



**Media Statement: Sri Lankan Collective Against Torture Denounces Appointment of Deshbandu Tennakoon as Inspector General of Police.**

The Sri Lankan Collective Against Torture strongly condemns the appointment of Mr. Deshbandu Tennakoon as the Inspector General of Police. We vehemently object to the President's decision to appoint Mr. Tennakoon, an individual found by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka to have violated a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution, i.e. the protection against torture, to a position of public trust.

This appointment, enabled by the Constitutional Council established to function as a check on the power of the executive and thereby prevent political appointments, is a grave setback to democratic principles and the rule of law in Sri Lanka. Several concerning aspects of this process highlight how it undermines democratic values:

1. Ignoring objections raised by public representatives, civil society organizations, and recognized professionals after Mr. Tennakoon assumed the role of Acting Inspector General of Police.
2. Disregarding the judgment of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka which found that Mr. Tennakoon had violated the fundamental rights of a citizen in **SC FR 107/2011**.
3. Conducting the Constitutional Council's decision making process regarding this appointment in a non-transparent manner, thereby calling into question the integrity of the process as well that of the Council.

As confirmed by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, Mr. Tennakoon has violated fundamental rights, a cornerstone of the sovereignty vested in the people of Sri Lanka, as set out in the Constitution. The Supreme Court's judgment directed that compensation to be paid by Mr. Tennakoon, along with other implicated officials, from their personal funds and underscored disciplinary action that should be taken against these public officials.

Hence, we reiterate that an individual found by the Supreme Court to have violated fundamental rights lacks credibility and eligibility to hold the position of IGP. The appointment of a person found to have violated the fundamental rights of the people is tantamount to enabling an act that violates the Constitution and the sovereignty of the people, which the members of the Constitutional Council, as well as the President and the Speaker are sworn to protect.

Moreover, concerns have been raised regarding the procedural aspects of the appointment, including the need for five members of the Constitutional Council to approve the appointment and the legality of using the speaker's deciding vote when the decision was not split equally. There are also doubts regarding the representation provided by civil society representatives within the Constitutional Council.



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**Sri Lanka Collective Against Torture**

In light of these issues, we are deeply concerned that this process could severely undermine already low public confidence in the rule of law and democratic institutions. As trust in democracy and public institutions is integral for the country's progress, we urge all political parties, members of parliament, and stakeholders to take immediate action to rectify this process.

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Sri Lanka Collective Against Torture

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