



NO JUSTICE NO HOPE



TWO YEARS ON VICTIMS LET DOWN

ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2019 EASTER SUNDAY



May 2021

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SRI LANKA

Title:

**NO JUSTICE – NO HOPE - TWO YEARS ON – VICTIMS LET DOWN
ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2019 EASTER SUNDAY**

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May 2021

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
1 - INTRODUCTION	4
2 - THE EASTER SUNDAY ATTACKS.....	5
3 - SELECTION OF TARGETS:	5
4 - REACTIONS TO THE BOMBING	6
4.1 - The Government.....	6
4.2 - The Christian Community	6
4.3 - The Muslim Community's Reaction.....	7
5 – INSTIGATING THE MASSES, INCREASING TENSIONS	8
6 – THE CHILAW ATTACK.....	9
7 – LOSS OF LIFE	11
8 – LOSS OF PROPERTY.....	11
8.1 Cries of Victims	12
8.1.2 Businesses.....	13
8.1.3 Mosques	14
9 – COLLAPSE OF RULE OF LAW.....	14
10 – IMPUNITY	15
11 – HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	16
12 – TWO YEARS ON, RECOVERY & REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS.....	17
12.1 Methodology	17
12.2 Key Findings.....	17
12.3 Analysis	20
13 – CONCLUSION	21
14 – RECOMMENDATIONS.....	23

1 - INTRODUCTION

The ending of Sri Lanka's 30-year war involving its Tamil community was expected to bring peace and prosperity to Sri Lanka. However, the country is still yet to see this. It soon became clear that extremist groups within the majority Sinhala community had turned their attention to targeting the Muslim community. There are widespread speculations that these groups acted with state patronage as hate speech, incitement, vilification and demonisation of the Muslim community became the norm. No real cause was needed for the violent attacks against Muslim villages that later ensued. One such incident is the focus of this report - the attacks in and around Digana in the Kandy District in Central Sri Lanka.

One of the worst domestic attacks since the end of the war, the horrific Easter Sunday attacks, placed Sri Lanka's Muslim community once again in the spotlights. Despite the Muslim community giving words of strength and mourning to Sri Lanka's Christian community and condemnation from Muslim leaders against the perpetrators, who subscribed to an extremist and isolated understanding of Islam, certain groups from within the majority Sinhala community felt the Muslim community should be held accountable.

This gave way to organised mob attacks from the 11th through to 15th May 2019 in the Kurunegala, Gampaha and Puttalam districts which involved attacking, damaging, destroying, and burning Mosques, Muslim businesses and industrial premises, vehicles and other properties belonging to the Muslim community. Most vulnerable were the areas that were flanked by Sinhala towns. These attacks left devastating consequences for the Muslim community as one life was lost and over one billion Sri Lankan rupees worth of damage along with damage to the social, cultural, and economic set up of the Muslim community. Reports suggest that the Sri Lankan authorities did very little to stop these attacks, conduct impartial investigations, and hold the perpetrators to justice.

Two years have since passed, and despite the Sri Lankan government investigating the attacks against the Muslim communities, there seems to be very impartiality in these investigations. No real structure to prevent such incidents from happening again have been introduced as legislation.

There is no denying the importance of justice, equality, accountability, and upholding the rule of law in helping Sri Lanka regain its footing in human and minority rights.

This report has two sections: the first attempts to review the violation faced by the Muslim community in the immediate aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks, while the second section reviews the situation of the Muslim community two years on. Both sections draw on extensive secondary data and the careful examination of videos and images that document the events that took place to establish and present what happened during those mob attacks and interviews of the victims to understand their situation two years on.

The photographers of some images obtained through social media remain unknown when finalising this report, even when the credibility of those images has been established by examining the context and background. PGR will be pleased to give due credit to photographers of those images if their identities are established.

PRG - Sri Lanka,
London, United Kingdom

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2 - THE EASTER SUNDAY ATTACKS

On 21st April 2019, significantly on the day of Easter Sunday, the entire world woke up to the shocking news of a series of coordinated bomb attacks in Sri Lanka targeting three churches and three hotels in Colombo and several other parts of the country. The island nation which had largely eradicated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and ended the civil war in 2009 and had not seen any major terrorist attack since then, reacted in shock and disbelief to the incidents. As Christians were celebrating Easter Sunday, suicide bombers walked into three churches: the Zion Church in Batticaloa, the St Sebastian's Church in Katuvapitiya, Negambo, and St. Anthony's Church in Kochchikade, Colombo 13, and exploded themselves causing massive loss of life, injury and destruction. Near simultaneous attacks were also carried out in three luxury hotels in Colombo: the Shangri-La, Cinnamon Grand and the Kingsbury, mainly targeting their restaurants or reception areas. A fourth explosion took place around 12:30pm in a relatively small inn called the Tropical Inn located in Dehiwala, a suburb of Colombo. The attacks claimed the lives of more than 250 individuals and injured more than 500 others. Some were to succumb to their injuries later.



Picture: Carl Court/Getty Images

Very soon mainstream and social media reports started appearing pointing, with information suggesting that a fringe Islamic extremist group was responsible for the attacks. The group, which identified themselves by the name National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ), was led by an individual called Moulavi Zahran Hashim, a firebrand preacher from the eastern town of Kathankudy, who propagated an extremist version of Islam. The NTJ, which was formed in 2014 according to a report published in The Hindu maintained its stronghold in the Eastern Province but was also able to attract a few Muslim youth from the western and central parts of Sri Lanka. It was to emerge later that the group was known to the intelligence services who had been following their activities and movements.

In the aftermath of the attacks, the Islamic State, a terrorist group operating mainly in the Middle East, claimed responsibility for them through their 'Amaq' news agency. Although the attacks mimicked the style and modus operandi of IS attacks, there has been no strong evidence to date that the attacks were carried out directly by the group other than through inspiring the NTJ.

3 - SELECTION OF TARGETS

The attacks appeared to be well planned. The day, the timing, the locations and the targets were all highly significant. The targets had been selected to cause not only maximum loss of life but also to pit the entire country against the Muslim community. The two churches that were attacked in the Western Province belonged to the Catholic denomination. St. Anthony's Church in Kochchikade, Colombo catered to both Tamil and Sinhalese Catholics. At the time of the attack the Tamil mass was being conducted. The Katuvapitiya church catered to mainly Sinhalese Catholics. On the other hand, The Zion church in Batticaloa served mainly Tamil Christians belonging to the Evangelical Church and it is rumoured that the church was only attacked because the bomber missed the mass at the catholic church in Batticaloa, which was the original target. The other set of targets consisted of luxury hotels in Colombo that catered to mainly foreign guests, many of them who had come to celebrate Easter in Sri Lanka.

