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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு  
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Press Notice No: HRC/P/i/E/18/10/24

## Press Notice

### Special Powers under Section 12 of the Public Security Ordinance

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) wrote to H.E. the President on 15 October 2024 on section 12 of the Public Security Ordinance. An Order was published in Extraordinary Gazette No. 2403/47 dated 26 September 2024 under the said section calling out all the members of the Sri Lanka Army, Sri Lanka Navy and Sri Lanka Air Force ‘for the maintenance of public order’ in every administrative district of Sri Lanka with effect from 27 September 2024 onward for a period of one month. The HRCSL brought to H.E. the President’s attention the strict criteria in section 12(1) of the Ordinance, and pointed out that under the said section, the President would be required to form the view that exceptional circumstances endangering public security have arisen and that Sri Lanka Police are not capable of maintaining public order in the country.

The HRCSL recalled the relevant international human rights standards and norms on the deployment of armed forces to discharge police functions and encouraged H.E. the President to restore the practice of relying on civilian authorities, i.e., Sri Lanka Police, to ensure public security. In view of the fact that Sri Lanka is currently in an election period, the HRCSL invited H.E. the President to consider whether an order under section 12 of the Public Security Ordinance is warranted in the absence of any recommendation by the Election Commission. Moreover, given the specific powers vested in Parliament to review any Order that calls out the armed forces to exercise police powers, the Commission encouraged H.E. the President to consider the appropriateness of issuing such an Order at a time when Parliament stands dissolved.

The HRCSL assured H.E. the President that it is prepared to offer its continued advice and assistance with respect to administrative practices that impact the protection and promotion of human rights in Sri Lanka.

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