

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

PRESS RELEASE

IMADR strongly condemns the death threats and abuse against Nimalka Fernando, other Sri Lankan human rights defenders and political activists through state media

TOKYO, 12 November 2013 – *IMADR strongly condemns the death threats and abuse against Dr. Nimalka Fernando, President of IMADR, and any kind of reprisal and harassment against human rights defenders, as well as expresses its grave concern and protest against the Sri Lankan state media.*

On 4th November 2013, through a programme produced by the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation titled 'The way country is moving' (Rat Yana Atha), statements were made by callers urging the annihilation of Dr. Fernando and other human rights defenders for co-operating with the international community. The sub title of the Programme was 'Stoning the Sinner Woman'. They used a statement of Dr. Fernando made to a TV channel regarding making representation to the UN since 1989 with regard to human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

The statements of callers included but not limited as follows;

Call 1: "We cannot allow persons like Nimalka Fernando to live in this society"

Call 2: "We use insecticides to eliminate the spread of mosquitoes. Some mosquitoes develop a resistance to such spray. These people are like that. We have to find a method to destroy them."

Call 3: "If we do something to them the government, will be blamed by the human rights people. We should use a lorry and cause an accident."

Call 4: "There is something called cleaning in the army. Mr Gotabaya knows this. We should hand her over to the cleaning system."

Call 5: "Chairperson, today you have started a good activity. Continue this upto March 2014 and begin to deal with the NGO clan one by one."

In this programme, the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Co-operation did not disassociate himself from those comments. On the contrary, he joined them actively to promote such ideas during the radio programme. The discussion also supported the idea of "dealing with the NGO team one by one up to March 2014"

The GOSL has continued to intimidate and harass civil society activists for making submissions to the UN mechanisms, especially for engaging with the Human Rights Council to address human rights violations. The fact that state media is now allowed to openly be used to trigger the death of a **IMADR is an NGO in consultative status (Special) with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations**

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM prominent human rights defender and feminist in Sri Lanka is significantly concerning and regrettable.

Dr. Fernando has filed complaints with the Human Rights Commission in Sri Lanka and the Inspector General of Police calling for immediate investigation, to secure the tapes of the said programme since this is the only evidence available and take appropriate measures against those responsible for aiding and abetting to cause her death.

We urge you to send letters to the following:

- (1) His Excellency Mahinda Rajapakse
President
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Fax: 00 94 11 2542919
- (2) The Chairperson
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
Fax: 00 94 11 2694924
- (3) The Inspector General of Police
Police Headquarters
Colombo 01 – Sri Lanka
Fax: 00 94 11 2440440 Email: telligp@police.lk

*Dr. (Ms.) Nimalka Fernando, President of the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) is a prominent women's rights and human rights activist from Sri Lanka. She is also the Co-chairperson of South Asians for Human Rights and provides leadership to several South Asian networks including the South Asian Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) and the People's SAARC process. She is thereby one of our leading South Asian feminist and human rights defender. Dr. Fernando has been a long standing leader of the Mothers & Daughters of Lanka, Convener of the Platform for Freedom and various civil society networks in her country. She has been actively participating in and contributing to the UN Human Rights mechanisms, participating in treaty body meetings and sessions of the Human Rights Council for over three decades.

During the past several weeks she and other civil society activists have been organizing an alternative Civil Society Forum parallel to the People's Forum organized by the Commonwealth Foundation in collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL). The state media continued to campaign against Dr. Fernando and others involved in this activity.