

CENTRE FOR MONITORING ELECTION VIOLENCE

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Southern Provincial Council Election – 2009

1900hrs: CMEV Final Report- Major Incident in the Southern Provincial Council Elections, 10th October 2009

At the close of polls, CMEV reports a provisional voter turnout of 63.66 %. A breakdown of the districts indicates 66% in Hambantota district, 68% in Matara district and 57% in Galle district. This is to be compared with the 2004 Southern Provincial Council Elections where the total turnout was 55.64% with a breakdown of 55.99% in Hambantota district, 54.43% in Matara district and 56.5% in Galle district.

Today, Polling Day, CMEV monitors reported 29 incidents in total with 8 major incidents and 21 minor incidents.

There were several incidents where CMEV monitors were not allowed to enter polling stations which are reported below. CMEV has lodged complaints about these incidents with the National Coordinating Centre of the Commissioner of Elections.

Whilst it remains the case that in this and other elections, incidents of election related violence increase as polling day approaches, CMEV notes certain similarities between the Southern and Uva province elections in particular. In both cases the total number of cases of election related violence was substantially lower than in other elections and on Election Day the same number of major incidents was recorded in both provinces. On Election Day, the number of incidents recorded in the Sabaragamuwa and North Central Provinces was 05 each respectively. In Uva and the South the corresponding figure is 08 each respectively. The figures for campaign violence in the former two cases, however, are 56 and 70 respectively. Both elections – Uva and Southern- took place after the military defeat of the LTTE – a factor which has had a clear bearing on the intensity of inter-party competition in the elections.

Table: 01 Breakdowns of Major Violence by PC Elections

Election	Number of Major incidents confirmed by CMEV during the Campaign	Number of Major incidents confirmed by CMEV on Election Day
Eastern PC	Did not monitor	72
North Central PC	61	05
Sabragamuwa PC	56	05
North Western PC	70	20
Central PC	46	30
Western PC	62	13
Uva PC	32	08
Southern PC	26	08

One trend noted by CMEV is the persistence of intra-party violence amongst UPFA candidates. In the Southern Election campaign there were 12 such incidents reported to CMEV. The cumulative figure for all the other provincial elections in this series except for the Eastern Province is 31. The figure in the Southern Provincial Council election is 12 – over twice the number. CMEV notes that this reflects on party discipline and the responsibility of the leadership to ensure that party candidates engage in violence free competition for preferences.

In terms of voter turn out however, there appears to be a marked difference between the Uva and Southern Provinces – with the former recording the highest turn out in this series of provincial elections and the latter, whilst not the lowest, lower than all others except the North Western Province.

Table: 02 Breakdowns of Voter turn out by PC Elections

Election	Total Polled (%)
Eastern PC Elections, May 2008	65.78%
North Central PC Elections, August 2008	67.75%
Sabragamuwa PC Elections, August 2008	68.37%
Central PC Elections, February 2009	66.84%
North Western PC Elections, February 2009	60.77%
Western PC Elections, April 2009	63.24%
Uva PC Elections, August 2009	70.03%

District of Matara- Major incidents

Polling station No 33, Walukarama Maha Viharaya Kottegoda polling station, Devinuwara polling division, Matara District. At around 7.39 am, Pradeep Sreemal of the JVP Media Unit reported that the JVP polling agent S. K. Ajith was not allowed inside the polling station by the SPO. A CMEV field monitor was a witness to the incident, which was confirmed by the JVP.

Polling station No. 41, Devagiri Viharaya- Puwakwatte polling station, Weligama Polling Division, Matara District. At around 8.10 am, a CMEV mobile monitor

reported that the CMEV mobile team was not allowed to enter the polling station by the Assistant Returning Officer (ARO), even though the monitors possessed the required documents.

Polling station No. 21, Kotapola Kanishta Vidyalaya polling station, Deniyaya Polling Division, Matara District. At around 9.00 am, a CMEV field monitor reported that although he was allowed inside the polling station by the Senior Presiding Officer (SPO), the ARO had not permitted him to collect information reports. ARO had stated that CMEV is not permitted to collect information from polling stations.

Polling Station No. 38, Akuressa Polling Division, Matara. At around 2:30pm, Sajith Srimal, Media Coordinator of JVP, reported that JVP supporter Dayanada Bassanayake was assaulted by two UPFA supporters named Raja and Janaka. The victim has been admitted to the Akuressa District Hospital. Sumith Hewage, a doctor at the hospital, when contacted by CMEV, stated that the victim had sustained minor injuries from the assault. The Police constable, Sarath (56062) stated that a complaint has been lodged by Morawaka Yapage Chandrika. Complaint reference; (CIB 2/19/46) was lodged with the Akuressa Police Station and according to the Police the incident was a private dispute.

District of Galle- Major incidents

Polling station No. 51, Benthara-Elpitiya Polling Division, G/Walgambagala Kanishta Vidyalaya polling station, Galle District. At around 9.15 am, a CMEV field monitor reported the distribution of hand bills of UPFA candidate Withanachchi Don Chamli Padmalal (Candidate No. 24) by a person who identified himself as a representative of the Grama Sevaka in the area. The incident occurred inside the G/Walgambagala Kanishta Vidyalaya polling station without objection from the Senior Presiding Officer (SPO). A group of 60-80 people had distributed hand bills of the said candidate outside the same polling station while another of his supporters had compiled a list of voters outside the polling station.

Polling station No. 8, Galle Polling Division, Galle district, around 9.30am, a CMEV field monitor reported that a group of 5 supporters of UPFA candidate Randima Preemal Gamage (Candidate No 12) stationed near the G/Paramananda Maha Vidyalaya Galwaduwegoda polling station were seen canvassing support for their candidate.

Polling station No. 48, Benthara-Elpitiya Polling Division, Galle district, Preaching Hall of Old Pituwala Purana Viharasthanaya polling station. At around 10.40am, the CMEV field monitor reported that a group of 7 people stationed at the polling station gate were canvassing on behalf of UPFA candidate Sajin Vass Gunawardana (Preferential Candidate No. 25).

Polling station No. 05, Karandeniya Polling Division, Galle district, G/Yatagala Maha Vidyalaya polling station. At around 10.30 am, an individual by the name of Nuwan Maheesha Thilakaratna was prevented by the SPO from casting his vote as the voter

list had indicated that he was a postal voter. He was unable to vote even though he clarified that it was his brother who is with the Sri Lanka Army and had a postal vote.

CMEV wishes to thank the Election Commissioner, his officials and the Police for the cooperation and supported extended to its monitors.

Finally, CMEV once again wishes to reiterate its call for the implementation of the 17th Amendment as a mechanism for protecting the integrity of the electoral process, particularly with regard to election violence, the violation of election laws and the abuse of state resources.

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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National Coordinator