4 - REACTIONS TO THE BOMBING

4.1 - The Government

Soon after the attacks, a letter dated 11th April claimed to have been endorsed by the Inspector General of Police and sent to senior police officials warning of a terrorist attack that is being planned by Zahran Hashim began to circulate in the social media. It appeared that the government had received clear warnings from intelligence services of several other countries, especially India, that a terrorist attack was imminent. The New York Times reporting on this stated in its article of 22nd April 2019 that *“Ten days before devastating bombings on Easter Sunday, a top Sri Lankan police official warned the security services in an advisory that a little-known radical Islamist group was planning suicide attacks against churches. Top government officials say the warning never reached them, and no action was taken against the group.”* The Sirisena – Wickramasinghe government’s response to the attacks could be modestly termed as chaotic. The two leaders, who had fallen out with each other for some time, following the October 2018 constitutional crisis, when Prime Minister Wickremasinghe was sacked for a few months by the President, blamed each other and their loyalists within the security establishment for the grave lapse in national security. The BBC interviewed Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe a few days after the attack and reported his response in its report of 26th April as follows:

Sri Lanka's prime minister has told the BBC he was "out of the loop" when it came to intelligence warnings ahead of the deadly Easter Sunday bombings. Ranil Wickremesinghe said that crucial information about any potential danger in the country was not passed to him. The subsequent attacks, which claimed at least 250 lives, exposed a massive intelligence failure by Sri Lanka. The country's police chief and top defence ministry official have both resigned over the bombings. But Mr Wickremesinghe argued the fact that he was unaware of the warnings meant he did not need to step down from his position. "If we had any inkling, and we had not taken action, I would have handed in my resignation immediately," he said, adding: "But what do you do when you are out of the loop? If we had any inkling, and we had not taken action, I would have handed in my resignation immediately," he said, adding: "But what do you do when you are out of the loop?"

President Maithreepala Sirisena who was out of the country at the time of the attack rushed back to the island. On 24th April, he asked the Secretary of the Ministry of Defence and the Inspector General of Police to resign. The Economic Times reporting on 26th April reported as follows: *Sirisena said the intelligence supplied by a friendly nation was not shared with him by officials. All they have done was to exchange letters among themselves. I asked both police chief and defence secretary why the information was not shared with me, they remained silent," he said.* President Maithreepala Sirisena appointed a five member Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Easter Sunday Attack via an extraordinary gazette issued on 21st September, 2019. The report of the PCol was handed over to the now president Gotabaya Rajapaksa on 1st February 2021.

4.2 - The Christian Community

Even while the Christian community bore the brunt of the terror attacks, the Christian leadership, both the Catholic and the Anglican churches showed great restraint and calm, and played a key role in containing the emotions of their followers. Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith called for peace and harmony to prevail in the country.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, the archbishop of Colombo, expressed his "deepest sorrow and sympathy" for those affected by the attacks and called on the government to find those responsible for the deadly blasts and "punish them mercilessly:"

"I would also like to ask the government to hold a very impartial strong inquiry and find out who is responsible behind this act and also to punish them mercilessly," he said. Cardinal Ranjith, however, also stressed that Sri Lankans should respect the rule of law, saying "I ask all our Sri Lankan people not to take the law into their own hands and to maintain peace and harmony in this country." reported DW.

The then Anglican Bishop of Colombo Dhiloraj Canagasabey also called for calm. He said in a statement reported by ACNS: "The Church of Ceylon unreservedly condemns these cowardly and cruel acts of terrorism and conveys our deep condolences to the families and friends of those who have lost their lives and have been hurt. We wish all those who have been injured full recovery. We pray for them and their families, that God's comforting presence will continue to be with them through this tragic experience.

"We call on the government to institute quick action to investigate thoroughly these incidents and to bring the perpetrators to justice. To ensure the safety of places of religious worship and to prevent any individuals or group taking the law into their hands or provoking acts of intimidation or violence against any community or group.

"I call on all Sri Lankans to be mindful at this time and to act with patience and understanding. The motives of those twisted and warped minds that planned and executed such appalling acts could very well be to destabilise the country and to cause damage to the unity and harmony of our nation."

Despite a few incidents, the Christian community largely heeded to these calls and maintained calm while coping with their losses, grief, and sorrow with prayer.

4.3 - The Muslim Community's Reaction

If the attacks came as a shock to all Sri Lankans, it was even a further shock to the Muslim community, as they were watching the events in the media with complete disbelief. Even though there had been a few indications of extremism and radicalisation prevalent among the Muslims as revealed lately by the attacks on



A Muslim walks past a banner on a mosque wall during the Friday prayers in Colombo [Dinuka Liyanawatte/Reuters]

Buddha statues in the Mawanella area in December 2018, they appeared to be completely taken by surprise with the attacks. The Muslim community in Sri Lanka mobilised to condemn the Easter Sunday attacks at all levels. Muslim religious leaders and scholars distanced themselves and their religion from the attacks and their perpetrators pointing out that terrorism had no place in Islam and that the attacks were in violation of the teachings of Islam. Islamic scholars, Muslim civil society leaders and Muslim politicians condemned the attacks through media statements and briefings, messages of condolences, by visiting Christian and Catholic leaders

in a show of solidarity with them. Muslim parliamentarians made statements in Parliament condemning the attack and distancing the Muslim community from the heinous acts of the perpetrators. Moulavi, Mufti M I M Rizvi, President of the All Ceylon Jammiyathul Ulama, the highest body of Islamic scholars in the country,

PRESS RELEASE

The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka (MCSL) condemns the attacks on the places of worship of our Christian brothers and sisters on their holy day of Easter, as well as on the hotels in Colombo.

We mourn the loss of innocent lives due to extremist and violent elements who wish to create divides between religious and ethnic groups to realize their agenda. This is a deliberate attempt to create panic and disrupt civil life.


The fundamental teachings of all faiths are Peace and Justice. We strongly condemn violence and extremism in all its forms.

We call upon His Excellency, President Maithripala Sirisena and the Government of Sri Lanka to conduct a comprehensive inquiry and bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice.

We also call upon the Muslim community to provide any assistance needed to the affected people.

We express our deepest condolences to the families bereaved in this attack, and offer our heartfelt prayers for the speedy recovery of those injured.

In solidarity,


(FOR) - N. M. Ameen
 President
 MCSL

21st April 2019

released a video statement on 22nd April condemning the attack¹, emphasising that terrorism had no place in Islam. He also expressed solidarity with the Christian community. Rauf Hakeem, Leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), one of the main Muslim minority parties in Sri Lanka, made a speech in the parliament immediately after the bomb blast. While he condemned the act, he thanked the leaders of the Christian faith for their tolerance. In a press release on the day of the attack, N M Ameen, President of the Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, a prominent Muslim civil society organisation, also condemned the attack. These were followed by many other organisations and prominent individuals who expressed their shock and condemnation of the attacks. Muslim businessmen on their part made donations and offered financial help to rebuild the churches as well as to assist the victims and their facilities.

