

# CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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## Presidential Election 2015

### Media Communiqué 13

6<sup>th</sup> January 2015

The Presidential Election campaign ended at midnight with several major incidents reported. At the end of campaigning, CMEV documented a total of 420 incidents, with 237 major incidents and 183 minor incidents. The highest number of major incidents were reported from Jaffna District with 22 incidents followed from Badulla District with 19 incidents, 18 incidents from Kurunegala District and 17 incidents from Kandy District. CMEV noted 26 incidents of fire arm use during this period and 3 separate incidents where petrol bombs were used with two resulting in threat and intimidation of residents. CMEV also noted 132 instances of misuse of state resources for electioneering.

The final day of campaigning commenced with a shooting incident which left one UNP supporter critically injured. There were also incidents of threats and intimidation reported including the intimidation of two human rights defenders in Negombo. The last day of campaigning also witnessed a clash between UPFA and UNP supporters resulting in 3 persons being hospitalised state resources being used by the UPFA for electioneering, and reports of false ballot papers being circulated in parts of Sri Lanka, an issue raised by CMEV with the Commissioner of Elections.

Several court orders were issued today to arrest perpetrators of violence and to halt programmes which are biased towards one candidate. CMEV welcomes these court orders and urges the authorities to implement these without delay. It is paramount that officials take all necessary steps to ensure that election laws are respected and the integrity of the electoral

process upheld. Furthermore, CMEV raised in communiqué 12 the assault of two election officials in Trincomalee by UPFA supporters and the subsequent role played by a Deputy Minister to release the perpetrators. Such actions must be condemned and authorities must take all steps to uphold law and order and hold perpetrators to account.

### **5<sup>th</sup> January – UPFA campaign organiser Mr. Arumugam Chandrakumar knifed in Kopai, Jaffna**

CMEV received a complaint that UPFA Organiser Mr. Arumugam Chandrakumar (38 yrs) was knifed by two unknown individuals near the Navalar School in Kopai. Mr. Chandrakumar received knife wounds in the back and arm at approximately 9.20 pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January. According to the OIC of Kopai Police, Mr. I.P. Jayakodi, he was taken immediately to Kopai Hospital and subsequently transferred to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital at 10.05 pm for surgery. Hospital staff stated that they will not comment on Mr. Chandrakumar's status until the surgery is completed. The CMEV Field Monitor is currently on location obtaining further details.

### **5<sup>th</sup> January, three injured in shooting in Kahawatta Ratnapura**

CMEV received a complaint regarding a shooting that took place in Kahawatta, Ratnapura at about 2 am in the morning on January 5<sup>th</sup>. United National Party (UNP) supporters, preparing the grounds for a meeting to be addressed by the Common Presidential Candidate Maithripala Sirisena, were shot at by an unidentified group of people. According to Police OIC L.P.K. Rajamanthri, the three injured persons, D.I.W. Karunadasa Ranasinghe, H. Hussain Dulshan and Shantha Dodangoda received treatment at the Ratnapura Hospital. CMEV was informed that investigations are underway. Ratnapura Hospital Police officials confirmed that Shantha Dodangoda is critically injured (injuries to his chest) and is currently receiving treatment in the Intensive Care Unit. A police complaint was made by Mr. T.M. Upali, a UNP Pradeshiya Sabha member.

The Pelmadulla Magistrates Court issued an arrest warrant for Deputy Minister of Power & Energy, Premalal Jayasekera, Minister Nilantha Jayakodi and Pradeshiya Sabha Chairman Vajira Dharshana de Silva.

