



YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

කරුණ භීතීඥ සංගමය இளம் வழக்கறிஞர்கள் சங்கம்

No.17,Hulftsdorp Street,Colombo12,Sri Lanka.ylasl@gmail.com.fax:0718804771

Press Release

29th September, 2023

JUDICIARY UNDER THREAT

YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION DEMAND AN IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE RESIGNATION OF THE MAGISTRATE OF MULLAITEEVU

The jurisdiction of the Mullaiteevu Magistrate has become a place of contentious judicial, legal and political battle ground due to the Kurunthur Malai incident and the excavation of a mass grave consisting of what appears to be the remains of LTTE carders. The Mullaiteevu Magistrate's Office has come under direct threat from Member of Parliament Sarath Weerasekara who identified the Magistrate as a 'Tamil' Judge who is making orders inside a 'Sinhala Buddhist' State. Despite condemning statements by the BASL and Lawyers' Collective and protests by Bars across the North and the East the pressure seemed to have continued on the judge in performing his judicial duties independently.

It is in this background a resignation letter said to be signed by the Mullaiteevu Magistrate/ District Judge T. Saravanarajah was circulated in the media yesterday. The said letter read that he justice Saravanarajah has tendered his resignation due to 'threat' to his life and due to 'lot of stress'. Thereafter a whatsapp message was circulated which contains allegations on Member of Parliament Sarath Weerasekara, the Government and the Attorney General for directly threatening him regarding his orders on the Kurunthur Malai incident, filing cases against him as a person in the Court of Appeal, reducing security measures granted to him as a judge and 'pressuring' him to change his orders.

If these allegations are true it raises serious concerns regarding the executive's interference in independent judicial functions. These concerns become further acute in jurisdictions such as the North and the East parts of the Island where judges in addition to other political tensions affecting the Island also have to deal with sensitive racial tensions affecting minorities. For instance, the Young Lawyers Association also note with concern that the

Mullaiteevu mass grave which has been discovered is still in the excavation stage. Given the resignation of the Chief Magistrate of Mullaiteevu for reasons of 'threat' to life, we are also concerned about the safety of the Additional Magistrate overseeing the excavation of the remains of what appears to be former LTTE soldiers.

The Young Lawyers' Association demand that the Judicial Service Commission conducts an impartial inquiry into the allegations against the Government and the Attorney General which has been circulated in the media.

Mullaiteevu District and its people have been the subject of a bloody war which has killed thousands and disappeared thousands more. Families of the disappeared await truth and justice. Tamil farmers await to return to their lands. Truth, justice and accountability continues to remain a distant dream for communities impacted by the war and racial tensions. Therefore, as legal professionals we become duty bound to ensure that the structures created by the State to grant justice to people functions with integrity and independence from interference from the perpetrators.

It is in this context that we urge the Judicial Service Commission to act expeditiously and reveal the truth to the legal community and society in the interest of protecting the judiciary and judicial functions in the long run.

Executive Committee