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இலங்கை வர்த்தக, கைத்தொழில் பொதுத் தொழிலாளர் சங்கம் (சீஎம்யூ)
THE CEYLON MERCANTILE, INDUSTRIAL AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION (CMU)
අංක 3, බාලා තමිපො පටුමග කොළඹ 3 -, ල. 3, පාලා තම්පො ඉරුකුක කොමු 3 No. 3, Bala Tampoe Lane, Colombo3
Tel. 2328157 - Fax 2434025 - Email: cmuoffice1928@gmail.com

General Secretary
Trade Union

10.7.2021

Dear comrade,

Very Urgent Request to send message of Solidarity

We hope you are doing well and keeping safe in the present pandemic situation.

You may be aware that the Sri Lankan Government is using a militaristic approach in the present situation on all fronts as far as Students, Workers and Peasants are concerned.

All protests are curtailed or banned under the pretext of Covid-19 and in many cases the workers are penalized by curtailing their movements.

The public transport is minimum and or nonexistent and the workers are forced to find their own way to work whereas some employers provide transport.

No meetings are permitted under the health guide lines and restricts gathering of people, TU meetings are prohibited, without permission from the PHI (Public Health Inspector). (But the government party members are having their own way and have meetings, parties and festivals without any interruptions or restrictions)

On the other hand, the government is bringing legislature in various sectors which are detrimental to the vast majority of people and curtail democratic rights.

On the 7th of July in a state corporation (State Engineering Corporation) terminated the services of 9 workers for demanding their wages for the month they worked and were suspended. Two workers climbed to the top of the building in protest and later was forced by Police to come down and were sent to 14 days quarantine along with the Trade Union Leader Com.Duminda Nagamuwa who contested the Presidential Election in 2019.

The government has appointed 25 army commanders to 25 districts of the island and continuing to appoint ex-army Commanders or officials as head of ministries and government agencies.

The most recent attempt to bring legislature to establish a military academy (apart from what is already existing) which curtail the free education system, the University students and the teachers protests were curbed under the pretext of health guidelines.

Limited number of participants at meetings (not more than 25) and various other conditions to be observed.

The Teachers Union and some students Union were having an agitation against the new bill to be passed in the parliament on 8th of July. The undersigned also was to take part

in the agitation but due to a personal matter I could not go to the agitation point. (Otherwise, I also would have been inside the so called Quarantine center in Mulathive by now)

General Secretary of the Ceylon Teachers Union Comrade Joseph Starlin and two other Union leaders (whom you see in the attached pictures) along with 31 others were arrested on the 8th of July and produced before court.

The judge released them but the Police refused to let them go and took them by force to a remote center 330 km off from Colombo without even thier personal belongings such as clothing, toothbrush, towel, and essential items.

From the pictures you could see how tense the situation was at the agitation point and the inhuman and cruel way the Police acted and treated even the few women who were present. This was not warranted at all.

We request you to send a letter of solidarity with the struggle that continues against undemocratic high handed and cruelty that is imposed upon peaceful demonstrations and arbitrary detention of Trade union leaders under the pretext of CoviD-19.

The letters or telegrams **DEMANDING THE RELEASE OF TRADE UNION LEADERS AND STUDENT ACTIVISTS** and of your concern about Democratic rights of the people and workers in Sri Lanka can be sent to the following.

1. President of Sri Lanka - Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa -
Email ps@presidentsoffice.lk
2. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka - Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa.
Email info@pmoffice.gov.lk
3. Minister of Labour - Mr. Nimal Siripala De Silva
Email minister@labourmin.gov.lk
4. Inspector General of Police –
Email igp@police.lk

The postal letters can be addressed to

C/o The Parliament of Sri Lanka
Sri Jayawadhana pura
Kotte
Sri Lanka

Please be kind enough to send us a copy of your letter for our records.

Yours fraternally,
The Ceylon Mercantile Industrial and
General Workers Union (CMU)



Sylvester Jayakody
General Secretary CMU

c.c. Teachers Union General Secretary

PS. I attach here with a newspaper article on the same issue.

JVP Leader Anura Kumara Disسانayake today called in parliament on the Government to recall the protesters who were arrested and forcibly sent for quarantine in various parts of the country, claiming it was totally against the law and human rights.

He told Parliament that the police are not entrusted with any powers to use physical force to send the protesters who were granted bail by the court.

The MP pointed out that several Courts have rejected to issue an order to send the protesters for quarantine when the police sought permission to do so.

"This was an abduction of civilians by the police. Police have not been vested with any power to arrest or send protesters for quarantine. They cannot arrest people without a court order. We will file a Human Rights petition against this move," he said.

Mr. Disسانayake said the arrest of protesters was not done to prevent the spread of COVID-19 adding that it was a political witch-hunt.

"People travel in crowded buses. There were celebrations with the participation of a large number of people after Basil Rajapaksa assumed duties as a Minister. If this regulation is to spread COVID-19, how such activities are allowed? This regulation is solely an order given to suppress peoples' right to protest," he said