

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Jaffna MC & Vavuniya UC Elections-2009

Media Communique-02

06th August, Colombo Sri Lanka Incidents of election malpractices related to the Jaffna MC and Vavuniya UC Elections continue to be reported. As of 06th August, CMEV has recorded 08 incidents of election related violence.

Jaffna Municipal Council Election Campaign

Puttalam: On 04th August at 02.00pm a meeting was held in Ibnu Bathutha Memorial Hall (IBM), Puttalam to distribute dry ration cards to IDPs. The CMEV field monitor reported that four UPFA candidates addressed the meeting namely Ajmain Asfer (candidate no 01), M.M. Ramees (candidate no 19), M.M. Musthafa (candidate no 21) and Asker Roomi Badurdeen (candidate no 04).

Mayoral Candidate of Independent Group 01, Moulavi S. Suffiyan told CMEV that dry ration cards are usually distributed through the Grama Niladharis and that this meeting was organized by the ruling alliance to influence voters in their favour. He also told CMEV that A. Risad Badhiutheen, Minister of Re-settlement and Disaster Relief Services was supposed to attend the meeting

S.R.M.M. Irshad, Parliamentary Secretary to the minister, told CMEV that the meeting was arranged by the Secretariat for Northern Displaced Muslims (SNDM) and neither the candidates nor the minister attended the meeting and instead alleged that a few candidates of Ind. Group no 01 had distributed propaganda leaflets at the entrance.

On 04th August at around 8.45pm a group of supporters of Independent Group No.01 were assaulted by a group of APMC (UPFA) supporters while they were engaging in canvassing in the Good Shed road, Puttalam. Ind. group candidate, M.B. Nawas Deen (candidate no 18) had made a complaint (CIB 02/35/21) to Puutalam Police station on this account. The assault resulted in damage to a three wheeler (WP HN 6702) and the estimated loss is Rs.20, 000/=, according to the candidate.

Ariyalai: On 01st of August at around 12.00pm UPFA candidate, Mr A.M. Mangalanesan (candidate no 03) was assaulted by a group of TULF supporters at his

residence located at, Ariyalai, Jaffna. He was admitted to ward no 29 of the Jaffna General Hospital and discharged after treatment.

A complaint (EIB/03/2009) had been lodged with Jaffna Police Station. SI Thialakasiri told to CMEV that 03 TULF candidates and 06 supporters were arrested by the Police on 01st August and bailed out on 03rd August.

Forged Applications

During the lead up to the Jaffna MC Elections there have been allegations of attempts to vote illegally. It has been alleged that a number of displaced voter applications have been forged. A number of applications had been forwarded to the Election Commissioner prior to the 30th June deadline set by the Election Commission for displaced voters with forged details.

While these applications had the signatures of GSs W.P.M. Servier, GS for Ratmalyaya division, C. Roshan, GS for Palavi and N.M. Rasmy, GS for Thillayadi, they were apparently forged. The Assistant Election Commissioner A.O.M. Nafeel, told CMEV that though the applications had initially been accepted, the Election Commission had subsequently found out that the details used in the applications were false and after the inspection a number of such applications were identified and polling cards were not sent to these applicants. He stated that as a result the Election Commission had removed 488 names from the electoral register and informed the S.P.Os in this regard

A total of 41,747 polling cards remain undelivered in the Jaffna Post office as the recipients do not reside at the addresses on the cards. The Returning Officer, Jaffna has informed the voters that they could collect their polling cards from the Post Office until 3.00pm of 8th August (polling day). CMEV identified in its field visit report that there are a large number of voters in Jaffna who do not reside in the peninsula and is deeply concerned that this could lead to electoral malpractices.

CMEV learnt that some 2, 622 people from the Jaffna camps and 130 people from camps in Vavuniya were resettled yesterday. A large release ceremony was held at Durraipah Stadium, Jaffna attended by parliamentarian and senior advisor to the President, Basil Rajapaksa on 05th August at 02.00pm CMEV notes that the releases have a bearing on the elections and calls on the Government to uphold the rights of the IDPs without exploiting their situation for possible political gain.

Vavuniya Urban Council Elections

On 03rd August at around 5.15pm TNA (ITAK) candidates, A. Nagarasa (candidate no 02) and M.M. Rathan, (candidate no 14) were threatened and prevented from campaigning in Kurumankaadu area by a group of EROS (UPFA) supporters in two Dolphin Vans. The group was led by EROS leader, R. Prabakaran (Praba) and EROS

Organizer, Northern Province, Sarawanabhawanathan Jeganathan (Dhusyanthan). A TNA (ITAK), supporter had been also assaulted in the incident. A. Nagarasa made a complaint (EIB/30/08) to Vavuniya Police on the same date.

TNA parliamentarian, Sivashakthi Anandan alleged to CMEV that their campaign activities are systematically obstructed by the ruling party alliance and DPLF (PLOTE), and that they had not been allowed to campaign in many areas including Kurumankadu, Thirunavatkulam, Rambakulam, Kovilkulam and Velikulam.

CMEV contacted EROS leader R. Prabakaran, who stated that he did not obstruct TNA supporters but asked them not to paste posters on the wall of the residence of Sarawanabhawanathan Jeganathan

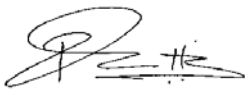
When CMEV contacted Vavuniya Police, K.J. Ratnapala, PC stated that further investigations are going on in this regard.

Two polling stations of Vavuniya UC gazetted on June 30th namely V/Saivapragasa Ladies College (Polling Centre No 08) and V/Thandikulam Pramandu Vidyalaya, Hall No 01 (Polling Centre No 18) have been replaced by the Conference Hall of Agriculture Department, Vavuniya and Agriculture School, Thandikulam respectively, as the Commissioner is unable to conduct the polls in the previous stations because the stations are used for accommodating Vanni IDPs.

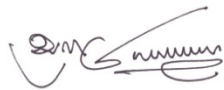
Assistant Election Commissioner, Vavuniya, A.S. Karunanidhi told CMEV that a gazette notification will be published soon and the concerned voters will be informed by loud speakers and print and electronic medias. He further stated that notices would be displayed in public places regarding this.

CMEV field reports reveal that although political parties have intensified their campaigning, voters seem relatively disinterested and continue to concentrate on their day to day activities.

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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