CMEV monitor who was at the Trincomalee Police Station soon after the assault informed that the two suspects who were arrested by the Trincomalee Police Station in connection with the assault were released after Deputy Minister Punchinilame arrived at the Police Station.

CMEV is alarmed that supporters of politicians feel they can assault public officials carrying out their official tasks in connection with the forthcoming Presidential election and be released without due process being followed. CMEV urges the authorities including the Police to take all necessary steps within their purview to prevent violence and hold perpetrators of violence to account. CMEV also urges candidates and political parties to ensure that their supporters and offices operate within the framework provided for elections.

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](http://www.cmev.org)**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Saravanamuttu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. P. Saravanamuttu  
Co – Convener