

Remarks by Hon Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe at the Parliament on 06th
March 2018

Mr. Speaker,

I'm delivering this announcement for the information of this House on the aggression in Ampara followed by the unrest seen in Digana a few days back.

Unrest occurred at Ampara in the night of last 26th while a few people having meals in a hotel called Kasim in D.S. Senanayake Street and they questioned about a strange substance found in the meals they were provided with. The questioning extended up to a quarrel and furious people have attacked the hotel including four other shops and a mosque in the area. The Police have taken immediate legal measures early as possible. Nevertheless I was reported that there was a lapse in legal actions. Therefore a separate investigation is carried on by the order of the Inspector General of Police under the supervision of the Deputy Inspector General of Police Baticaloa.

Moreover, a lorry driver who came by the lorry to Karaliyadda filling station in Theldeniya police division around 02.00 am on last 22nd has been attacked by four young men who were reported to be Muslim nationals. The victim was taken into the hospital Kandy and reported dead at the dawn of 03rd March due to critical wounds resulted in the attack. The 04 suspects regarding the attack were taken into custody.

Secondly, based on this incident an extremist gang of people fired two shops, a shop run by a native Muslim and an adjoining shop in Theldeniya Police division on 04th of March.

The Police have taken immediate action on the spot and ensured the security of the area through mobile visits with the help of Police Special task force and additional Police teams in order to control the situation. 24 suspects have been arrested by the Police at the incident and decided to keep under custody until 19th March 2018 after being questioned at Theldeniya Magistrate Court.

Meanwhile, the extremists acted violently again yesterday and have destroyed 04 shops and 02 mosques. The Police have enacted curfew affecting the administrative district of Kandy since the noon yesterday until 6.00 am today. Curfew is still effective in Pallekale and Theldeniya Police divisions.

Moreover, a corpse of a person (24) found in the morning today, inside one of the shops that have been fired. Further investigations are in progress and a team of officers from Criminal Investigation Department has also been deployed.

Mr. Speaker,

The National Security Council met yesterday and chiefs of Defense and the Police were given necessary instructions to maintain the peace and order in the country, to implement the law against violations and to be in alert at any time to counter any unrest.

Further, I contacted community leaders, religious leaders, Inspector General of Police and the Chief of Defense staff over the phone and instructed them to take necessary actions in order to mitigate the condition.

Mr. Speaker,

As a Government we strongly deplore these ethnic aggressions. There is no possibility to accept these kinds of activities as a responsible Government. As a country that fought a thirty years war we know the importance of peace, unity and the freedom.

A few who crave for power are planning to mess up the social knitting through various harmful practices. Racism is their trump card. Their objective is to be in power even creating fear and terror in the minds of ordinary people. It is obvious that disseminating defective, erroneous information, especially via social networks is one of their well organized practices.

A group of extremists announced via social media throughout the last 09 months that Sinhalese have been threatened by the Muslims and to prove that they have showed forged data and statistics. Some Muslim organizations have responded. These teams and groups have been cultivating racism for a long time and it has

created a strain. The majority of this country is Sinhala Buddhists and we defend that heritage as native Sinhala Buddhists. No threat or harm has been committed against that heritage or the rights neither we let it be.

There are other ethnicities and religions living in this country as Sri Lankans. All those ethnicities and religions have the right of enjoying their own culture and observing their own religion without bothering others. That is the Sri Lankan concept followed since Sir D.S.Senanayake. We follow the same and hence we are alarmed and express our sympathies regarding the damage caused for mosques.

Our Government will never be hesitated to take strong legal measures against these barbaric activities.

Mr. Speaker,

Let me express my gratitude to Maha Sangha, Muslim Maulavis including religious monks, journalists and all other communities for being patient and taking wise decisions in curtailing the situation.

Also, I take this opportunity to assure you that our Government will take measures for providing reparations for the loss of humans as well as physical property due to this calamity.

At last, but not least, I request from all the citizens of the country to be wise, rational and patient enough among the traitors who have coveted interests.