

[Press Release]

08th July 2014

Free Media Movement vehemently condemns and disagrees with the circular issued on 01st July 2014 by D.M.S. Dissanayake (Director/Registrar, Ministry of Defence & Urban Development) on the efforts to violate & wrench fundamental human rights enjoyed by civil and non-governmental organizations of Sri Lanka. Free Media Movement stresses to all organizations and individuals who value Democracy & Freedom that it's time to rise against such unjust & oppressive steps to violate human rights.

The circular says that some non-governmental organizations engage in certain activities which they are not supposed to engage in and they must stop those activities with immediate effect. It points out that non-governmental organizations are prohibited from holding of press conferences, issuing media releases, conducting workshops or training programs for journalists etc.

Accordingly this circular directly violates the freedom of expression & freedom of assembly which are mentioned in the constitution of Sri Lanka. On the other hand, right to express & right to assembly given to citizens by a constitution cannot be nullified by merely a circular. A question raises; Why didn't the officials of Ministry of Defence weren't aware of the fact that even in a very special situation such a step can only be taken by the parliament. If they have ignored that fact it is quite evident that they've defamed the constitution.

On the other hand non-governmental organizations are the organizations by citizens of Sri Lanka and these organizations have all the rights which are enjoyed by a citizen. Therefore we stress that this circular is totally illegal and we further bring into notice that there is a danger of this circular being used to oppress the freedom of expression of any citizen in Sri Lanka. Also this circular violates many charters of Human rights which Sri Lanka is committed internationally through United Nations Organization.

We emphasize that this circular is just another step taken forward to make Sri Lanka a dictatorial state. Therefore we want to remind that it's the supreme responsibility of entire Sri Lankan nation to rally to defeat this villainous motive.



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