Mr. Thushara Upuldeniya
Commissioner General of Prison
Prison Head Quarters
Colombo 10

Re: Remandee G. S Abeysekera

We refer to our letter of 25 November drawing your attention to the concerns regarding health and threats to life of Remandee, G.S. Abeysekera who has apparently contracted the COVID-19 virus while at the Mahara Prison in your custody. We are surprised to be informed that Mr Abeysekera, with multiple health issues, has been transferred to the Treatment Centre for prisoners at Gallella. We have been made to understand, the better treatment is available at the Welikanda Treatment Hospital.

Mr. Upuldeniya, as you are aware, the health and security of all prisoners including remandees, remain the responsibility of the Commissioner General of Prisons. Given the concerns already conveyed to you regarding security issues, we ask you to take immediate steps secure Mr Abeysekera and ensure the best possible treatment. It may be best to transfer Mr Abeysekera to the Welikanda Treatment Hospital. Further, his family has informed us that they have no information regarding Mr Abeysekera’s health situation or his whereabouts. We urge you to immediately keep families of all prisoners infected by the COVID-19 virus informed of his whereabouts and provide them with the results of their PCR Test.

We are also receiving many complaints from family members desperate for information regarding their loved ones in custody. Therefore, we suggest that you provide us with an updated list of all prisoners affected by the virus and their current location and treatment. We would welcome the appointment of a contact person in each treatment in case further information is required by family members.

This letter is sent under power vested under the HRCSL Act, No. 21 of 1996, SS. 10 (b), 11 (d), 28(2) where the Commission is specially mandated to ensure the welfare of those deprived of liberty.

Ramani Muttettuwegama
Commissioner in charge of Investigations and Inquiries
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka