



ශ්‍රී ලංකා මානව හිමිකම් කොමිෂන් සභාව
இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Press Notice No: HRC/P/E/ii/11/12/23

Press Notice

The inherent right to life is recognised as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of Sri Lanka. The Supreme Court has recognised that Article 13(4) of the Constitution should be interpreted broadly to include such a right, especially in view of ‘the State’s responsibility of upholding fundamental rights, as enshrined in Article 4(d) of the Constitution, which requires all organs of government, including the Police, to “respect, secure and advance” the fundamental rights declared and recognised by the Constitution and to not “abridge, restrict or deny” such rights.’

Accordingly, all persons arrested and detained by Sri Lanka Police are entitled to the respect and protection of their inherent right to life.

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) observed that, based on the complaints received and inquiries held by it, a total of twenty-four cases of custodial deaths and thirteen cases of encounter deaths involving Sri Lanka Police occurred during the period between January 2020 and August 2023. Six custodial deaths and two encounter deaths took place during the first six months of 2023.

In this context, the HRCSL was of the view that general guidelines and recommendations need to be issued to Sri Lanka Police to prevent custodial and encounter deaths and to safeguard the inherent right to life of all persons. The HRCSL decided to issue these *General Guidelines and Recommendations to Sri Lanka Police on Preventing Custodial and Encounter Deaths* on 11th December 2023 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute marking the 2023 International Human Rights Day.

Spokesperson
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

11.12.2023