



Sri Lanka Young Journalists' Association

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November 22, 2019

Mr. K. W.O. Karaliyadda,

Chairman,

National Police Commission.

Dear Chairman,

Regarding the removal of the Director of the Criminal Investigation Department, SSP Shani Abeysekara

As Sri Lanka Young Journalists' Association (YJA), we are displeased that National Police Commission; an independent commission established by the 19th Amendment to the Constitution has made a decision to transfer the CID Director SSP Shani Abeysekara as the Personal Assistant of the Galle DIG.

All the official approvals and decisions to finalize the transfer were sorted out within a day of time. The Secretary of the Police Commission signed the letter yesterday (21st) and forwarded it to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) yesterday (21st) and also made the announcement public on the same day.

The hasty decision of the Commission to remove Mr. Abeysekara from the post of Director of the Criminal Investigation Department and demote him right after the change of the government has been prompted to make us doubt whether the Commission is truly an independent Commission.

Many cases of journalists including the assassination of former editor of the Sunday Leader Lasantha Wickrematunge, the attack on Upali Tennakoon, former editor of Rivira newspaper, the abduction and torture of the former deputy editor of the Nation newspaper Keith

Noyar were being investigated under the supervision of Mr. Shani Abeysekera. All these incidents took place between 2005 and 2015.

Shani Abeysekera was responsible for investigations of several controversial crimes committed during the same period in Sri Lanka including the assassination of rugby player Wasim Thajudeen, the abduction and disappearance of 11 youths around Colombo, the murder of Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra and the shooting of Rathupaswala.

It is a matter of serious suspicion that the removal of Mr. Shani Abeysekera from the Criminal Investigation Department was made just after the return of the same ruling. It is our firm belief that Mr. Shani Abeysekera was transferred with the intention of sabotaging those criminal investigations.

Many controversial and serious criminal investigations such as Royal Park assassination, Angulana double murder, Udathalawinna assassination, Mohammed Siyam assassination, 2 million robbery, Townhole bomb targeting former President, Customs Officer Sujith Perera assassination, Delkanda six people assassinations, Airport attack, the bomb attack said to have targeted former defense secretary (incumbent president) and suicide bomb attack on Army headquarters targeting Sarath Fonseka were launched under the supervision of Mr. Shani Abeysekera.

The suspects have been charged in connection with the shooting of residents of Rathupaswala, shooting of Welikada Prison inmates, the abduction and disappearance of journalist Prageeth Eknaligoda and the abduction of 11 youths around Colombo.

More than 30 convicts of criminal investigations launched under the supervision of Shani Abeysekera have been sentenced to death by a three-member High Courts, which have also been upheld by a five-member bench of the Supreme Court. (We do not endorse the death penalty as an association). Among those sentenced to death are underworld leaders, parliamentarians, police officers and a DIG.

The sudden transfer of such a talented officer is a matter of serious doubt. When the former Inspector General of Police (IGP) asked to appoint Superintendent of Police SP Mewan Silva to fill the vacancy of CID Director created by the promotion of Sudath Nagahamulla, the National Police Commission made an independent decision saying it didn't heed any political interference and therefore the suitable person for the position was Shani Abeysekera then.

Two years later, the National Police Commission's decision to remove Shani Abeysekera who has six years experience as an SSP and many more years experience in the criminal investigations field and appoint him as a Personal Assistant to a DIG appears to be seriously politically motivated.

The purpose of establishing independent commissions from the Constitution is to free the public service from political interferences. Working in the interests of successive governments does not fall on the list of tasks and functions of independent commissions. Therefore, we urge the National Police Commission to annul the decision of removing Mr. Abeysekera as Director CID and reinstate him in order to assist in expediting ongoing investigations.

Thank you

Yours Sincerely,

Sri Lanka Young Journalists' Association

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Copies

Hon.Karu Jayasooriya – The Speaker and the chairman of constitution council.

Hon.Mahinda Rajapaksa – Prime minister

Hon.Ranil Wickramasinghe – Opposition Leader of the house

Mrs.Deepika Udagama – Chairperson, Sri Lanka Human rights commission.

Chairman – Administrative appeals tribunal.

Mrs.Savithri D Wijesekara – Member, NPC.

Mr.Y L M Zawahir – Member, NPC.

Mr.Thilak Kollure – Member, NPC.

Mr.Gamini Nawarathne – Member, NPC.

Mr.G Jeyakumar – Member, NPC.

Mr.Chandana Wickramaratne – Acting IGP

Mr.Ravi Seneviratne – Senior DIG: CID and TID