

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Southern Provincial Council Election – 2009

Media Communiqué No. 04

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5th October, 2009 Colombo Sri Lanka: According to the reports received by CMEV from its monitors in the field, a total of 64 incidents of election related violence have been reported from the Southern province. Out of the total 64 incidents, 18 have been categorized as Major and 46 as Minor. Eleven (11) out of 18 major incidents have been reported from the Galle District while most of the incidents - 28 out of 64 have been recorded from the same district. CMEV has recorded total incidents of 22 and 14 respectively from the Hambatota and Matara districts.

Lost Interest in voting – Deniyaya electorate, Matara

CMEV monitors report a possible boycott of the forthcoming election by the voters of Ridiyagala Village in the Deniyaya Electorate due to the loss of credibility of politicians regardless of party affiliation. The CMEV field monitor reported that voters of Ridiyagala village had decided to remove all party offices in an expression of their disappointment over the unfulfilled promises given by the politicians to reconstruct the road leading to their village.

Villagers decided not to support any political party until the construction work begins. The Grama Niladari of the village informed CMEV that there are 407 families and 1088 voters in this village.

According to the information CMEV received from the field on 04th October officials have taken measures to speed up the reconstruction work on the road. The CMEV field monitor reported that stones and other raw materials were dumped along the road and reportedly a meeting was held in the village temple to explain to the villagers the reconstruction works and an engineer from the Provincial Council and few other officers participated in the meeting.

The above situation clearly reflects the disappointment of sections of the community with politicians and points to a democratic deficit which will if not addressed, have serious repercussions for representative democracy in the country.

Attack on UNP Parliamentarians in Deniyaya, Matara

October 04, 2009 at around 11.00 a.m. it was reported to CMEV that a group of UNP parliamentarians and supporters were assaulted allegedly by a group of UPFA supporters led by Dilan Perera, Minister of Ports, at the Bevaraliya Estate in the Deniyaya Electorate.

UNP Parliamentarian, Sagala Ratnayaka, informed CMEV that the Secretary of UNP, Tissa Attanayake and Parliamentarians Ravi Karunanayke, Palitha Ranga Bandara and Lakshman Kiriella along with a group of their supporters have been obstructed by Thusitha Ranawaka, while they were going to inspect a road constructed under Maganeguma for an individual, following the information given by the voters of Enasal Watta & Beveareliya Estate. He further stated that a lorry was parked across the road to obstruct their visit and they were not allowed to go ahead and when they tried to withdraw from the place, that a group of UPFA supporters led by Dilan Perera assaulted the UNP supporters and journalists, damaging their vehicles as well.

CMEV contacted Tissa Attanayake who said that a police complaint in this regard was not made in Deniyaya or Matara and that he expected to lodge a complaint at the Police Headquarters in Colombo. He further stated that UPFA organizer of the Deniyaya Electorate, Wijaya Dahanayake, intervened assisted in easing tensions and helped them to leave.

When contacted, Minister Dilan Perera categorically denied the allegations and further informed CMEV that they had been invited for a tea party at Thusitha Ranawaka's resident. He said that since the UNP convoy of vehicles was obstructing them, he had asked his security to remove their vehicles. He said that his security personnel helped the UNP supporters to move their vehicles. He further stated that neither he nor his supporters were involved in any violent activities.

CMEV notes that as the campaign moves to a conclusion tensions will increase and urges the political parties, Election Commissioner and the Police to be vigilant and to take the necessary action to ensure that the people of the province will be able to exercise their franchise without hindrance.

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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