5 – INSTIGATING THE MASSES, INCREASING TENSIONS

Despite these calls for calm, and assurances that the Muslim community will not be targeted, it became increasingly apparent that official and unofficial measures taken by the government, private sector, the media and certain leaders of other communities began targeting the entire community.

In one of the first official signs that the anger was gradually turning against the entire Muslim community, on 29th April 2019 the government imposed a blanket ban on face coverings normally worn by Muslim women. In a statement issued by the President’s Office on 28th April, it was stated that all face coverings that hinder



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the identification of persons were banned with immediate effect under emergency regulations. Human rights organisations as well as most Muslim community leaders rejected the move stating that it will only ostracise the entire Muslim community, pointing out that neither the suicide bombers nor their female family members were wearing face coverings. However the ban did receive support from a section of the Muslim community

House to house searches started almost immediately after the attacks, and it was obvious that Muslim houses were disproportionately targeted for the searches. Arrests were made, many of them under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act. Mainstream media channels provided wide coverage to these raids, often twisting or falsifying facts.

¹ <https://acju.lk/en/videos/item/1716-acju-media-statement-on-22-04-2019-regarding-easter-sunday-attacks-tamil>

Social media, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp platforms were used to spread hate messages against the Muslim community, some calling for the total annihilation of the Muslim population in the country.

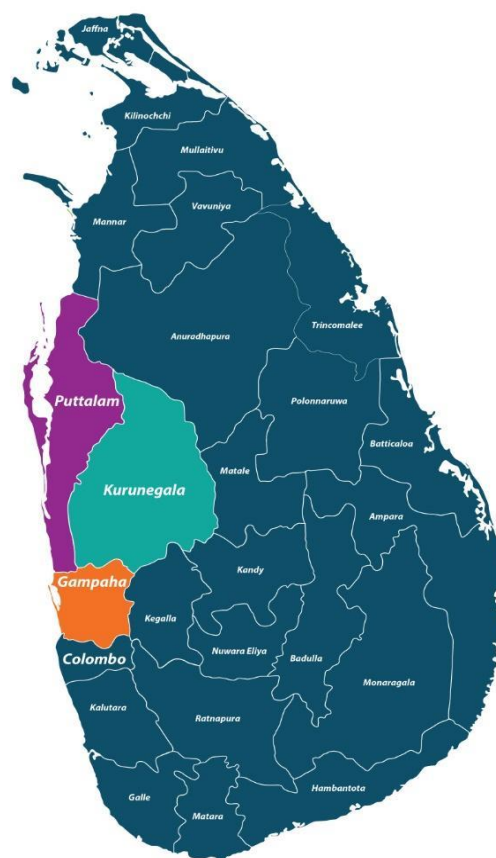
In a sign of growing tensions, around 800 refugees including families had to be relocated from their homes in Negombo as landlords asked them to vacate their houses in fear of mob attacks. The refugees, mainly minority Christians and other faiths from Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Yemen, were under the care of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and had fled persecution for not being Muslim, were ironically targeted for ‘appearing Muslim’². Other incidents included an occasion where 12 Muslim female teachers working in a school in Puwakpitiya being refused entry to the school as they wore ‘Abaya’ or a dress normally worn by Muslim women that covers the head. The teachers had to be redeployed to another school through the intervention of the Governor of the Western Province³.

Tensions started brewing even further with instigative and inflammatory statements particularly coming out of certain leaders of the Sinhala Buddhist community who were known for their extreme anti-Muslim views. By 11th May 2019 it was evident that a major riot was in the making.

6 – THE CHILAW ATTACK

The trigger to the large scale attacks came from Chilaw, a town in the North Western province, about 45 kilometers north of Katuwapitiya, Negambo. A Facebook post made by a person identified as Hasmar Hameed with the words “Don’t laugh more 1 day you will cry” was interpreted as a threat to public peace. According to Hasmar’s father a mob of 50 to 60 had arrived in the morning while Hasmar was at his shop, dragged him out and brutally assaulted him for about 10 to 15 minutes before the army and police arrived and his son was arrested by police. However, by noontime on the 12th a mob of several hundred people gathered in the Chilaw town⁴, attacking Muslim businesses and a mosque. The police imposed curfew in the town. However tensions had risen to such an extent that violence soon started spreading to other nearby areas. Hasmar’s ordeal was to last 72 days with him first being put in Police remand custody and then being taken to Mahara prison until his father’s relentless efforts and money was spent before being produced in court and released on bail.

Soon the attacks were to spread to the North Western Province. In the afternoon of 12th May, reports started emerging that mosques, houses, businesses and properties such as vehicles in Bingiriya, Kinyama and Kuliypitiya in the



Picture: District map of Sri Lanka
(Affected districts are highlighted)

² Daily Mirror, 9 May 2019

³ Adaderana, 9 May 2019

⁴ <https://www.dailysabah.com/asia/2019/05/12/mosques-muslim-businesses-attacked-in-sri-lanka-after-facebook-row>

Kurunegala district were being attacked.⁵ The government imposed curfew in those areas but such measures were grossly inadequate to quell the violence. Although a few individuals were arrested they were soon to be released by the police due to pressure by the mobs and an influential politician surrounding the police and demanding their release.

The attacks continued through the 13th to 15th May. More violence was reported from surrounding areas in the Kurunegala district⁶, in Hettipola, Bandara Koswatte, Kekunagolla, Panduwasnuwara, Anukkana, Kobeigane, Edandawela, Karanhippala and Bingiriya in particular, from the morning of the 14th. Mobs roaming freely, extensively damaging properties, shops, houses and mosques, and looting from houses and shops⁷. As it went on largely unabated, the violence extended to Minuwangoda, Kottaramulla and Thummodara in the Gampaha district, areas closer to Catholic majority areas such as Negombo, Wennappuwa, Chilaw and Nattandiya.

“Brother, it’s gone. Everything’s gone. They broke my house, my shop, my three-wheeler. The TV, the fridge, everything. They smashed everything. Not sure if they are going to attack us now...I am hiding in the bushes now...My kids are in one place, I am in another place...My mother is also hiding somewhere in the bushes. They are deliberately planning this, I told you...About 50 people are coming (to attack us) There’s no one here to organize (help) us.”

-Victim (anonymous), Anukkana, Kurunegala District

13th May 2019

One of the biggest single acts of destruction of property was that of the Diamond Roza Pasta Factory. Diamond Pasta, Sri Lanka’s largest Pasta factory, whose owners were Muslim, was destroyed by mobs, which used high tech equipment for their acts of destruction. The factory employed over 30 staff. The damage to this factory alone exceeded Rs. 700 million (aprx USD 4 million)⁸.

