



ශ්‍රී ලංකා පුවත්පත් පැමිණිලි කොමිසම
இலங்கை பத்திரிகை முறைப்பாட்டு ஆணைக்குழு
Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka

96, Kirula Road, Colombo - 05, Tel: (+94) 11 5353635, Fax: (+94) 11 5335500,
E-mail: pccsl@pccsl.lk, Web: www.pccsl.lk

***Re-statement to the House on Re-activation of the Press
Council by the Minister of Mass Media and Information,
Hon. Lakshman Yapa Abeywardana - 22 July, 2009***

PRESS RELEASE

Hon. W.J.M. Lokubandara
Speaker
Parliament of Sri Lanka
Sri Jayawardhanapura
Kotte.
Hon. Speaker,

Our attention has been drawn to the above, extracts of which have been published in the daily newspapers of July 23. Clothed in the garb of parliamentary privilege, the Minister of Mass Media and Information, Hon. Lakshman Yapa Abeywardene has made false accusations against the Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka, an industry based self-regulatory body that receives and hears public complaints against newspaper reports.

We believe that these false accusations have been made to justify the re-activation of the statutory Press Council which has powers, *inter-alia*, to imprison journalists.

The Minister reading from a prepared text in Parliament on Wednesday, has stated that the Press Complaints Commission has not been of any assistance to the public or the press; that it receives funds from non-government sources, and that there is financial fraud and irregularities.

We wish to state the assistance that the Commission has rendered to the public and the press is well documented in the Annual Reports of the Commission which are regularly sent to the Ministry of Mass Media and Information.

It is correct that the Commission receives its funds from non-government sources, which includes the industry, thereby placing no financial burden on the tax-payers. There have been no financial frauds or irregularities that have been found in the audited annual accounts which are published in the newspapers and are open for public inspection since the Commission's inception in 2003. The statement of the Hon. Minister on these points are therefore, wrong and irresponsible.

Furthermore, the Commission has received and dealt with, 704 complaints against Sinhala, English and Tamil news papers, since October 2003 up to June 2009, at no cost to the complainant or the State.

We believe that making accusations of financial fraud is a serious matter and we ask the Minister to table in Parliament, or at a Press Conference, evidence of such irregularities.

In view of the fact, that we don't have a Right of Reply in the House to the Hon. Minister's statement, this letter is being released to the media.

Thank You,
Respectfully,

KUMAR NADESAN
CHAIRMAN
PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION OF SRI LANKA

Prime Minister, Hon. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Prime Minister's Office, 58, Sir Ernst de Silva Mawatha, Colombo 7,

Minister of Mass Media & Information, Hon. Aura Priyadarshana Yapa, 163, Kirulapana Avenue, Polhengoda, Colombo 5

Minister of Mass Media & Information, Hon. Lakshman Yapa Abeywardene

Leader of Opposition, Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Office of the Leader of the Opposition, 30, Sir Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo 7.

Leader of Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, Hon. Dinesh Gunawardana, Palrimentary Complex, Sri Jayawardana,

Leader of Lanka Samasamaja Party, Hon. Tissa Vitharana.

Leader of Tamil National Alliance, Hon. R. Sambandan.

Leader of Eelam People's Democratic Party, Hon. Douglas Devananda

Leader of Ceylon Worker's Congress, Hon. Arumugam Thondaman

Leader of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, Hon. Rauff Hakeem

Leader of Up Country People's Front, Hon. P. Chandrasekaran

Leader of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, Hon. D.E.W. Gunasekara.

Parliament Group Leader of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, Hon. Anura Dissanayaka

Leader of the National Freedom Front, Hon. Wimal Weerawansa

Leader of Sri Lanka Mahajana Party, Hon. Mangala Samaraweera

Leader of Sihala Urumaya, Ven. Ellawala Medhananda Thero

Leader of Western Province People's Front, Hon. Mano Ganeshan.

Leader of National United Front, Hon. Ferial Asroff

All Media Institutions