



CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES

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## Press Release

### The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) welcomes the interim order issued by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka

**9th June 2007, Colombo, Sri Lanka:** An interim order was issued by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka on the 8th of June 2007 directing the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapakse and eight other respondents preventing them from ordering the eviction of Tamil persons from Colombo. The interim order further prevents the respondents from preventing Tamil persons from entering and/or staying in any part of Colombo. The interim order was issued on the fundamental rights application made by the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA). The petitioners held that evicting Tamils from Colombo is wrongful, unlawful and illegal and violates the fundamental rights of those persons who were so evicted, guaranteed by Article 12 (1), 12(2), 13(1), 13(2) and 14(1)(h) of the Constitution. Article 12 provides that all citizens are equal before the law and ensures that no citizen shall be discriminated against grounds specified in the Constitution. Further, Article 14 (h) provides for the freedom of movement and the right to choose his residence within Sri Lanka.

The case was filed by CPA in response to the mass scale eviction of Tamils that took place on the 7th of June 2007. As reported in the media, the operation commenced in the early hours of the morning, police and army officers visited various lodges occupied predominantly by Tamils in Colombo and forcibly removing Tamils from these guesthouses. It was reported that people were given less than half an hour to pack all their belongings and board buses. Newspaper reports also raised the issue as to what the police considered as being a valid reason, given that a patient undergoing treatment and a woman who was to be married in a few days in Colombo were among those evicted. This move is directly attributed to the statement made by the IGP on the 1st of June, claiming that Tamil people cannot remain in Colombo without a valid reason.

CPA urges the authorities to take note of the interim order and to take measures to prevent future evictions from taking place. The evictions of 7th June, targeted a minority group who face multiple security threats in the North and East. Forcibly evicting them from Colombo and transporting them back to areas in the North and East not only raises serious breaches of human rights but further polarizes the ethnic communities and marginalizes the Tamil people of the Sri Lanka.