⁵ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/mobs-attack-mosques-muslim-owned-shops-and-homes-in-sri-lanka-kurunegala-district/article27119473.ece>

⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sri-lanka-blasts-socialmedia/sri-lanka-clashes-kill-one-imposes-nationwide-curfew-after-mosques-attacked-idUSKCN1SJ02I>

⁷ <http://www.ft.lk/news/Mobs-cause-mayhem-across-Muslim-villages-in-NWP/56-678190>

⁸ <http://www.ft.lk/front-page/Mobs-destroy-SL-s-largest-pasta-factory/44-678218>

7 – LOSS OF LIFE

Although the target of the organised mobs were to attack and destroy the economy of the Muslims, they did not hesitate to attack anyone who stood in their way. One such victim of the mob attacks was Fauzul Ameen a 49-year-old carpenter who was brutally hacked to death at his house cum workshop when he tried to protect it from being burnt down. He was slashed with swords and sharp objects by the mobs and chemicals were poured into his wounds to aggravate the suffering. He was admitted to the Marawila hospital with fatal injuries and pronounced dead soon afterwards. Ameen was survived by his wife, herself a cancer patient, and four young children. His wife has since passed away and the orphaned children are now under the care of Fauzul Ameen’s brother, himself victimised during the attack. The five persons arrested for his murder have since been freed on bail.



Picture: Relatives mourn beside a coffin of Fauzul Ameen, the victim of anti-Muslim riots, during a burial ceremony in a Muslim cemetery in Nattandiya on May 14, 2019. / AFP

8 – LOSS OF PROPERTY

The violence that continued largely unabated for over three days left a trail of destruction of Muslim houses, businesses, properties and places of worship. Soon after the attacks, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, one of the main political parties in the country commissioned a loss assessment, and published an extensive report that included a compilation of individual reports of losses. The report claims that 24 mosques, 181 houses, 100 businesses, 58 vehicles and 363 properties were either totally or partially destroyed. The study estimates the total loss at LKR 1.197 billion, approximately USD 6.8 million⁹.

DISTRICTS WHERE ATTACKS TOOK PLACE	MOSQUES		HOUSES		BUSINESSES		VEHIC LES	Total No of Properties Destroyed/ Damaged	TOTAL LOSS IN LKR MILLION
	Nos	Loss in LKR Million	Nos	Loss in LKR Million	Nos	Loss in LKR Million			
Puttalam	04	0.66	033	45.60	02	001.35	09	048	047.62
Kurunegala	19	19.23	110	29.60	36	126.00	36	201	174.83
Gampaha	01	1.50	038	03.07	62	970.00	13	114	974.57
GRAND TOTAL	24	21.4	181	78.27	100	1,097.35	58	363	1,197.02

Table: SLMC - Loss assessment of damaged properties in monetary value

The SLMC report identifies 15 towns and villages in three districts that were attacked and where houses, businesses and properties were destroyed or damaged.

⁹ At the exchange rate of USD1 = LKR 178

Kurunegala District		Gampaha District	Puttalam District
Bandara Koswatta	Kottaramulla	Dalupotha	Bujjampola
Ehatamulla	Madige Anukkana	Ethukala	Nattandiya
Hettipola	Nikawarattiya	Minuwangoda	
Kiniyama	Thorakotuwa	Periyamulla	
Kottamba Pitiya			

Further analysing the damages inflicted by the organized mobs, the *SLMC's Report on the Attacks Against the Muslims in the Aftermath of 4/21 Easter Sunday Suicide Bombings in Sri Lanka* argues that the riots were an organized effort to systematically destroy economic interests of the Muslims. It states: “ Amongst the properties damaged in the recent violent attacks, a large number is from the Kurunagala District amounting to 55 % of the total number of damaged properties. 31 % and 13 % are from Gampaha and Puttalam districts respectively.

“This may be due to the locations of the properties selected for attacks. The Muslim-owned properties that were surrounded by the neighbourhoods of the Sinhalese Buddhists were easy targets. The findings pointedly indicate two things. First, the Muslim businesses that are located in the majority Sinhalese townships are not safe. Second, small Muslim settlements amongst Sinhalese villages are vulnerable at all times.

“In the case of large-scale Muslim businesses their locations have been selected where it has been easy and quick to mobilize sufficient manpower from the majority Sinhalese community to engage in violence and attack. Such locations have now become disadvantageous for Muslim businesses because of the risk of ethnic and religious riots taken place frequently.”



Pictures: Al Jazeera/Dinuka Liyanawatte/Reuters

8.1 Cries of Victims

8.1.1 Families - The memories of victims seeing their properties and livelihood being destroyed, in many cases in front of their own eyes, or while hiding terrified in fields behind their houses, not knowing what's going to happen next, thankful for once to the darkness of the night to save them from marauders are just as vivid when they retold as when it actually happened. The cries of the victimized families express the despair and anguish felt by them;

*“First about 25 to 30 of them came shouting and pelting stones at the mosque. They backed off in the face of resistance and came back like 500 to 1000 strong having told the police in Kinyama that Muslims have attacked. First they attacked my father’s shop, then started attacking the house... We locked our house and fled to the fields behind the house. Others in the village too had come there to hide. We didn’t file a complaint with police as we didn’t see any of the perpetrators being caught or arrested. If one person attacks it’s a fight and we could complain. But here it’s a mob attack.” – **Victim (anonymous), Hettipola, Kurunegala.***

*“On 13th May, 2019 morning I had received a call that we would be attacked that day. So we had taken important documents in a bag in case anything happens. Anticipating the attack, we had spent the night hiding in the fields behind our house. As there was no attack, we returned to the house at about 8.30 a.m. A nearby house was attacked around 9.30 a.m. The owners of that house complained to the police. That house was attacked again because of the owner’s complaint... About 10 minutes after breaking Ramazan fast there was a terrible noise and we fled the house again, carrying the children, forgetting even to close the door, running to hide in the fields behind. We didn’t complain to the Police as we had seen a nearby house being attacked again as revenge for complaining to the Police” – **Victim (anonymous), Bujjampola, Puttalam.***

*“My house is completely burned down. I have four children and doing broker business in Colombo. I was warned before the attack, to leave the house and if not I would be killed. My family had found safety in my Sinhalese neighbour’s house when they attacked. We couldn’t do anything. They burned seven other houses belonging to Muslims... Jewellery and other valuable goods had been stolen... my son complained to the Police and a court case is on-going ” – **Victim (anonymous), Kottaramulla, Puttalam.***

8.1.2 Businesses - Businesses were the most affected among properties destroyed by the mobs lending credit to the suspicion that the higher motives of the attack was to destroy the economy of Muslims. That business rivals from the majority community were also behind the scenes in at least some of the attacks in the past, in other areas, is well known. Thus that a second-in-command of a top anti-Muslim political party was caught in camera in close proximity to the marauding gangs in Minuwangoda and that he was in the company of a leading businessman from the majority Sinhalese community was a hot topic of discussion even in the parliament. A video-clip supporting the claim was circulating in the social media at the time. Some of those victimised expressed their desperation and misery as follows;

“We had closed all the shops. I was in Hettipola town at the time. I had heard of attacks happening there and gone to see. They were attacking the shops there. I rushed back to my shop thinking they might soon come here too. They came here hooting and in motor cycles, about 300 persons. I took my three-wheeler and parked it in the house opposite, thinking they will not attack there. But they attacked and flattened everything in front of our eyes and tried to attack us personally too. They burned this shop and also burned the three wheeler that I hid. Then they started attacking the mosque and houses.

