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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS
MADE IN THE CHANNEL- 4 TELEVISION PROGRAMME TITLED
'SRI LANKA'S EASTER BOMBINGS – DISPATCHES' AIRED
ON 5TH SEPTEMBER 2023

25 June 2024

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1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

The Committee comprising Hon. Justice S.I. Imam, Retired Judge of the Supreme Court, Air Chief Marshal Jayalath Weerakkody, Retired Commander of Sri Lanka Air Force, and Mr. Harsha Soza, President's Counsel was appointed on the directions of the Hon. President on September 11, 2023, to inquire into and report whether the persons against whom allegations were made in the Channel - 4 Television broadcast of September 05, 2023 had engaged in any act or omission in relation to the Easter Sunday Bomb Attack, and whether such persons had any complicity with the Easter Sunday Suicide bombers.

We had our first meeting on September 14, 2023. We considered the scope and ambit of our mandate and found that our mandate (**vide annex marked Y**) is limited, and that we were a fact-finding committee. We had no power to compel the attendance of anyone to testify before us. The meetings of the committee were invariably at the Presidential Secretariat.

We sent notices to the following persons to provide information: -

1. Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
3. Chief Executive Officer, Channel - 4 Television
4. Controller-General, Department of Immigration and Emigration
5. Secretary, Ministry of Defence
6. Hon. Sivanesathurai Santhirakanthan, MP, State Minister of Rural Road Development
7. District Secretary, Ampara
8. Senior DIG (Eastern Province)
9. Ambassador to Switzerland in Sri Lanka
10. Commissioner-General, Department of Registration of Persons
11. Mr. Hanzeer Azad Maulana
12. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees




Apart from the notices sent to the aforesaid persons, the committee also published a general notice in the Press on October 29, 2023 (vide annex marked A). No one came to give evidence in response to the notice in the Press.

In order to investigate the veracity and credibility of Hanzeer Azad Maulana's Channel - 4 broadcast we requested by letter dated October 6, 2023 (vide annex marked B), the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights to provide the committee with a certified copy of the sworn submission allegedly made by the said Azad Maulana. But the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights by letter dated December 1, 2023 (vide annex marked C) replied, inter alia, as follows:-

“ In relation to the work being carried out by this office pursuant to those Human Rights Council Resolutions, we have no information pertaining to your request for which we have consent to share with your Committee of Inquiry”.

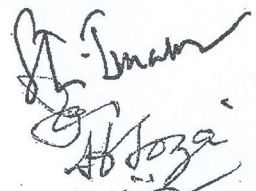
It appears that the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights is hamstrung by the absence of consent to share vital information. The consent is obviously that of the person who provided the information.

We have noted the official condemnation of the Channel - 4 broadcast by the Ministry of Defence. We have in our inquiry investigated whether there is proof of the allegations made in the Channel - 4 broadcast.

As a preliminary measure, we wrote to the aforementioned persons. By letter dated 27th September 2023, we requested Channel-4 in the United Kingdom to send from its media station a representative who is equipped with information and is conversant with the content of the programme to testify before us in regard to the facts presented on the Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka (vide annex marked D)

Channel - 4 by letter dated October 9, 2023, (vide annex marked E) declined our request, inter alia, in the following terms.

“Channel - 4 is committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism and journalistic freedom. It is central to those principles that we do not agree to reveal the confidential sources for our programmes or to disclose confidential journalistic material. Providing such information would undermine the willingness of individuals to cooperate with journalists, discourage journalists from disseminating information that would be in the

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public's interest to know and weaken the actual and/or perceived neutrality of journalists".

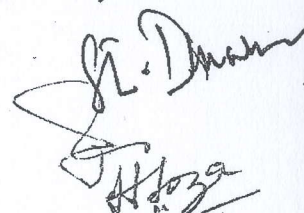
We have made every effort to trace the whereabouts of Azad Maulana, but we have not been successful. The email sent to him to his last known address has not even been opened. Azad Maulana has failed to appear before us and testify regarding the allegations he has made in the Channel - 4 broadcast. He has not presented himself before us to be subjected to cross-examination. His allegations, therefore, lack the merit of being allegations tested by cross-examination (**vide letters dated October 20, 2023 to Mrs. Aruni Wijewardena, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Chinthaka Abeywickrema, District Secretary (Ampara) and Mr. K.A. Rohana, Senior DIG - Eastern Province, the Controller - General of the Department of Immigration and Emigration respectively (vide annexes marked F(i), F(ii), F(iii)).**

We also wrote to Her Excellency Dr(Mrs). Siri Walt, Ambassador of Switzerland in Sri Lanka to ascertain whether Mr. Hanzeer Azad Maulana who was featured in the Channel-4 telecast is residing in Switzerland, and if so, to provide his contact details (**vide letter dated October 24, 2023 (vide annex marked G)**). Her Excellency Dr(Mrs). Siri Walt replied by letter dated January 16, 2024, and stated that due to data protection laws in Switzerland, no information on individuals can be given- (**vide annex marked H**).

