

Reports issued by The Centre for the Monitoring of Election Violence (CMEV) contain detailed information on election-related violence that occurred in Wayamba. The following are excerpts from the CMEV's Interim Report.

## VIOLENCE IN THE WAYAMBA ELECTION: INCIDENTS, TYPES AND PATTERNS

**T**his interim report on election violations during the campaign for the North-Western Provincial Council Election analyses the incidents recorded from the date nominations were closed on December 7, 1998 to the end of campaigning on January 22, 1999, two days before the election. The following is a summary of the main findings which will be fleshed out in the final report.

(i) This election is proportionately more violent (in terms of numbers of incidents) than the local government elections of 1997. A total of 675 incidents were recorded in the 45 days of the present campaign, whereas in the 44 days of the campaign in 1997 a total of 335 incidents were reported from the same geographical area.

(ii) The incidents reported are qualitatively more serious than those reported at the local government elections for the same province. For instance, allegedly, two Murders, nine Attempted Murders, 40 incidents of Hurt, 175 Assaults, 28 Robberies and 18 reports of Arson have taken place in the provincial council campaign as compared with one Murder, no Attempted Murders, ten incidents of Hurt, 84 Assaults, fourteen Robberies, and four acts of Arson in the run-off to local government elections.

(iii) This campaign has recorded a significant increase in violations by persons whose party affiliations have not been identified. In comparison with the 1997 election, the allegations against the PA and UNP have shown a slight decline and increase respectively. The JVP's share of alleged violations has declined both in numerical and percentage terms.

(iv) A significant difference in this campaign is the relative absence of alleged violations against other groups or parties. The total violence thus reflects the polarised aggression of the PA and UNP towards each other. Whereas in 1997 5.07% of the complaints were against groups other than the PA and UNP, in the present campaign the two parties together account for all but 0.7% of the allegations against perpetrators whose party affiliations have been identified.

(v) The number of complaints against persons of unknown party affiliation has increased from the 1997 figure of 25.67% to 29.48% in 1999. This reflects a sharp increase from 86 to 199 incidents.

(vi) Within the Districts of Kurunegala and Puttalam, the Police areas of Kuliyaipitiya, Mawathagama, Anamaduwa and Puttalam recorded the highest number of incidents, totalling 52, 53, 40 and 34 respectively.

(vii) 49 incidents or 7.26% of the total recorded involved the use of firearms, which is higher than the average for the local government elections.

(viii) In the Police areas of Anamaduwa, Wariyapola, Kobeigane, Giribawa, Kuliyaipitiya, Puttalam, Rambodagalla, the PA has allegedly been responsible for more than two-and-a half times the number of violations than the UNP, and the number of incidents recorded in each is over 15. In Gokaralla the UNP has allegedly committed twice the number of violations that the PA has. Gokaralla and Maho are the only Police areas, in which the total number of incidents exceeds 15, with a significant increase in violence allegedly by the UNP.

(ix) 22 individuals have been named in complaints made to the Police. Of these, D. M. Dassanayake, PA Member of Parliament for the Puttalam District, has been cited as the alleged perpetrator in 13 incidents, one of which is a case of Hurt, 2 Assaults, 4 allegations of Threat and Intimidation, one Robbery, two acts of Mischief and 3 Threats. Of the others, Anthony Maximus (PA) is the accused in 5 incidents, Sarath Nishantha (PA) in four and M Thaha Anoo alias Anju (UNP) in five incidents, including one Attempted Murder and two cases of Hurt. Notable is the fact that two UNP MPs from outside the province (Susantha Punchinilame & AMS Adhikari) have been accused of alleged violence.

### Geographical Distribution of Violations

**O**f the total of 675 incidents reported, Kurunegala District accounted for 480 (71.11%) while Puttalam recorded 195 (28.88%). Overall, Mawathagama and Kuliyaipitiya Police Areas registered the highest number of incidents with 53 and 52 respectively, followed by Anamaduwa with 40 and Puttalam with 34. Fifteen Police areas recorded over 20 incidents of violence, while Alawwa, Ambanpola, Hospital Police Post, Kotawehera, Polgahawela, Polpithigama, Ranayakepura, Weerambagedera, Dankotuwa, and Wanathavillu registered under 6 violations.

