



CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Statement on Disruptions to the Local Government Elections 2023

CMEV expresses its deep concern about the indefinite postponement of the postal voting for the Local Government Election 2023. It has been reported that this is due to the Government Printer's refusal to submit the printed postal voting ballot papers on time to the Election Commission.

CMEV learnt that the Government Printer sent a letter to the Election Commission yesterday, February 13, 2023, informing it that it is unable to process the printing of ballot papers until the full cost for the printing is made by the Commission. This was in line with the President's recent direction on January 31, 2023, to heads of government authorities to not purchase services on a credit basis.

CMEV believes that the disruption of the postal voting could impact holding the Local Government Election 2023 as scheduled on March 9, 2023. The Government's actions have created immense uncertainty for voters regarding the Local Government Election, and this is a direct violation of the right to vote that is guaranteed for all citizens under the Constitution of Sri Lanka. CMEV highlights it is the responsibility of the Executive to create an enabling environment for conducting the Local Government Elections, as per the Constitution.

The conduct of the Government Printer is specifically a violation of Article 104B(2) of the Constitution which states that it is the duty of all authorities of the State to co-operate with the Election Commission to enforce all laws relating to holding elections. Refusal or failure to carry out this duty is a criminal offence under Article 104GG of the Constitution. CMEV specifically urges the Election Commission to exercise its powers under this Article to take action against the Government Printer and any other public authority disrupting the election process.

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