### **5<sup>th</sup> January, Misleading fake ballot papers distributed in several Districts**

CMEV received information regarding the distribution of false and misleading ballot papers (a photo of this ballot paper is attached) depicting erroneous symbols for the Common Presidential Candidate Maithripala Sirisena and the United Socialist Party Candidate Sirithunga Jayasuriya within the Puttalam (Madurankulama and Arachchikattuwa), Kandy (Kundasale and Kandy Town), Batticaloa (Kalkuda) Anuradhapura (Kekirawa, Kalawewa, Anuradhapura West

and Horowupothana), Badulla (Haputale), NuwaraEliya (Hatton), Monaragala (Bibile) and Trincomalee Districts. The fake ballot paper depicts a trishaw for Maithripala Sirisena (as opposed to the correct symbol of a swan) and an elephant for Sirithunga Jayasuriya (as opposed to the correct symbol of a trishaw), while the symbols of the remaining candidates including the incumbent president remained error free.

CMEV, via its field monitor, has obtained a copy of the said misleading ballot paper at 1.30pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January from the 96<sup>th</sup> Junction area in Thissapura, Muttur, Trincomalee District, allegedly distributed by supporters of UPFA Thambalagamuwa Pradeshiya Sabha Chairman ChampikaBandara. The CMEV Eastern Province Coordinator subsequently reported the incident to IP Seneviratne, OIC of the Thambalagamuwa Police Station who directed two police officers to the location. A complaint on the incident, bearing the number EIB 71/08 was also subsequently filed by the CMEV monitor.

In Aarachchikattuwa, Halawatha, the said fake ballot papers were distributed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January. According to North Western UNP Provincial Councillor Sisira Kumara, the ballots were allegedly distributed by Minister Neomal Perera's supporter Jude and ten others. They were also distributed at a public street drama performed by UPFA supporters.

CMEV is concerned by these incidents, which are a violation of election laws and are likely to confuse the public during the last few days leading up to polling day. CMEV has also raised the issue with the Commissioner of Elections urging immediate remedial action to ensure that the integrity of the election is not undermined by such actions.

CMEV also welcomes information received of an arrest made in the Hatton area (alleged perpetrator DS Princes, van number 56-4918 as per the Hatton police station) in relation to this unlawful distribution. It commenced on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2014 and has been halted in the Bibile area upon the intervention of the Commissioner of Elections.

### **5<sup>th</sup> January – Clash between supporters of UNP and UPFA at Rambukkana, Kegalle**

CMEV received a report regarding a clash between supporters of the UNP and UPFA in front of the Rambukkana Train Station. Three persons supporting the UNP were injured as a result of this clash and admitted to the Rambukkana Hospital. Head injuries were sustained by Mr. Priyantha Pradeep and Mr. Sandun Udaya, while Mr. Chanaka Ruwan suffered a neck injury. All three patients were subsequently transferred to the Kegalle Hospital. CMEV was informed by the OIC Kegalle Police, Mr. Bandara Dekandawela and the hospital staff, that none of the injured are in critical condition.

## **4<sup>th</sup> January, Human Rights activist Brito Fernando and Prasanga Fernando intimidated in Negombo**

CMEV received a complaint with regard to an incident which took place in Periyamulla, Negombo on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January. Human rights activist Mr. Brito Fernando along with his family returning home from an outing on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January discovered a plastic bag in which a severed head of a dog was hung on his gate. Fellow Right to Life staff member Prasanga Fernando also reported that he was subjected to the same treatment at his home.

CMEV was informed by the police of a complaint filed at the Negombo police number CIB 2/33 on January 5<sup>th</sup>. The victims believe that the possible reasons for the intimidation could be related to the commemoration of the disappeared, which was organised and carried out by the Right to Life organisation on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2014. Subsequent to this ceremony, posters with the faces of Right to Life staff members and other human rights activists were found all around the city of Negombo. The posters were captioned *“Makara Raakshayo Athurudahan Wuwan Vikunagena Kai.”* A police complaint was lodged at the Seeduwa Police related to this. Later that day the house of Brito Fernando was stoned. According to the two victims, the group responsible for this latest incident is also responsible for the posters and the stoning of their houses, which are attempts to intimidate them.

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)**



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