

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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தேர்தல் வன்முறைகளைக் கண்காணிப்பதற்கான நிலையம்

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Southern Provincial Council Election – 2009

Media Communiqué No. 02

October 02, 2009

2nd October, 2009 Colombo Sri Lanka CMEV is deeply concerned by the escalation of violence.

Violence Profile

As of 01st October, 2009 CMEV has confirmed 56 incidents of election related violence of which 15 has been categorized as Major. Incidents of threat and intimidation have risen to 06 while 02 incidents of arson have been confirmed by CMEV. 04 incidents of assaults and 01 grievous hurt have been reported to CMEV.

Incidents of violence are increasingly being reported from the Galle District. 10 out of 15 major incidents have been reported from the Galle District while most of the incidents (24) out of 56 have been recorded from the same district. 05 Major Incidents have been reported from Hiniduma Pollong Division; Hambantota and Matara districts have recorded 02 and 03 Major Incidents respectively. CMEV has recorded a total 21 incidents from Hambantota District and 11 from Matara District respectively.

The UPFA has been accused of perpetrating 12 Major Incidents out of confirmed total of 15 Major Incidents. In 03 Major Incidents, the perpetrators have not been identified.

The competition for preferential votes within the ruling party, the UPFA has further intensified in the lead up to the elections. Out of the 13 complaints made by UPFA, 10 complaints have been made against party members. CMEV has received 32 complaints from the JVP, 11 of which are against UPFA. CMEV has recorded a total of 24 incidents in which the perpetrators have not been identified.

Key Issues

Reports from CMEV field monitors confirm continuing breaches of election laws. Section 74 of the Provincial Councils Elections Act No. 2, 1988 empowers the Police to act regarding the display of handbills, posters, placards etc. in public places. Despite this

and the order of the president to remove illegal cut-outs displayed in public places, CMEV field monitors have reported that cut-outs are yet to be removed. According to CMEV monitors' reports, illegal cut-outs can be seen in the Polling Divisions of Galle, Hiniduma, Elpitiya and Hambantota.

CMEV contacted Mr. Jayantha Kulathilake, the DIG Southern range, in this regard and he informed that necessary actions have been taken by the police to remove illegal cut-outs. He further stated that as of October 1, 2009, the police have removed 80, 61, 39 and 60 cut-outs respectively from Matara, Galle, Elpitiya and Tangalle police divisions.

It was reported to CMEV that about 250-300 supporters of Mr. John Silva Edirisooriya (Candidate No. 11) of UPFA have been using a double cab vehicle bearing No. 57-5815 with loud speakers to distribute leaflets and hand bills in areas such as Medaketiya, Danketiya, Sea Road, Ennapitiya, Muslim village and around the Divisional Secretariat office in Tangalle electorate from 9.30 a.m. to 5.25 p.m. on 1st October 2009

It is alleged that UNP candidate Mr. Kapila Jayantha Wellapili (Candidate No. 03) was seen distributing cash and hoes as part of his election propaganda in Matara and Kamburupitiya. When CMEV contacted Mr. Kapila Jayantha Wellapili, he rejected the allegation and said that he had already received the people's support and it is not necessary to provide such incentives to increase his voter base.

CMEV welcomes the current approach of the state agencies to implement the election related laws. It has been the experience of CMEV that the situation gets tense in the last phase of the campaign and therefore we urge the Election Commissioner and particularly the police to anticipate this situation and take precautions to put in place whatever special security measures are required in order to ensure a violence free campaign and election. CMEV's experience with multiple elections confirms that the areas of violence on Election Day tend to coincide with the areas which experienced election related violence during the campaign.

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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