



CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES
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மாற்றுக் கொள்கைகளுக்கான நிலையம்

EFFECTIVE ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDED NOW TO COUNTER RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND TENSION

May 23rd 2017, Colombo, Sri Lanka: The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) is deeply concerned about recent attacks and threats against Muslim places of worship and businesses as well as the use of inflammatory and insulting rhetoric against Islam. CPA unreservedly condemns these actions and calls on the government and the law enforcement agencies to hold to account without delay those responsible for them and take preventative measures against such actions without delay. The failure to do so will nourish the politics of hate and harm and the culture of impunity, both of which were roundly rejected by our fellow citizens in 2015.

The need of the day is for reconciliation, peace and amity between all the peoples of our country. There is no place for hate and division. The government must honestly and actively pursue reconciliation. It must acknowledge the divisions within society and put in place mechanisms at the community and national level to heal them and prevent further division. Moreover, the basic tenets of good governance require that the law of the land be applied equally to all, without fear or favour, irrespective of the identity of the perpetrators of division and hate. The peace and prosperity that this country deserves will be seriously retarded if such actions are allowed to go unchecked and unpunished.

CPA reiterates that the existing legal framework provides law enforcement authorities with ample tools to prevent such incidents and arrest perpetrators. It is deeply troubling that law enforcement authorities use the existing legal regime to prevent and stifle other forms of peaceful protests and gatherings but continuously fail to show the same degree of enthusiasm and efficiency in apprehending the perpetrators of these attacks.

The President and current government, voted into office with the support of our fellow citizens of all ethnicities and faiths, must act with courage and foresight to halt this frightening and fatal trend. None of our fellow citizens should have to live in fear or be subjected to abuse and violence on religious grounds or indeed on account of deliberate falsehoods spread against them by purveyors of hate.

This government must act -fast and without room for any doubt. By word and by deed, it must send out a clear and cogent message that it stands for a united Sri Lanka with peace, amity and security for all of its peoples.