

# CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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## Presidential Election – 2010

### Statement on Election Day

27<sup>th</sup> January 2010

On 26<sup>th</sup> January, Election Day, CMEV deployed 3,790 monitors in mobile teams and in polling stations throughout the island.

On Election Day, CMEV recorded a total of 178 incidents of which 94 have been categorised as Major. The highest number of Major incidents – 26 cases of Intimidators' Presence in the vicinity of polling stations- was recorded in the Kandy District. Eight (08) of the 94 Major Incidents involved the use of firearms. The Kurunegala District, which recorded the highest number of Major incidents during the campaign (36), recorded 04 incidents of violence in this category on Election Day, illustrating a feature noted in other elections of a high incidence of campaign violence not being replicated on the day of the election.

In comparison with the violence recorded on Election Day in the 1999 and 2005 Presidential Elections, Election Day of the 2010 Presidential Election was considerably less violent. In 1999 there were 816 Major Incidents and in 2005, 242.

The Interim Report released by CMEV contains its observations on the election campaign. In it we noted our concern about the challenges to the electoral process highlighted in the election campaign which ranged from the flouting of the authority of the Election Commissioner to the abuse of state resources to problems with voter identity documentation and voting arrangements for IDPs as well as the high incidence of violence in this our first post war, peace time election in decades. Accordingly we reiterated our call for the implementation of the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, in particular the establishment of independent commissions for the Police, public service and Elections, it provides for. We made the point that the Seventeenth Amendment does not constitute a panacea and that it is not a sufficient measure to ensure the integrity of the electoral process, but rather a pivotally necessary one.

The concerns raised in our Interim Report remain. We wish to highlight three issues in addition to the incidence of violence recorded on Election Day. The first relates to

the demonstrably unsatisfactory transport arrangements for IDP voting, which resulted in the effective disenfranchisement of a number of IDPs. In a Media Communiqué on Election Day, CMEV highlighted the case of 300 IDPs who on account of delays in transport were unable to vote after having waited hours for that transport. CMEV learns that they were left stranded thereafter and that there were other IDPs who were placed in a similar predicament.

The second issue relates to the series of explosions in Jaffna that occurred before polling commenced and immediately thereafter. CMEV believes that these acts of violence were perpetrated to reduce the voter turnout in the peninsula and calls on the agencies of law and order to bring the perpetrators of this violence to justice. Such violence in particular compounds the challenges of peace, reconciliation and national unity. Likewise, the effective disenfranchisement of the IDPs. The free and fullest participation of the people of the north in the democratic process of the country is to be welcomed, not impeded and undermined.

The final issue CMEV wishes to highlight is especially critical and relates to the concerns raised by party agents and members of the public about the integrity of the count. CMEV shares these concerns and has received complaints alleging that party agents were both assaulted and chased from counting centres in a number of districts. Complaints to date have been received from the Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Matale Electoral Districts. On 27 January, CMEV wrote to the Commissioner regarding this, urging him to publicly acknowledge and address these concerns before the official announcement of the final result.

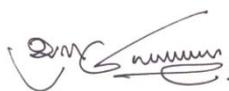
CMEV will issue a full report on both the campaign and Election Day once all field reports from its monitors have been compiled.

On the available evidence and information in its possession, CMEV believes that the problems in the electoral process identified above need to be urgently addressed. This is essential to ensure that the doubts and concerns expressed over the results of this election do not persist and undermine the integrity of our electoral process as well as the legitimacy of our governance.

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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