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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

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Press Notice

HRCSL Conducts Discussions with Relevant Authorities on Measures to Prevent the Recurrence of Violence in Prisons

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka launched investigations into the violence at the Negombo prison on 05th and 06th of July, 2026 and subsequently at several other prisons including the Mahara prison on 18th August 2026, the Commission held discussions with relevant authorities on measures to prevent the recurrence of such violence. The discussion was held with the participation of representatives of the Secretaries to the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Public Security, as well as a Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police, a Deputy Inspector General of Police representing the Inspector General of Police, the Acting Commissioner General of Prisons, and several Commissioners of Prisons. The Human Rights Commission was represented by the Chairperson, Commissioners, several Directors, and other officers.

The Chairman of the Commission recalled the report published subsequent to an extensive study conducted by the Commission into prisons and detention centres in 2018 and the relevant recommendations published in 2020 was pointed out that, on previous occasions, the Commission had proposed that the recommendations contained in the said report be taken into consideration in the preparation of the strategic plans for 2021 and 2025, and had emphasised the need to implement those recommendations.

The discussion focused on issues including the safety and security of inmates and prison officers, overcrowding within prisons, and inadequate sanitary and water facilities. The Acting Commissioner General of Prisons stated that measures are being taken to construct new prisons at Bogambara and Mahamodara, relocate the Galle, Matara, and Wariyapola prisons to more spacious locations, and construct new buildings at the Kalutara and Boossa prisons. The state officials present at the discussion further stated that measures are being taken to amend the relevant laws and introduce appropriate technological measures to facilitate alternatives to detention, such as community service and house arrest, in order to address the issue of overcrowding.

Representatives of the Ministry of Justice stated that attention is being given to filling vacancies at the Government Analyst's Department to expedite the analysis process in cases involving persons detained for drug-related charges. They further stated that steps are being taken to address gaps in the existing legal framework relating to the rehabilitation of persons affected by drug addiction. The Commission emphasised the need to introduce body scanners to reduce invasive body-search practices involving detainees and to safeguard their dignity and bodily integrity. The Acting Commissioner General Prisons thereafter assured the Commission that measures are being taken to procure new equipment and that a

database is being established by Prisons Headquarters in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Police to maintain comprehensive records of detainees.

In response to the Commission's inquiry regarding complaints by inmates alleging that they had been assaulted by officials, the Acting Commissioner General of Prisons informed the Commission that an internal investigation was being conducted that appropriate disciplinary action would be taken.

The Commission recalled that it has issued several guidelines and recommendations on how to address the current situation in prisons. It has received reports from several institutions indicating that initial steps are being taken to implement these guidelines and recommendations. The Commission reiterated the importance of ensuring that these measures are implemented regularly and continuously.

The investigations initiated by the Commission into the unrest within the prisons are currently ongoing, and recommendations will be issued to the relevant authorities upon completion of the investigations.

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