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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு  
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

## Message of the Chairman on International Human Rights Day 2023

On this International Human Rights Day, we celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the milestone achievement of adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It calls for a moment of reflection, to acknowledge and honour the significant developments the declaration has paved way for, to protect and promote the universal rights of all persons.

Attention is also drawn towards the many challenges that hinders the full realisation of the rights and values enshrined in the declaration. Among the many challenges, special attention is drawn to the global pandemic and the political and economic instability that unfolded in the country, which has left behind long term and ongoing repercussions. Those challenges brought to surface the systemic inequalities that were prevalent over the years and also exacerbated injustices faced by many, in particular persons belonging to vulnerable communities.

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, building on the work that has been done over the years, places extra emphasis going forward to address such systemic inequalities and create an equitable environment, where all persons are able to fully realize the rights and values envisioned in the UDHR.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the Commission, in commemoration of the International Human Rights day under the theme '*Freedom, Equality and Justice for all*' will launch three very important guidelines and recommendations to the State and relevant authorities, in the presence of representative from the State, law enforcement authorities, governmental and non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations.

Accordingly, the Commission will launch its '*General Guidelines and Recommendations to the Sri Lanka Police on Prevention of Custodial and Encounter deaths*', '*General Guidelines and Recommendations on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders*' and '*Interim Report of the Fact Finding Mission on Right to Health and Liberty of the patients at the National Institute of Mental Health*'.

On this day, while I call upon the State and all other relevant authorities, to uphold the fundamental and international human rights obligations of the State, I also call upon all individuals and organizations to take proactive steps to educate and enhance your knowledge on the rights that have been guaranteed to every person by the Constitution and other legislations of Sri Lanka.

I also assure you on this day, that the HRCSL as the key oversight body to protect and promote human rights in Sri Lanka, will in its fullest capacity dispense its mandated duties and responsibilities to ensure the rights of all persons, leaving no one behind.

Justice L T B Dehideniya  
Chairman  
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

10<sup>th</sup> December 2023