

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Southern Provincial Council Election – 2009

Media Communiqué No. 03

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4th October, 2009 Colombo Sri Lanka : CMEV has confirmed 63 incidents of election related violence of which 17 have been categorized as Major and 46 as Minor. Incidents of violence are increasingly being reported from the Galle District. Eleven (11) out of 17 Major incidents have been reported from the Galle District while most of the incidents -28 out of 63 have been recorded from the same district. CMEV has recorded a total 22 incidents from the Hambatota District and 13 from the Matara District respectively.

Intra Party Violence - UPFA

It is alleged that a group of supporters of Mr. Sajin de Vas Goonawardana (Candidate No. 25), a UPFA candidate for the Galle district have assaulted a group of supporters of Mr. Nishantha Muthuhettigamge (Candidate No. 20), another UPFA candidate in the same district on 2nd October 2009 in Ahangama police division in the Galle district. A complaint has been lodged with Ahangama police (EIB/76/11) by Mr. T. Himal Kumara, stating that the alleged perpetrators - the supporters of Mr. Sajin de Vas Goonawardana- had assaulted them with swords, wooden batons and that Mr. Daya Hemantha, a supporter of Mr. Nishantha Muthuhettigamge, had allegedly been kidnapped and robbed of Rs. 1700/-.

A CMEV monitor visited Karapitiya general hospital on 3rd October 2009 and reported that two victims of the incident Mr. D.H. Kumara and P.M.L. Senevirathne had been admitted for treatment. CMEV contacted the OIC of Ahangama police and was informed that no suspects have been arrested so far and that further investigations were underway.

03 JVP supporters assaulted in Deniyaya

On 03rd October, 2009 at around 01.00 a.m., 03 supporters of JVP candidate Mr. Priyantha Rajapakshe (Candidate No. 19), namely Ranjith Nishantha, Jinadasa, L.K. Dayananda, were assaulted by a group of supporters of UPFA candidate, Mr. Sarath Weerawansa (Candidate No. 05). Jinadasa sustained injuries to his head while Ranjith Nishantha's leg was injured in the attack. They were admitted to the Morawaka District Hospital.

When CMEV contacted Priyantha Rajapakshe, he stated that the supporters were attacked while pasting posters in Morawaka town for the JVP meeting scheduled on the 05th of this month at the Sanath Jayasooriya Stadium. He alleged that the supporters were assaulted by the groups of supporters of UPFA candidates, Mr. Weerawansa and Chandima Rasaputhra (Candidate No. 12), who came in four vehicles. He further stated that the perpetrators had threatened them by showing a pistol and that Mr. Weerawansa was seen inside the car when the incident occurred.

CMEV contacted Mr. Weerawansa. He stated that they were obstructed and a side mirror of his car (64-8027) was damaged by a group of JVP supporters when they were returning after a meeting. He further mentioned that a clash occurred between the two groups of supporters and that he instructed his supporters to leave the place soon in order to calm the situation. However two of their vehicles were taken into custody by the Pitabedda Police, acting on a message from the Morawaka Police. Their vehicles were given back to them after two hours.

Mr. Prabath Deshapriya, OIC Morawaka Police stated that a compliant had been lodged (EIB 01/2009) by Ranjith Nishatha on 03rd October at around 03.00 a.m. and that a counter complaint has also been made to the Pitabedda Police by UPFA candidate, Mr. Sarath Weerawansa in this regard. He further stated, that investigations are being carried out by the Morawaka Police and that the vehicles taken into custody were released on Police bail by the Pitabedda Police.

CMEV notes that as Polling Day approaches, both inter and intra party clashes have increased thereby creating a context of political violence in all three districts of the Southern Province. Therefore, CMEV calls on the leaders of the political parties, the Election Commissioner and the Police to take immediate and effective steps to halt the violence perpetrated by various candidates and supporters, which are clear threats to the integrity of the electoral process and democracy in Sri Lanka.

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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