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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Press Notice No: HRC/P/i/E/22/12/23

Press Notice

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka wrote to the Hon. Attorney-General regarding the occurrence of torture, and custodial and encounter deaths involving Sri Lanka Police. In its letter, the Commission observed that over 200 complaints with regard to torture had been received by its head office in Colombo in 2023. Complaints relating to six custodial deaths and two encounter deaths were also received in the first six months of 2023.

The Commission shared its Draft General Guidelines and Recommendations to Sri Lanka Police on Preventing Custodial and Encounter Deaths, launched on 11 December 2023, and requested the Attorney-General's feedback on the Draft.

The Commission drew the Attorney-General's attention to two recent landmark judgments of the Supreme Court in *Weheragedara Ranjith Sumangala v Bandara, Police Officer, Police Station, Mirihana & Others*, SC (F.R.) Application No. 107/2011 and *Fathima Sharmila v Officer in Charge, Police Station, Slave Island & Others*, SC (F.R.) Application No. 398/2008. The Commission accordingly encouraged the Attorney-General to consider prosecuting the police officers found by the Supreme Court to be responsible for acts of torture under the Torture Act of 1994. It also encouraged the prosecution of police officers found responsible for the deaths of persons held in police custody, particularly where there is evidence that the deaths of such persons were caused by acts of torture. It emphasised that such prosecution is crucial to combatting a culture of impunity and preventing the recurrence of torture, and custodial and encounter deaths in the future.

The Commission also emphasised the need to take appropriate measures under the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act of 2023 to protect victims and witnesses from acts of reprisal.

Media Spokesperson
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

22.12.2023