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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு  
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Press Notice No: HRC/P/i/E/01/11/24

## Press Notice

### Statement on Enforced Disappearances in Sri Lanka

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) has launched a process of public consultations to prepare a parallel report to be submitted to the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearance. Sri Lanka became party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2016 and thereafter enacted the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance Act, No. 5 of 2018. Sri Lanka submitted its national report to the Committee in 2023 outlining the fulfilment of its obligations under the Convention. The Committee is authorised to review this national report and receive parallel reports from stakeholders including the HRCSL and civil society organisations.

As the HRCSL carries out this important task, it remains conscious of the unresolved grief of the families of thousands of persons who are still missing. It also takes note of numerous reports of threats and intimidation of families and activists who speak out on enforced disappearances. The advocacy of truth and accountability, such as the peaceful protests regularly held in the North and East, and acts of collective remembrance, such as the annual event held on 27 October in Seeduwa, are constitutionally protected as part of the people's fundamental rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

In promoting the rights to truth, justice, reparations, and non-recurrence, the HRCSL recalls the important role expected of existing institutions, including the Office on Missing Persons and the Office for Reparations. The HRCSL recognises the potential contribution a new Commission for Truth, Unity and Reconciliation could make if meaningfully empowered and resourced. However, given the concerns raised over the proliferation of such commissions, any new truth-seeking mechanism should be preceded by meaningful consultations with all stakeholders and the full implementation of the constructive recommendations of past truth-seeking mechanisms. The HRCSL also stresses the importance of establishing a mechanism in Sri Lanka dedicated to independently and impartially investigating, prosecuting, and holding accountable those responsible for enforced disappearance. Under such a mechanism, investigations into alleged crimes of enforced disappearance should be conducted by an institution or unit that is independent of regular law enforcement authorities.

The HRCSL accordingly invites all relevant stakeholders to participate in future consultations that are scheduled through the Commission's regional offices. It also invites stakeholders to submit their observations and recommendations on the issue of enforced disappearance to the Commission on or before **30 November 2024**. These observations and recommendations will be considered in the preparation and finalisation of the parallel report.

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