The geographical profile of the campaign, therefore, indicates that the main thrust of election-related violence was concentrated in around 20 police areas while the other 20 are relatively less violent. In fact, the former account for well over 80% of the total number of incidents, and for most of the serious ones.

Another important aspect of the location of allegations of violence is the concentration of incidents attributed to a single party in some police divisions, notably Wariyapola, Rambodagalla, Puttalam, Kuliyaipitiya, Giribawa, Kobeigane, and Pannala in all of which there is a PA preponderance, and Gokaralla where the UNP appears to have dominated the violence. In each of the former cases, the PA has been accused of over twice the number of incidents laid at the door of the UNP. In fact, in Wariyapola where the PA is the alleged

perpetrator in 22 complaints, in comparison to the UNPs 04 and 04 by persons of unknown affiliation, there appears to be no mitigation or rationalization whatsoever for the violence. It is contexts such as this that urgently need to be exposed and investigated so that the unilateral perpetrators of such gratuitous violence be called to account.

Kuliyapitiya with 22 allegations against PA members, 02 against the UNP, 27 against persons with unknown political affiliation and 01 against the Police, is another case in point. However, Anamaduwa is perhaps the most blatant and shocking example. Of the 19 incidents alleged against the PA, Puttalam MP DM Dassanayake has been accused in 13 separate complaints. He was also the accused in complaints made during the local government election campaign in 1997. It is inconceivable that a party that insists that it is committed to democratic norms and practices, especially free and fair elections, would allow such a state of affairs to continue.

### Types of Violence

**T**he aggregate of election-related incidents has been analysed by alleged perpetrator and police area in which each was committed. Two incidents of Murder have been recorded in the run-up to the election, and this establishes the current campaign as comparatively more violent than the 1997 local government election where in 7 provinces six deaths were recorded. Moreover, in the North-Western Province in 1997 only one Murder took place and no cases of Attempted Murder, in comparison with 09 in 1999.

In general, Major Offences (categorised as Murder, Attempted Murder, Hurt, Assault, Threat & Intimidation, Robbery, and Arson) accounted for 53.35% of all offences in 1999, while in 1997 it was under 40%. In fact, the percentage of major offences in the North-Western Provincial Council election is comparable with the 1998 Local Government elections in the Jaffna Peninsula where the actual numbers were in order of magnitude less. In 1997 in the NW Province major offences accounted for 48.66% of the total.

Of the 49 offences involving the use of firearms, the PA is allegedly implicated in 24 (49%), the UNP in 08 (16.3%) and those with unknown party affiliation in 17 (34.7%). The number of incidents involving firearms is 7.3% of the total which is higher than comparable elections in the recent past.

### General Comments

**D**ata show that the PA is allegedly responsible for slightly under half of the total incidents, the UNP for slightly more than half the PA, and those of unknown affiliation for just under a third of the total. A comparison with the same region in the local government elections of 1997 indicates a decline of alleged PA culpability from 48.06% to 45.93%, an increase of the UNPs alleged quotient from 21.19% to 23.7% and the increase of those whose party affiliation remains unknown from 25.67% to 29.48%.

This statistic reinforces the reports received from election monitors in the field regarding the main parties' increased reliance on outsiders for campaign work, including alleged violations. Part of the reason for this could be the fact that elections are being held only in one province and, therefore, additional manpower can be mobilized from elsewhere. Yet, the use of outsiders is a disturbing trend which needs to be discouraged since the ordinary checks and balances that militate against criminal behaviour within communities (such as the recognition of individual perpetrators and the fact that they have to continue to live in the area after the elections are long over) do not obtain in the case of strangers.

Moreover, the fact that senior party officials who are MPs (Cabinet Ministers in the case of the PA, former Ministers in the case of the UNP) were placed in charge of key areas, does not bode well for voter confidence in the system, given the fact that violence continued unabated in these very locations.

The Police too appear not to be taking complaints seriously. Reliable statistics are difficult to obtain since local Police sources are unwilling to commit themselves, but the percentage of complaints investigated adequately remains quite low. CMEV estimates this figure to be under 10%, with effective post-investigative action being taken in only a handful of cases. If public confidence is to be restored, this situation must be remedied forthwith. For this purpose, increased staff and other resources should be provided to the Police during the campaign and on election day. Political interference in the discharge of Police duty should be unequivocally rejected by all parties, and the Police should not be identified with any individuals or political parties under any circumstances.



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