



ශ්‍රී ලංකා මානව හිමිකම් කොමිෂන් සභාව
இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Message No: HRC/M/i/E/26/06/24

**Message of the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka,
International Day in Support of Victims of Torture – 2024**

On this day of International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) stands united with the global community in reaffirming its commitment to render its full support to victims of torture and their families. This day which marks the moment in 1987 when the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment came into effect, serves as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility of all States to eradicate all forms of torture and protect and uphold the dignity and rights of every individual.

The HRCSL, as the key oversight body to promote and protect human rights in Sri Lanka observes that, similar to previous years, during the year 2022 too, the highest number of complaints received by the HRCSL were pertaining to violations of personal liberty totalling 2228, out of which 560 cases were those of Torture. Although the HRCSL through its inquiries and investigative mechanisms, takes all measures within its capacity to provide redress and reparation to victims of torture, attention is drawn on this day to the aforementioned statistics, to underscore the gravity of the issue and urgent need to address and eliminate torture from our society at large.

Resolute in its mission to ensure that all places of detention within the country do comply with international human rights standards and are free of any form of torture, the HRCSL has intensified its monitoring mission through its National Preventive Mechanism, with enhanced staff capacity and resources. It is the firm belief of the Commission that consistent and effective monitoring help better understand the systemic issues leading to incidents of torture and other ill-treatment. It is also an essential component required to propose viable solutions to eradicate the root causes of

these inhumane and unjustifiable practices which has an enduring adverse effect on the lives of the victims and their families.

The HRCSL, recognizing the importance of continuous education and training to eradicate all forms of torture, is conducting a series of human rights training programmes to Sri Lanka Police officers in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Police Department. The month-long training programmes conducted in different parts of Sri Lanka are designed to equip the Sri Lanka Police officers with necessary knowledge and skills on ways and means of upholding a zero tolerance policy on torture while executing their mandated duties. Emphasizing a victim and survivor centred approach, these trainings will foster a culture of respect for human rights and dignity within the Sri Lanka Police.

The HRCSL reiterating the critical need to support accountability mechanisms to render justice to victims of torture calls upon the State to provide necessary protection to victims and witnesses of torture and other ill-treatment to navigate the justice system. It also urges the State to allocate sufficient resources to justice sector institutions to ensure justice is delivered in a timely and effective manner. Additionally, it calls upon the State to design and implement psychological support programmes for all victims of torture and their families, free of any form of discrimination, to ensure they attain full recovery from the injustices they have encountered.

Justice L.T.B Dehideniya
Chairman
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

26th June 2024