



CPA strongly condemns the violence in churches and hotels across Sri Lanka

21st April 2019, Colombo, Sri Lanka: The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) vehemently condemns today's attacks on three churches, three hotels and other locations across Sri Lanka that resulted in over 200 deaths and left over 450 injured. This shocking and senseless attack is the largest witnessed in post-war Sri Lanka. CPA extends its deep condolences to the families and loved ones of all victims of these attacks and urges the authorities to take immediate action to prevent such violence from spreading. Furthermore, we call upon those in authority to take speedy and decisive steps to hold all perpetrators to account without fear or favour.

CPA has continuously condemned the impunity that has prevailed following attacks on places of religious worship and affronts to the freedom of religion, which have been increasing in number in recent years. The most recent of these was a mere week ago, with the attack on the Methodist Prayer Centre in Kundichchaankulama, Anuradhapura, on the 14th of April 2019. CPA calls on the government to ensure that this impunity does not continue following today's attacks, and emphasises the need to protect the rights and safety of all religious minorities in the island.

The attack on hotels is clearly a horrific and premeditated attack on tourism in particular and the economy in general. Moreover it goes to the heart of the ability of the government to provide security to the people. We call upon the government to demonstrate its ability to do so and upon our fellow citizens to assist the government in this.

Today's incidents demonstrate the urgent need to move from the rhetoric of reforms and reconciliation to real action. We must desist from actions that lead to communal divisions, fear and hate. And we must ask for nothing less from our political and religious leaders, especially in this election year.