



INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF THE VICTIMS OF TORTURE

චරිතයට ලක්වූවන්ට ඝනය දැකීමේ ජාත්‍යන්තර දිනය

சித்திரவதைக்கு ஆளானவர்களுக்கு ஆதரவு வழங்கும் சர்வதேச தினம்



Human Rights Office - Kandy

2025

On June 27th, 2025, the Human Rights Office (HRO) in Kandy - Sri Lanka, marked the International Day in Support of Survivors of Torture with a deeply moving event with solidarity. This year's commemoration placed a special focus on expressing solidarity with Dilshan, a survivor of brutal police torture in 2020, who has courageously pursued justice for five years without external aid. The event brought together a diverse group of participants, including survivors of torture, families of the disappeared, survivors of other human rights violations, lawyers, human rights defenders, support group members and civil society activists. Their presence enhances the collective commitment to uphold human dignity and solidarity among those who have suffered grave injustices.

Fr. Nandana Manatunga, Director of the Human Rights Office, initiated the event by reflecting on the global and local significance of the International Day in Support of Survivors of Torture. He emphasized the importance of remembering victims, advocating for justice and fostering resilience among survivors.



A central feature of the event was a panel discussion highlighting the ongoing challenges faced by Dilshan. Investigative journalist Mr. Tharindu Jayawardhana provided a detailed account of Dilshan's ordeal, describing the cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment by the police officers



and degrading treatment by the police officers endured in 2020. Mr. Tharindu further explained that following these abuses, Dilshan faced ongoing threats to his safety, which compelled him to seek protection from the National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses. Unfortunately, the protection provided severely curtails the freedom of Dilshan as protection is provided once again from the law enforcing agencies, practically by the police officers.

In a deeply moving and insightful address, Ms. Nilushi Devapura AAL highlighted the extensive social and economic hardships faced by Dilshan. She discussed the severe impact of torture on his ability to secure employment and maintain a stable livelihood. Ms. Devapura painted a vivid picture of the emotional and psychological burden that five years of distress and uncertainty have taken on the survivor, profoundly changing his personal life and well-being.

While moderating the discussion, human rights lawyer Mr. Suren D. Perera delivered a detailed analysis of the legal status of the case. Highlighting key issues, rights and potential outcomes. He proceeded to discuss how the responsible authorities have neglected this adversity and how we can support the victim as a society to receive his legal due.

The conversation proceeded smoothly and the participants joined the panel discussion. They asked questions and shared their perspectives on this matter. The event continued with a group discussion and the participants were divided into groups. They were given the chance to discuss the rights violated and assistance Dilshan should have received from authorities and the community. The participants were also asked to share the practical ways to offer solidarity and support to the survivor.



The 2025 commemoration aimed to spread awareness and build a community of solidarity in support of the victim. Everyone who were present, appreciated his strength and determination, fighting for years on his own to receive justice, yet it remains out of reach due to the negligence of the responsible authorities.

Rev. Fr. Nandana Manatunga, the Director of HRO, concluded the discussion, emphasizing the importance of supporting the

victims of torture holistically to regain their inherent dignity and join our efforts to eradicate torture and create a society in which all persons enjoy the fundamental right to be free from torture.

