

Campaign to Achieve Democratic Goals with HOPE

HUMAN RIGHTS WORKSHOP FOR RELIGIOUS AND PRIESTS

10 - 13 February 2025

Miani Technical Institute
Batticaloa



Human Rights Office Kandy

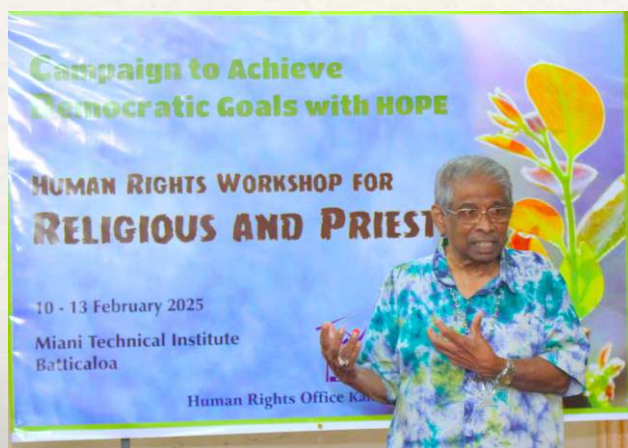
With the theme
“Campaign to achieve
Democratic Goals with
Hope” the workshop for
the Priests and Religious
was held from 10th - 13th
February 2025 at Miani
Technical Institute in
Batticaloa, organized by
the Human Rights Office
Kandy. The workshop
brought together 28
participants from various
parts of the country.

The participants focused on promoting democratic values and civil society engagement with the newly elected government.

With a short prayer service, the workshop was inaugurated followed by an introduction to the workshop by Fr. Nandana Manatunga the Director of HRO and then the participants introduced themselves together with their present engagements. A scriptural input was given by the Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Kurunagala of the Anglican Church, Bishop Kumara Illangasinghe setting the tone for the workshop.

The workshop included exposure visits to 02 different communities. All the participants were given a chance to visit the Monument for Easter attack victims of "Zion Church" near Kallady Bridge in Batticaloa and then the group divided into two. First group joined the ongoing Justice walk on the 1007th day and held a discussion at the Gandhi park

followed by a visit to the monument for the Satharakondan massacre and also joining a dairy farmers' protest. The second group visited the members of the Islamic Women's Association for Research and Empowerment (IWARE) in Kattankudy, the Kattankudy mosque and the monument of the mosque massacre. Subsequently the participants divided into two groups and discussed their findings and presented them at the plenary session which was followed by a further discussion at the plenary, attempting to identify the causes and possible interventions at various levels.





The workshop provided a platform for religious leaders and activists to share experiences, discuss challenges, and strategize certain activities in promoting democratic values and human rights in their own communities. The recent state elections proved that the people have placed their trust and hope in the newly elected President and his government to minimize corruption and establish the Rule of Law. The exposure visits and discussions helped participants to understand diverse community perspectives and engage in meaningful dialogue to address social and political issues.



Rev. Fr. Boniface Mendes from Pakistan, the former secretary of the Office of Human Development (OHD) of Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) shared his vast experiences in engaging with diverse communities in different Asian countries. The Political and Economic situation in the North after the recent elections and the aspirations of the people were highlighted by Fr. Jeyabalan Croos and Fr. Nehru Croos.

Ruki Fernando elaborated the theme with a presentation on "Human Rights under the NPP Government" while Mr. Suren D. Parera AAL and Mr. Madawa Eriyagama AAL from the Legal Team of HRO under the theme "Swimming against the current". discussed the legal interventions that are possible with local mechanisms through the available institutions in the country. The workshop concluded with the understanding that participants would meet up again in July 2025.

