

IV. Reproduced below is a statement on political violence issued by a broad coalition of human rights groups and advocates.

CONDEMN THE RESURGENCE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Political violence is again raising its ugly and dangerous head. We unreservedly condemn the use of violence as a political weapon by any political party or group, whether in power or expecting to obtain power.

The aim of those who are behind this violence and manipulate it is to drive fear into the people. However, it is our belief that the political parties or groupings that hold power or expect to come to power have given a pledge to the people not to cause or leave room for a reign of terror among our people.

It is no longer possible to consider the several acts of political violence that have taken place at Anamaduwa, Anuradhapura, Katunayake, Kesbewa, Ja-ela, Matugama, Baddegama, Kolonnawa, Pannala, Maradana, Negombo and Bentara since this Government was elected to power as isolated incidents. This is because the political parties that have been accused of perpetrating these acts of violence have voiced no serious condemnations of such violence, nor have they taken any meaningful steps to prevent their recurrence. We therefore perceive the danger of such violence occurring again in any part of the country.

If this situation remains unchecked, it will soon not be possible for any citizen to engage freely in political activity, and will also be a major threat to the community at large. It is certain that this can have its own dangerous impact on any future elections.

Therefore we call upon all political parties or groups that have among them persons who have engaged in or encouraged political violence, to take practical and meaningful steps against such persons in order to demonstrate their commitment to democratic freedoms and restore public confidence in their claims to oppose political violence.

It is the primary duty of the government to prevent situations of this nature. Similarly, we wish to make it clear that we totally reject any attempt made by anyone to justify in any way the use of political violence.

Organizations

1. Free Media Movement
2. Free Artists' Alliance

3. Movement for the Defence of Democratic Rights (MDDR)
4. University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna)
5. Yuktiya
6. Student Council (Colombo University)
7. Women For Peace
8. Community Education Centre (Malabe)
9. Jana Sansadaya (Panadura)
10. Movement For Inter Racial Justice And Equality (MIRJE)
11. Vivarana
12. Devasarana Development Centre-Kurunegala
13. Uva Community Development Centre-Badulla.
14. INFORM
15. Mothers And Daughters of Lanka
16. Women and Development Foundation-Kurunegala
17. Citizens For Peace-Kurunegala
18. Women And Media Collective
19. Movement For Defence Of Human Rights
20. National Peace Council
21. Janata Sanvada Kendraya - Negombo
22. Human Rights Organization - Kurunegala
23. "Kalape Api" - Negombo
24. Organization To Safeguard Life And Environment
25. Sri Lanka Environment Journalists Association
26. Social Scientists' Association
27. Citizens For Peace - Galle
28. Movement For National Land and Agricultural Reform
29. Movement For Free And Fair Elections
30. Centre For Society And Religion
31. Da Bindu Samuhikaya - Negombo
32. Janavaboda Kendraya - Negombo
33. United Estate Services Union - Badulla
34. Womens Development Foundation - Badulla
35. Womens Development Centre - Badulla
36. Uva Education And Development Foundation.
37. Uva Kamkaru Sarana Sevena
38. Uva Non Governmental Organization Forum
39. Uva Journalists' Association
40. Co-operative Peace Foundation - Badulla
41. Provincial State Clerical Staff Union.
42. United Co-operatives And Cooperations Staff Union
43. All Ceylon Business And Industrial Workers Union
44. Government United Workers Congress
45. United Workers Congress