

Presidential Election 2015

JOINT STATEMENT BY ELECTION MONITORING ORGANISATIONS

The tightly contested presidential election has entered its last phase. We are now in the “cooling off” period prior to Election Day. The undersigned election monitoring organizations have the following concerns. Our primary objective is to ensure a free and fair environment for elections. The sovereignty of the people is foremost in a democracy and the legitimacy of the elected leadership arises from the free vote of a country’s constituency. It is a right of the people to be able to choose a candidate of their choice within the framework of a free and fair contest. We call on the government, political parties and those state institutions mandated with the responsibility to conduct free and fair elections, and in particular the Elections Commissioner’s Department and the Police to ensure:

- 1) Voting is not deterred, by a rise in violence that is accompanied by illegal actions such as the forcible taking of ID cards of voters in targeted areas.
- 2) There is no staging of incidents at targeted polling stations, counting agents and counting centers to induce the annulment of results, and the threatening and intimidation of polling agents to chase them from polling stations.
- 3) There will be no deployment or presence of the armed forces on polling day which would in any way adversely impact voter turn-out and the integrity of the poll, unless called out by the Election Commissioner who has power to call for the security forces in case of election violence which is beyond control by police
- 4) The political parties will not use the state or private media for its campaign during the “cooling off” period when such propaganda is forbidden.
- 5) The misuse of huge amount of public resources, including public funds, public servants, public buildings, state media will immediately cease.

Finally, there is a need on the part of all stakeholders to ensure there is no violence in the aftermath of the election. The pre-election campaign has witnessed a large number of acts of violence committed blatantly in full view of the general public. While no deaths have resulted, and the intensity of the attacks has been limited during the pre-election period, we are concerned about the possibility of violence spiking up, either spontaneously or in a planned manner in the post-election period. There needs to be zero tolerance for post-election violence. It is the responsibility of political parties to ensure that their members do not take the law into their own hands or victimize their political opponents.

Rohana Hettiarachchi

Executive Director, People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL)

Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu

Executive Director, Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV)

S. Ranugge

Executive Director, Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL)

Keerthi Tennakoon

Executive Director, Campaign for Free and Elections (CaFFE)

Manori Kalugampitiya

Director, Movement for Free & Fair Elections (MFFE)

Nimalka Fernando/ Daya Herath

National Coordinator, Mothers and Daughters of Lanka (MDL)

06.01.2015