



CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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February 28, 2023

Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Statement on the Reported Death During the Local Government Elections 2023

CMEV expresses its grave concern about the first death reported yesterday in connection with the Local Government Elections 2023. This death follows from the undemocratic and repressive actions of the Sri Lanka Police to prevent a protest rally organised by the National People's Power (NPP). Nimal Amarasiri, a NPP candidate for the Nivithigala Pradeshiya Sabha, died from injuries sustained due to Police-directed water cannon and tear gas assaults at the protest rally in Colombo, on February 26, 2023.

The NPP rally was held to protest the indefinite postponement of Local Government Elections announced by the Election Commission in the face of continuous obstructions to holding elections from the President and Government. The rally was held in defiance of a Court Order against it. The Police directed heavy water cannon and tear gas assaults at the large crowd, leading to 28 people being hospitalised and two being admitted to the Intensive Care Unit. One of these persons was Mr. Amarasiri, who passed away yesterday.

CMEV deplors the oppressive efforts by the Government led by the President to violate the people's right to vote. In particular, CMEV condemns the Government's use of the Police to obstruct people's democratic rights and act in an extremely repressive manner. CMEV reminds the Government and all public officials that they are duty-bound to protect the people's fundamental right to vote. As such, the Sri Lanka Police and all relevant public authorities should comply fully with the inquiry initiated by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka at a minimum, and refrain from preventing, obstructing and/or inflicting violence on any future democratic protests.

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