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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Press Notice No: HRC/P/i/E/02/06/23

Press Notice

Under the HRCSL Act, No. 21 of 1996, Sections 10 & 11 the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka notes with extremely deep concern that there have been several public arrests linked to a comedy show held in Colombo several weeks ago. In particular, the HRCSL is aware that Jayani Natasha Edirisuriya was arrested for allegedly insulting the Buddhist religion in April of this year and is under court order and is now being held in remand until June 7th, 2021. We have been further advised that there have been additional arrests related to this incident which we informed happened at a theatre in Colombo more than one month ago.

The IGP is requested to provide a report on this matter. We are interested to understand the nature of the allegation and the investigation that has gone into making these arrests. Your analysis of what is religious disharmony is of equal importance. We would as well want an analysis as to the potential risks from this specific incident to religious harmony would be useful for the HRCSL to understand.

We further understand that a Special Police Unit is being established to investigate and act against groups that disturb religious harmony. The HRCSL would welcome a receiving briefing document from the IGP on this proposed unit including but not limited to the composition of said unit and specifically what laws it will be policing. We would equally want to know what specialized training the officers of this unit will have related to religious harmony. Further, will this unit be tasked with reviewing past incidents of religious disharmony in the country.

Furthermore, following receipt of said report, we might seek to request a discussion with the IGP on the decision to make the various arrests as well as to establish the aforementioned unit once his report is submitted and reviewed by our officers.

The aforementioned reports are to be submitted in their entirety on or before June 9th, 2023.

Media Spokesperson
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

02. 06. 2023