

The right to the truth and Justice

A series of bomb blasts ripped through churches and hotels in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, Killing at least 267 people and injuring five hundreds. 08 explosions were reported at the following places.

- St. Sebastian's Church, Katuwapitiya, Negombo (Western Province)
- St. Anthony's Shrine, Kochchiikade, Colombo (Western Province)
- Zion Church, Batticaloa (Eastern Province)
- Shangri-La Hotel, Colombo (Western Province)
- Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo (Western Province)
- Kingsbury Hotel, Colombo (Western Province)

The first 2 locations in the list above are largely Catholic areas and where the Churches were crowded with worshipers on Easter Sunday. Many of the worshipers in Kochchikade who died had come to Colombo from distant places such as Nuwara ELLiya in the Central Province and Jaffna in the Northern Province to visit relatives during the New Year and Easter holiday season, who made use of the opportunity to attend Easter services at the St. Anthony's Church while those attending services in Katuwapitiya, Negombo at the St. Sebastian church live in a largely Catholic populated town. In Batticaloa, the incident occurred in the town. 28 persons died in the bomb blast and about 45 have been injured. Worshipers from areas beyond Batticaloa are also among the affected.

Caritas Interventions to the victims of Easter Sunday Attack

1. Providing support to improve the emotional and psychosocial wellbeing of affected families through counseling support
2. Providing cash vouchers to affected families to purchase relief items to ensure wellbeing
3. Enhancing the physical wellbeing of affected families through appropriate medical and travel/transport assistance
4. Providing appropriate educational assistance to children of affected families to help them continue their education without interruption.
5. Providing livelihood assistance to rebuild their livelihoods and obtain stable income
6. Providing legal assistance to selected families to obtain documents (death certificates, copies of birth, marriage certificates, land deeds etc)and to support persons who need to transfer assets.
7. Promoting greater co-existence between communities of difference religious faiths to ensure harmony and improved security for all communities.

Presently, Arch diocese of Colombo under the guidance of His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, and together with the catholic bishop conference in Sri Lanka, has initiated a series of advocacy camping to seek justice to the victims of Easter Sunday Attack. Caritas Sri Lanka under the justice, peace and human development commission is heading the awareness and community mobilization towards to the right of truth and Justice.

As Sri Lankan Catholics, it is our prophetic role to stand before the truth and justice. Victims of the Easter Sunday bombings seek justice as a fundamental right. However, there is a serious doubt that justice will be done for the victims of the 2019 Easter bombings under the present administration. Therefore, let us join hands in this CSL Campaign by organizing awareness sessions under the theme "Cry for Justice". We invite all our Caritas International partners to join hands with Caritas Sri Lanka for seeking justice for the victims of Easter Sunday attack and the victims of last 30 years of war.