*“My wife had a tailor shop here. I also had a saloon and communication shop. All were destroyed. I didn’t file complaint with the police as it could have repercussions as the perpetrators are also from this same village and a neighbouring village.” - **Victim Businessman (anonymous) Medige, Anukana, Kurunegala***

“We can’t do anything now. Earlier we had good business with two shops in front and behind. Now we got only one shop. Not much business here. ... Six to seven big time businessmen who were having flourishing

businesses here before the attack have closed the shops given to them. In our old shop we were doing around LKR 50,000 daily sales whereas now we do barely LKR 5000 daily.”

*“The old shop was taken on 99 years lease from the municipality and we were doing business for more than 40 years. Another 54 years remaining, but after the blast they said they will not allow us to do business here.”
“Actually the shop was burned about 1 hour after the attack started but they didn’t allow us to come here. It’s only in the morning we came here and saw it completely burned.” – **Victim Businessman (anonymous) Minuwangoda, Gampaha.***

8.1.3 Mosques - One important violation that deserves attention is the destruction and desecration of mosques. At least 24 mosques were attacked. Several were burnt down while others were set on fire and were partially damaged. Copies of the Holy Quran, the sacred book of Muslims were strewn on the ground, some piled up and burnt in a deliberate attempt to desecrate them and cause not only physical damage but also psychological harm and morally degrade and disintegrate the Muslims. How the attacks unfolded as told by the administration of an attacked mosque complex in Kurunegala was as follows:

*“Rumours were spread that explosives have been hidden in our areas and security forces searched but couldn’t find anything. Navy divers search the village tank and found nothing. Then the mob started shouting derogatory words against Muslims. Large numbers of youth came in to...Muslim villages and started to attack masjids (mosques). Minor damages were caused to two masjids and one masjid was fully damaged. Two Buddhist monks of the village had tried their best to discourage the perpetrators from attacking the mosques but have not been listened to by the mob. We, members of the mosque administration, filed a complaint with the Police on the same evening of the day of the attack. We gave a list of names of 20 suspects to the Police. When then they were summoned by the Police they started coming to my home saying they were not among the mob that attacked, that they would never do a thing like that and that they cannot go to the police. Lots of them came saying those things. Then we thought that we should not drag this matter for the sake of restoring neighbourly relationship in the future. We discussed this with retired principals, the Sinhala (school) principal and seniors in the village and together with two village monks went and informed the OIC of the police station that we would like to give Common Pardon (‘Podu Samawa’) to the suspects on their promise that they will not resort to such actions in the future. However, despite this, the suspects were served summons by the courts and we, together with the village monks decided to inform the judge at the next hearing about our decision to give common pardon to suspects.” – **Victim Former Mosque Administration (Anonymous), Kurunegala***

9 – COLLAPSE OF RULE OF LAW

Eyewitnesses and credible video footage suggest that law enforcement authorities failed to protect victims or to do enough to quell the mob violence. In some video footage, police and armed forces personnel were standing watching without any visible attempt to stop them while mobs went on rampage, attacking shops and properties. On other occasions CCTV footage suggested possible collusion by armed forces prompting the Commander of the Army to issue a statement denying colluding with anti-Muslim rioters¹⁰.

¹⁰ <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/sri-lanka-army-denies-colluding-with-anti-muslim-rioters-2038778>

Noting the gross failure of law enforcement and security authorities to protect civilians, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, in the report on his mission to Sri Lanka in August 2019 states:

“Many complained about the role of the authorities in protecting communities against violence, citing the inability or the unwillingness of the authorities to protect communities against threats and acts of violence. Some expressed surprise and dismay that large mobs could openly and for several hours rampage through minority community neighbourhoods without hindrance or reaction from law enforcement authorities, or that these authorities fail to make adequate provision for protection even when some of the rioting continued on for several days. In some cases, these attacks took place during curfew hours. These happened during the riots in Kandy district last year, and yet again in May this year in several locations in the Western and North Western provinces.

“Some also expressed concern about perceived bias in the way the police addressed complaints. This was particularly the case where the assailants were members of the majority community. Many complained that either police failed to register and investigate complaints raised by them or that they would act in a punitive manner on complaints raised against them while failing to take similar measures when they were the target of attacks, or that generally the police were unsure on how to act in responding to infringements of the law by Buddhist monks.

“Some blamed politicians for influencing law enforcement citing examples where politicians were allegedly involved in pressuring the police to release persons arrested following violent attacks. Others blamed a more deep-seated culture of impunity which undermined the rule of law and human rights.”

10 – IMPUNITY

Although over a hundred suspects had been arrested in connection with the violence, as of September 2019, no meaningful prosecution has been done, nor have any of the suspects been convicted. The majority of the arrests in connection with anti-Muslim riots have been made under lesser criminal charges such as misdemeanour. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka observed that *“Upon examining the records of the Bingiriya police station, our Commission observed that, while the suspects had been taken in for engaging in communal riots (bailable only in exceptional circumstances by the High Court) they had been released on police bail for mischief, as stated above. Further, we noted that there was no record of transfer of suspects from Bingiriya to Hettipola and back. This very problematic situation is compounded by allegations of political interference”*. Most of the initially detained suspects have been released on bail - some at the behest of influential politicians, as reported previously and corroborated by the report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief¹¹.

