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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Press Notice No: HRC/P/i/E/10/07/26

Press Notice

Statement on Investigation into Violence at Negombo Prison and Subsequent Events at Other Prisons

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka has launched an investigation into the recent violence at the Negombo Prison and subsequent events at other prisons. The key aspects of the investigation include the following:

1. The circumstances that led to the violence at the Negombo Prison and the deaths and injuries of inmates and prison officers;
2. The denial of access to the HRCSL at the Welikada Prison during its unannounced visit at approximately 8.30PM on 7 July 2026;
3. Allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment of inmates who were transferred from the Negombo Prison to other prison facilities, and the circumstances of the deaths of two such inmates while in the custody of prison officials.

The Commission wishes to clarify that no conclusions have been drawn with respect to any of the abovementioned aspects of its investigation and that it is currently in the process of gathering evidence, including statements from inmates and officials, and evaluating the same. The preliminary findings emerging from several visits to prison facilities to which inmates from the Negombo Prison were transferred are currently under review. The Commission notes that, during these visits, its officers observed that several such inmates had sustained injuries, and found that medical treatment to these inmates had been delayed. The Commission recommended that medical treatment be provided to such inmates without delay and that any systematic delay in providing such treatment can amount to a form of reprisal.

With respect to unimpeded access to prison facilities, the Commission reiterates its deep concern expressed in its letter to the Commissioner General of Prisons (Covering Up Duties) dated 8 July 2026. The denial of access to the Commission staff at Welikada Prison on 7 July 2026 amounts to a violation of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act, No. 21 of 1996 and severely undermines the authority of the Commission to make necessary inquiries into the welfare of prisons, particularly when it receives information on allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. While unimpeded access was granted to the Commission on 8 July 2026, it notes that the denial of access during a crucial juncture on 7 July 2026 deprived it of the opportunity to investigate allegations in an effective and timely manner. It is emphasized that the ability of the Commission to conduct unannounced visits to places of detention at any time remains crucial to the fulfilment of its statutory mandate to investigate allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. In this respect, the Commission has summoned the Commissioner General of

Prisons (Covering Up Duties) and the Chief Jailer of the Welikada Prison to inquire into the circumstances under which the Commission was denied access to the said Prison on 7 July.

The Commission also wishes to clarify that the progress of its ongoing investigation will be disclosed to the public through periodic statements. It requests all media institutions to report on such progress in an accurate and responsible manner.

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