

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Jaffna MC & Vavuniya UC Elections-2009

Media Communique-03

07th August, Colombo, Sri Lanka Since the close of nominations on 24 June 2009, the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) has confirmed 08 incidents of election related violence with regards to the elections to the Jaffna Municipal Council and Vavuniya Urban Council.

Of these incidents, 03 assaults and 02 threats had been reported from Jaffna MC while 01 assault, 01 incident of intimidation and 01 threat have been recorded from Vavuniya UC. The UPFA alliance was directly accused of being responsible for 06 incidents whereas the TULF and the DPLF were each accused of one incident each.

Jaffna Municipal Council

TNA parliamentarian, Gajendran Ponnambalam reported to CMEV that anonymous threatening telephone calls were made to Tamils living abroad to the effect that their relatives who reside in Jaffna should not vote on the 8th.

CMEV received reports that approximately 3,000 polling cards were seized from voters in Navalthurai area. TULF mayoral candidate Ananda Sangari told CMEV that he had received similar information and was making further inquiries. He also alleged that EPDP supporters had procured polling cards for cash from voters.

CMEV contacted the Assistant Election Commissioner's office Jaffna, Chief Clerk N.B. Navaratnam, reported to CMEV that according to the records they received from the Jaffna Post Office 40,390 polling cards remain undelivered as of 06th August at 12.30pm. The ballots cards can be collected by voters up to 3 pm on polling day.

UNP Parliamentarian Dr. Jayalath Jayawardana reported to CMEV that the Jaffna Chief Post Master, A.Yoganayagam told him that 3,774 polling cards have been distributed on the 07th to people who were able to prove their identity. He suspected that some irregularities could have happened in the distribution. ITAK authorized polling agent, S.X. Kulanayagam alleged that 5,000 polling cards had been stolen from the Jaffna Post office by an unknown group. CMEV was unable to verify these allegations with the Jaffna Post Master. Kulanayagam claimed that ITAK had received

information that the UPFA was preparing forged documents for electoral malpractice and that they had brought special equipment to Jaffna for this purpose from Colombo.

CMEV contacted UPFA mayoral candidate, K. Theventhiram who rejected the allegations and claimed that EPDP party leader, Minister Douglas Devananda has strictly instructed candidates and members not to get involved in any violence or malpractices but to ensure a free and fair election, which reflected the peoples' verdict. He further noted that the UPFA has not got involved in any violence during the election campaign.

CMEV field monitors reported that campaign posters have not been removed. Instead tar has been applied on the symbol and the preferential numbers. Displaying posters in spaces apart from approved political party offices and candidates home is an election offence according to the section 81B of Local Authorities Elections Ordinance of no 53 of 1946

Vavuniya

Continuing campaigning activities are reported from the field. TNA Parliamentarian Shivashakthi Anandan told CMEV that supporters of Minister Rishad Badiudeen are continuing their campaigning for the UPFA in the Pandarikulam area. M.P Anandan also claimed that UPFA (Sri TELO) candidate, P.Udayarasa (candidate no 09) conducted a meeting in Srinagar area at around 06.00pm today (7th August).

CMEV field monitors report that campaigning activities still continues in Pattanichchoori area by ACMC (constituent party of UPFA) and SLMC supporters targeting the Muslim voters

CMEV received reports that posters and banners have been removed by the Vavuniya Police and some of the posters had been tarred in the town areas. It is reported that Vavuniya Police urged the public through loud speakers in the evening hours not to commit violence.

100,417 voters from Jaffna Municipal Council and 24,626 voters from Vavuniya Urban Council will poll on 8th August. 68 Polling stations have been set up for Jaffna MC and 18 for Vavuniya UC apart from 16 cluster booths for Jaffna MC. CMEV will deploy 46 stationary monitors and four mobile teams to monitor the Jaffna MC and Vavuniya UC Elections.

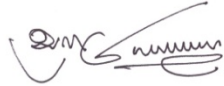
Taking into account all the allegations, CMEV is of the view that the huge difference between the actual number of voters and registered voters and the absence of voters' NIC numbers on the polling cards/electoral register would increase the possibility for

the malpractices. CMEV calls up on all the political parties and the authorities to ensure the integrity of the polls

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 nonpartisan organization to monitor the incidence of election related violence. Currently, CMEV is made up of CPA, FMM and INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre



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