The (independent) Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka also expressed concern about the situation of impunity towards the attacks. Following a visit to the area, on the 23rd of May 2019, in a strongly worded letter to the acting Inspector General of Police expressed its concern about the human rights situation of the affected population, and urged the acting IGP to take immediate necessary action. It specifically highlighted the issue of impunity and bias as follows:

¹¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24918&LangID=E>

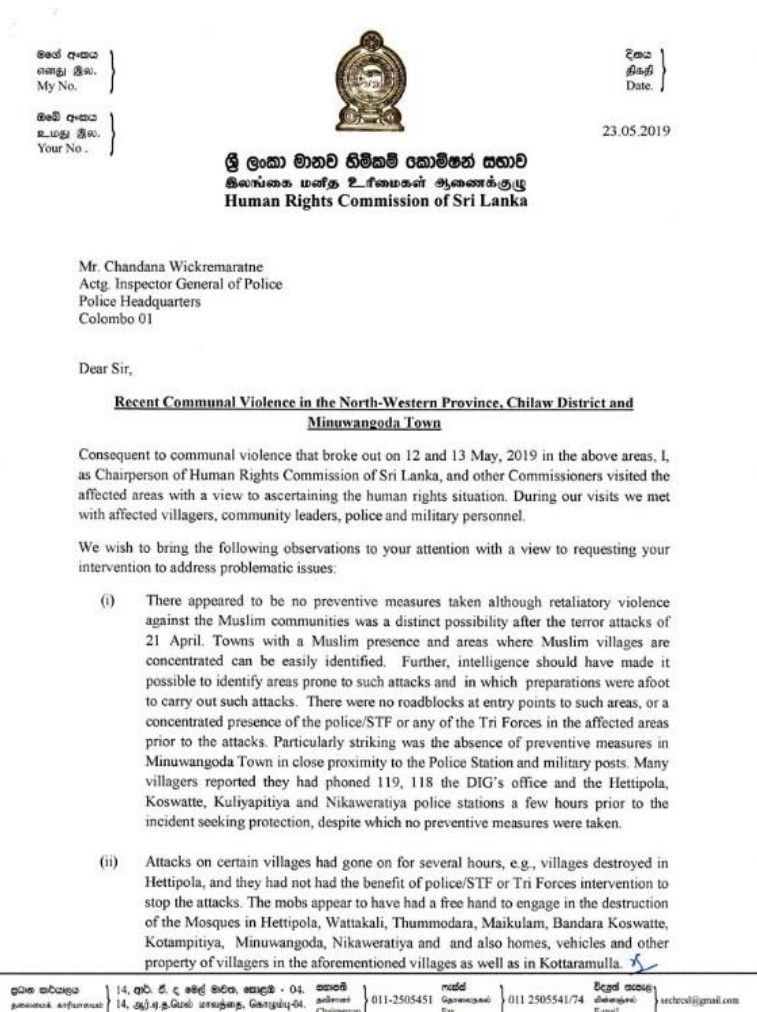
“Upon examining the records of the Bingiriya police station, our Commission observed that, while the suspects had been taken in for engaging in communal riots (bailable only in exceptional circumstances by the High Court) they had been released on police bail for mischief, as stated above. Further, we noted that there was no record of transfer of suspects from Bingiriya to Hettipola and back. This very problematic situation is compounded by allegations of political interference.

“Also, in Kuliyaipitiya on 13 May, the police decided to accede to the demands of the mob and released 4 people who had been taken to the station for questioning regarding attacks on four shops in Karanthipola. As soon as they were released, the mob attacked all Muslim owned shops in Kuliyaipitiya town during the curfew and went on to attack shops all the way to Rambawewa. Also, the Koswatte Police had released four persons on 15 May who had been arrested in relation to the attack in Kottaramulla. The OIC Reported that he had done so due to orders from the Actg. IGP.”

11 – HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The post Easter Sunday attacks on the Muslim community of Sri Lanka is yet another example of gross human rights violations and subsequent impunity that has become the norm in Sri Lanka in its recent history. It shows

- the blatant disregard of the Sri Lankan authorities, of their obligations towards the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the Sri Lankan Constitution.



Sri Lanka Brief¹², in its Briefing Notes Issue No 15th of June 2019 also highlights a number of human rights concerns including the right to life, impunity of leaders, imposition of emergency rule and reprisal attacks against refugees. .

RIGHT TO LIFE AND IMPUNITY OF LEADERS, EMERGENCY RULE, REPRISALS AGAINST REFUGEES.

Further to the above it also points out a very alarming violation, which is the denial of access to legal support for Muslim victims. The Briefing Note states: “The Human Rights Commission also pointed out that members of certain regional Bar Associations (e.g., Mawanella and Badulla) have refused to appear on behalf of members of the

¹² <https://srilankabrief.org/briefing-notes/>

Muslim community arrested after April 21 violent attacks. As a result, family members of those arrested have been compelled to obtain services of lawyers from other regions entailing much financial hardship and inconvenience. 'It was also observed that members of the Nikaweratiya Bar had protested when police had requested court not to grant bail to those arrested on suspicion of participating in the communal violence perpetrated on 13th May in some parts of the country', reported the Commission."¹³

The riots and the impunity that followed have violated the victims' right to life and personal security, right to equality by biased law enforcement, the right to freedom from discrimination by the exercise of discriminatory laws and regulations as well as discriminatory application of laws, the right to freedom from torture and degrading treatment, the right to equality before the law, the right to Remedy by a competent tribunal, the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right to own property, the right to belief and religion, and the right to opinion and freedom of expression, just to name a few.

12 – TWO YEARS ON, RECOVERY & REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS

The attack targeted Muslim inhabitants of 15 towns and villages in three districts that are either sandwiched between or bordering predominantly Sinhalese majority areas. The SLMC report identifies damages to properties as: damages to 24 mosques, 181 Houses, 100 Businesses and 58 vehicles amounting to a total loss of LKR 1.197 billion, approximately USD 6.8 million¹⁴. One fatality was recorded; a father of four, cut and stabbed to death, by mobsters belonging to Sinhalese majority community, while trying to prevent destruction of his livelihood.

Now, almost 2 years since the attack, the question arises as to how the victims have come through the physical, economical, psychological effects on them. The government in the immediate aftermath of the attack had promised to pay compensation to the victims. The Divisional Secretary's office distributed application forms to the victims, did field visits to assess the losses incurred and passed on the finalized assessments to the compensation process. The situation of victims, their recovery and rehabilitation was discerned through victim testimonies.

12.1 Methodology

An insight into the status of recovery of the victims was obtained in November-December 2020 through interviews with a cross section of the victims. 14 interviewees from among victims in Kurunegala, Gampaha and Puttalam districts responded to a common set of questions pertaining to progress of recovery and rehabilitation. The semi-structured questions guided the interviewer to ask questions in order to obtain open ended qualitative answers in a logical sequence.

12.2 Key Findings

The following are the key findings:

- Most victims say that the government did assess their losses, though a few have said they didn't want to go through the hassle.

¹³ <http://www.hrcsl.lk/documentation/statements-recommendations/>

¹⁴ Using the exchange of USD 1 = LKR 176.5 at the time

“My motor bike was damaged and it was registered in my brother-in law’s name; and his own bike too was damaged and compensation was paid for that only. They did not pay compensation for my damaged bike. On pursuing with matter, I was asked to bring the damaged bike to Kurunegala town to get the compensation. I gave up the effort after that. Many other such victims are yet to be paid and are being sent from pillar to post in order to get the compensation. I got the repairs done with my own money.” – Victim (anonymous), Midiyala, Kurunegala

- There is general dissatisfaction on the amount of compensation received while some say they have not received any compensation at all. The destruction of documentary proof along with property in many cases prevented proper assessment of value of destroyed property.

