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**இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SRI LANKA**

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Date }

2019.04.26

### Appeal to Fellow Citizens

The terrifying and violent acts perpetrated on 21<sup>st</sup> April, Easter Sunday, have left all of us in deep shock and sorrow. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka vehemently condemns these cruel acts which snuffed out a large number of lives.

We offer our deepest condolences to the bereaved families. We also salute the police officers who lost their lives while conducting investigations and offer members of their families our heartfelt sympathies.

At a moment like this, when our hearts are bleeding and we are fearful and uncertain about our future, we thought of addressing you for a specific purpose. That is to emphasize the importance of recognizing our duty as citizens to build our common future with responsibility and a positive vision.

We all know that while we are entitled to human rights, we also are subjected to corresponding duties. It is also an established truth that we can effectively enjoy our human rights only in a society where its members fulfill their duties.

When we assess the challenges faced by us today, the main challenges are to ensure that normalcy is restored to the everyday life of citizens and that the trauma and pain we suffer are not converted into hatred and retaliatory intentions resulting in counterviolence. We also do know that occasions such as this can be exploited by anti-social elements for narrow political, economic or other gains to cause religious strife. We should come forward to face such challenges with a great deal of responsibility. In particular, we must refrain from engaging in hate speech and inciting violence when expressing our views through any medium, including social media.

Our collective future rests in our hands, the hands of citizens. We cannot build a hopeful future through hatred and violence. It is us, the citizens, who should give leadership to build a society in which we can all live in human dignity as equals.

The best response to extremism and extremist violence is to work towards a just social order. We have learnt from history that one form of extremism breeds other forms of extremism. It is the average citizen who suffers from such cycles of hatred. It is our future that is left bleak.

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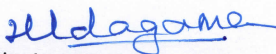
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Therefore, let us resolve to fulfill our duties for our own sake and for the sake of our children. Let us build a society where all of us can live in dignity.

Let us turn that resolve into our strength.

  
Chairperson

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka