

## The Child Rights Unit of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Conducted a Fact-Finding Mission in Jaffna District on Unregistered Child Care Centers.

A team of officials at the Child Rights Unit (CRU) of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL), in collaboration with the HRCSL's Jaffna Regional Office, conducted a special fact-finding mission on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of August 2024 in the Jaffna District. This mission aimed at addressing critical issues



concerning protection and Rights of the Child in the Child Care Centers that were not registered under the Northern Province Child Development Center Statute (No. 04 of 2016). The CRU conducted this mission following an inquiry initiated by the HRCSL's Jaffna Regional Office on two Child Rights violations at Child Care Centers in the Jaffna District, as highlighted in recent newspaper reports. The mission was conducted under the Support to Justice Sector (JURE) project, funded by UNICEF Sri Lanka.



During the mission, HRCSL officials held comprehensive discussions with stakeholders, including officials from the Provincial Department of Probation and Child Care Services, the Provincial Department of Education, the National Child Protection Authority, the Police Child and Women Bureau, representatives from the Child Care Centers, Civil Societies, and NGOs working for children. These discussions focused on effective ways in gathering insights on happenings at the unregistered Child Care Centers, such as compliance with care standards, living conditions, and the legal status of these centers. Additionally, the mission aimed at identifying broader issues affecting children and the challenges that officials face in enforcing child protection measures, while exploring

strategies to improve stakeholder coordination for better safeguarding of children's welfare and rights.

In addition to stakeholder meetings, the HRCSL team conducted monitoring visits to several Child Care Centers that were either not registered with the Department of Probation and Child Care Services or had failed to renew their registrations but continued to operate as hostels under temporary authorizations



Photographers: Heshoban Thavakumaran, Lasya Hettigamage  
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issued by the Provincial Commissioner of Probation and Child Care Services. These on-site inspections helped the HRCSL to closely examine the living conditions of the children, assess the quality of care provided, and verify the centers' compliance with national regulations and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), focusing specifically on the protection, safety, and well-being of the children. The findings may be useful source to make necessary interventions and recommendations to enhance the oversight of child care institutions.



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This proactive exercise of the CRU of the HRCSL underscores its commitment to upholding and promoting children's rights nationwide, on ensuring that Child Care Centers maintain high standards, and that children's fundamental rights are respected and protected in accordance with national and international legal

standards. Additionally, the CRU independently and continuously monitors the institutions and authorities that are responsible for child protection and children's rights in order to ensure that they act in the best interest of the children and comply with relevant laws and regulations.