“My loss was 80 lakhs and I applied for 60 lakhs for government compensation but they only gave 10 lakhs. Those who came to assess the damage couldn’t see the goods we had as it was fully burnt. We didn’t have all the bills computerized. Most were On- Approval bills.

Most of our traders are ordinary small time businessmen. So we had to asked for the loans soon as we received small compensation amounts. Jammiyathul Ulema gave us only 15 lakhs. We are managing with difficulty. Here 14 shops were burned down and in place of that Jamiyathul Ulama built 28 shops. The Municipality has sold off some of those shops.”

– Victim Businessman (anonymous) Minuwangoda, Gampaha.

- While most victims have applied for compensation from the government, there is marked reluctance to file police complaints or to even pursue already filed legal cases seeking redress. In fact, some complaints made to the police were on the verge of being withdrawn by the victims at the time of the interviews.

Many victims express the sentiment:

“... what happened has happened and it’s better not to file cases to seek legal redress as it would arouse the ire of the perpetrators and would lead to retaliation, especially in the prevailing situation of impunity”

Many said that they did not file cases with the police because it’s impossible to identify perpetrators in mob violence such as this. They have lost hope in the system having seen those assigned to protect them, i.e. the police and security forces, not doing so. They say it is the duty of the government to identify perpetrators and file cases.

When we returned we found they have attacked our house and damaged the windows. My car and bike were fully damaged. We did not file a police complaint as we were afraid of revenge attacks if we complain, as happened to the neighbouring house which was burned down because the owner complained.” – Victim (anonymous), Bujjampola, Puttalam.

- In the case of the sole fatality recorded from the attack, that of a father of four, a carpenter by profession, compensation of LKR one million has been paid to the next of kin. His wife too has since passed away through illness. The orphaned children are now cared for by the victim's brother who himself was victimized and compensated only for the damage to his house but not for the destruction of his motor bike. The five accused in his brother's murder have been freed on bail now.
- The SLMC report counts 100 businesses as suffered mob attacks and damage to equipment, stocks and building. Some of the medium to small range businesses interviewed said compensation received was not sufficient. One said they received money from insurance but that the government deducted that amount when they paid the compensation. They are trying to revive their businesses with additional assistance from other donors like local branches of the All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulema, etc. Some have taken loans to revive but are now in debt as they are unable to settle the loans, as level of business has not returned to normal.

“ My shop was completely destroyed. My loss is an estimated LKR 30.28 million but received compensation only LKR 3.6 million even though I had claimed only LKR 20 million. I had kept all my bills safely at home and had submitted all the bills as required. Jammiyathul Ulema gave us LKR 2.5 million. At the time my shop was burnt I had debt for LKR 8.8 million and to reopen I had purchased goods on LKR 10.6 million credit on the promise that I will repay from seasonal sales. But due to Corona it did not happen and I am indebted now. I didn't file a complaint with the police ”

– Victim Businessman (anonymous), Minuwangoda, Gampaha

- One of the largest affected businesses, Diamond Pasta, Sri Lanka's largest pasta factory, owned by Muslims was completely destroyed. The damage to this factory alone exceeded Rs. 700 million (aprx USD 4 million)¹⁵. No information was available of compensation received or status of recovery. One of its employees is still recovering from injuries sustained when jumping out of a window to escape from the attacking mob and fire that engulfed the factory due to arson. He is not able to do hard work now. He says the government did not pay compensation for his injuries or for the LKR 200,000/- cost of treatment he has incurred.
- Mosques damaged by mobs have restored normalcy with community support and compensation received from government. One mosque's administration said that details of the attack have been provided to Presidential Commission of Inquiry.

Another mosque administration is being coerced into 'amicably' settling the case now being heard in the courts, with the intervention of village monks and others, as the accused and their relatives have pleaded with them to do so. It was said that, at the time of the attack, the monks had pleaded with the mobsters not to attack the mosque but have not been listened to.

¹⁵ <http://www.ft.lk/front-page/Mobs-destroy-SL-s-largest-pasta-factory/44-678218>

“ The BRO estimated the damage to the mosque properties as LKR 30 lakhs. The government paid LKR 15 lakhs only. The damage to the gate alone cost the mosque LKR 5 lakhs. It was because of the strong gate the mobsters could not enter and do more destruction...They had thrown sacks of coconut shells in to the mosque and had attempted, but failed, to burn the mosque. Throwing stones, they had broken the windows. From footage of the CCTV installed in the front several mobsters were identified and arrested by the police. The *Hazrat* (preacher) at the mosque appeared at the Presidential Commission of Inquiry and has given details about this. Many say that the second-in-command of an anti-Muslim political party was involved in the attacks here but up to now no action has been taken.”

-- **Minuwangoda Town Masjid Administration, Minuwangoda, Gampaha**

12.3 Analysis

Findings from the Interviews with the victims reveal a marked reluctance of victims to file police complaints. Of the 14 interviewees, only two individual victims responded that some semblance of a court case is still ongoing and out of that too, one is to do with the only fatality of the attack and of which the five accused are already freed on bail. The other case involved the ransacking of a victim's house and theft of jewellery and other valuables before burning it down.

In another revelation, the case filed by the common administration of three mosques naming 20 persons as accused in attacking and damaging the mosques was moving towards pardoning by the plaintiff presumably for the sake of future good relations with the majority community. One should remember that of the more than 100 suspects arrested, no meaningful prosecution has been done, nor have any of the suspects been convicted. In addition, the majority of the arrests in connection with anti-Muslim riots have been made under lesser criminal charges such as misdemeanour. Topics, once discussed even in parliament, of politicians' alleged interference with law and order to release mobsters arrested by police, and caught in camera while being in locations where the violence was raging are now swept under the carpet.

Thus, it appears that this latest mob attack on Muslims is going the same way that all the previous crimes committed during the anti-Muslim riots of the past did.

Almost all victims who received compensations say that the amounts paid as compensation are unreasonably low. According to most victims, the destruction of documentary proof along with destruction of properties has led to difficulties in assessing the true values of movable properties. On the other hand, one of the interviewees, a businessman, says he had kept safely and submitted all bills required to establish the value of damaged property and yet received only a fraction of the claimed value as compensation. He is however reluctant to appeal against the seemingly unfair assessment of his losses, similar to the reluctance shown by most victims towards seeking legal redress.

The SLMC report, based on analysis of the damages to properties caused in this attack as well as other previous attacks, argues that the riots were an organized effort to systematically destroy economic interests of the Muslims.

The prevalence of impunity in conjunct with victims giving up on mechanisms available for legal redress, whether it be due to fear of retaliation by perpetrators or animosity shown towards victims by authorities

tasked with operating those mechanisms, will pave the way for achieving the motives of the perpetrators of the attack, perhaps encouraging further atrocities against minorities.

Furthermore, the Muslim extremist fringe group, by their Easter Sunday Attack, made easy the task of extremists among the majority community. This time around, the animosity among the majority community towards Muslims is much more widespread due to natural emotions of pain and anger felt at the loss of lives, injury, and seeing and being part of grief stricken families of victims who are kith and kin. Saner council among majority community has much lesser chance of prevailing at this time, unlike during past attacks by extremists on Muslims. More dangerously, such emotions may find expression in day-to-day interactions between communities at various levels in governance designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation of all communities in the country. The Muslim community is thus in double jeopardy of now being easy targets of extremists on one hand and being given up on, for the time being, by the saner elements among the majority Sinhalese community due to emotional turmoil. Restoring peace and harmony between communities, if not done urgently by the government, could be fertile ground to be capitalized upon by extremist forces on all sides.

13 – CONCLUSION

With so many anti-Muslim riots happening since 2011 and no sign of the governments' political will to take measures that could prevent it happening again, there is no guarantee to the life and property of the Muslim minority community in the country today.

The collapse of Rule of Law, prevalence of impunity for perpetrators involved in attacks and systematic squeezing of legal avenues for victims' redress has left a permanent psychological effect on the victims. The Muslim minority community in Sri Lanka is presently caught in a perpetual vicious cycle of atrocities committed with impunity, inadequate compensations, systematic denial of access to legal redress and setting up the stage for a fresh round of atrocities upon the vulnerable minority community and repeat of the cycle all over again. Economic, social, cultural, religious and educational interests of the Muslim community are being twisted and tweaked for creating various excuses to instigate mob violence targeting those interests of the community. By the time these ruses are invariably exposed as myths, the damage is already done and core motives of the perpetrators achieved thus incentivising repetition of these schemes.

Justice, Equality and Accountability, as well as upholding the rule of law are essential if Sri Lanka is to come out of international disrepute, and progress as a credible state and as a member of the international community. Only justice for crimes committed in the past, sincere, concrete measures to prevent such crimes in the future can ensure true reconciliation and bring Sri Lanka out of the abyss it is currently heading towards.

The riots and the impunity that followed have violated the victims' right to life and personal security, right to equality by biased law enforcement, the right to freedom from discrimination by the exercise of discriminatory laws and regulations as well as discriminatory application of laws, the right to freedom from torture and degrading treatment, the right to equality before the law, the right to Remedy by a competent tribunal, the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right to own property, the right to belief and religion, and the right to opinion and freedom of expression, just to name a few.

If the human rights community – both inside and outside Sri Lanka – remain silent, this heinous crime might simply add to the long list of injustices against minorities in Sri Lanka and become part of the tainted history of the country.

In situations such as this it's important that the Government and security forces take urgent action against hate crimes and ensure that the perpetrators of such actions were swiftly brought to justice. It is vital that all political leaders, religious and other community leaders condemn violence and make every effort to promote understanding and harmony between communities upholding Sri Lanka's social stability and ethnic solidarity. Further any actions taken under the State of Emergency has to be proportionate and respect constitutional rights and freedoms.

How Sri Lanka handles the aftermath of the Easter attacks – the reforms it chooses to pursue, and the way in which it manages inter communal rifts that preceded and have been exacerbated by the attacks – could have an important impact on the country's peace and security over the longer term.

Ending impunity for attacks on Muslims require clear leadership from the top. However the signs appear sadly bleak, as the Crisis Group Report ¹⁶says, *'Noticeably missing from the government's (then) proposed reforms is ending impunity for violent and hateful acts against Muslims. Even the best-planned and sophisticated policy for countering violent extremism will likely fail so long as Muslims continue to be demonised, boycotted and attacked at will, with no consequences for those who organise and carry out the violence.'*

'Any new government policies need to avoid reinforcing the narrative that Muslims as a whole have become a problem in need of action, or obscuring the uncomfortable fact that the Easter bombers succeeded thanks principally to the failures of the state, not the Muslim community. If Sri Lanka's leaders want to raise their odds of avoiding future such incidents they should focus on addressing the former, and stop alienating the latter.'

In the wider context, the anti-Muslim violence in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks, was not a spontaneous retaliation for the Easter attacks, but a continuation of a years-long hate campaign against the Muslim community. It was the latent Muslim community in Sri Lanka has been suffering from continuous islamophobia on two fronts in the Post-war era which brought up the Muslim minority as the new 'other', and also due to global Islamophobia emulating a world-wide trend . Thus, the well-orchestrated yet subtle Islamophobia machinery began to work overtime vindicating anti-Muslim bigotry, which continues to date. Amidst the Corona pandemic, we are seeing the same machinery do its work again, in the form of continued demonisation and inhuman forced cremation policy which was reversed in February 2021 mostly due to international pressure, rather than a change of heart.

If the nation is to learn from history, and forge ahead, not only the government must combat impunity but it also must respect the legitimate concerns of the people, irrespective of racial or religious differences. Failure to do so fails humanity as a whole.

¹⁶ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/302-after-sri-lankas-easter-bombings-reducing-risks-future-violence>

14 – RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the current crisis, People's Rights Group calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to:

- Publicly commit to protecting all Sri Lankans - irrespective of race, ethnicity and religion - from violence motivated by hatred and racism.
- Cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms particularly those meant for observing violations of minority human rights.
- Conduct a full, impartial and independent investigation, including into the potential complicity, of the role of law enforcement authorities in the attacks against Muslim communities in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks of May 2019.
- Identify and prosecute without favour or bias, all those who were responsible for carrying out, as well as those responsible for instigating, directing and encouraging the attacks.
- Ensure that full compensation is paid to victims for their financial losses.
- Commit to allowing all individuals to exercise their right to freedom of expression and religion, without fear of being arrested, harassed or intimidated. Islam and Islamic institutions are part of Sri Lanka and adherents should be afforded freedom to worship

We also call upon civil society actors in Sri Lanka to:

- Publicly call out violence, acts of hate including hate speech, and violation of minority and human rights in Sri Lanka, particularly those committed and instigated by those in authority and power.
- Unequivocally and unconditionally condemn acts of violence against minorities.
- Bring to the attention of the international community of the plight of Sri Lankan Muslim communities through social media channels.
- Stand in solidarity with Sri Lanka's minority communities and the suffering that they face.
- Consistently monitor serious human rights violations in Sri Lanka and publicly condemn these violations.
- Support the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in implementing its mandate and programme in the country comprehensively .
- Strongly advocate for the Sri Lankan Government to cooperate with the United Nation Human Rights Council and to implement any recommendations presented by it and by UN Special Rapporteurs.
- Provide assistance to minority communities in areas such as legal representations, promoting an alternative narrative and in any other areas which can progress minority rights.
- Support human rights and civil society organisations that are working to document human rights abuses, provide legal support to victims and those that are working towards building grass-roots understandings of issues.