The District Secretary, Ampara has informed us by letter dated October 30, 2023, that the name of Hanzeer Azad Maulana as it appears in the registered voters' list of Maruthamunai in 2013 is Mohamed Mihlar Mohamed Hanzir (Aasath Maulana) (**vide annex marked I**). Despite the variations in his name the identity of Hanzeer Azad Maulana as the spokesman in the Channel - 4 television broadcast regarding the Easter bombings of April 21, 2019, in Sri Lanka is not in dispute.

We wrote to the said Hanzeer Azad Maulana letter dated November 1, 2023 requesting him to appear before the Committee on November 15, 2023, and testify regarding the Easter bombings on April 21, 2019 (**vide annex marked J**). This letter of the Committee did not even evoke the courtesy of a reply.

Azad Maulana is a person who preserved his identity under different aliases. M.M.M. Hanzeer is one such alias. Sivenesathurai Santhirakanthan also known as Pilleyan



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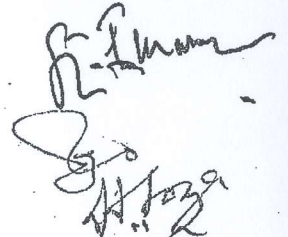
has said in an undated note (vide annex marked K) that "The last date on which M.M.M. Hanzeer left for India was 17.01.2022". We are satisfied that Azad Maulana was not in Sri Lanka during the time of the proceedings before this Committee.

Though we would have been justified in terminating the proceedings of the Committee because of Azad Maulana's absence, and failure to testify before us, we nevertheless proceeded to examine the veracity of the allegations in the Channel - 4 broadcast as best as we could.

2. ALLEGATIONS MADE BY AZAD MAULANA

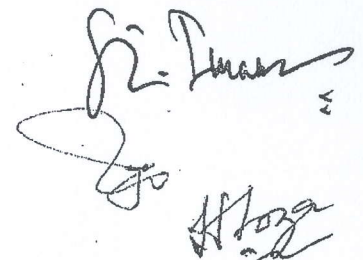
In keeping with the requirements of our mandate referred to above, it is now appropriate to refer to the allegations made by the said Azad Maulana in the Channel - 4 broadcast. They are as follows: -

- (i) There was a direct relationship between a senior Sri Lankan intelligence official and the terrorist group which carried out the bombings;
- (ii) A plan was hatched to create chaos and fear to bring back to power Mahinda and Gotabaya Rajapaksa; they are two brothers who had ruled Sri Lanka for a decade but who had been ousted from power a few years ago;
- (iii) A senior Sri Lankan intelligence agent met with the suicide bombers prior to the Easter Sunday attacks - Azad Maulana claims to have seen this meeting;
- (iv) The attack was not planned in just one or two days. It has been planned for two or three years. It was a very big plan;
- (v) Zaini Hashim Maulavi was held in prison on charges of religious extremism. His brother Zaharan was in hiding, and recruiting followers for the National Tawheed Jamaat or NTJ. The NTJ was an Islamic extremist group who wanted to turn Sri Lanka into a caliphate. They want death, death, death. They want to go to paradise. Pilleyan says we can use this

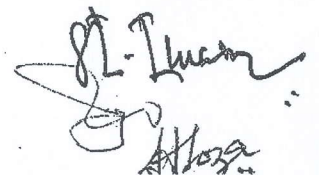


group and that they are not interested in anything in the world. They have been released three months later;

- (vi) In January 2018 on the orders of Pilleyan a meeting has been organized between Suresh Sallay and the above group;
- (vii) Suresh Sallay is a soldier who became a spy. The Rajapaksas championed his career. He was promoted through the ranks, and appointed Director of Military Intelligence. After the Rajapaksas lost the 2015 elections Suresh Sallay was posted to Malaysia by the new government. He was still seen as fiercely loyal to his former bosses who influenced him behind the scenes.
- (viii) As told by Maulana to UN Investigators Pilleyan had requested to arrange a meeting between Suresh Sallay, and the man he had helped to free from prison referring obviously to Zaini Hashim Maulavi.
- (ix) The exact location where the meeting was to be held is Karadiyapuval. Azad Maulana states he gave the information to the group to come to the aforesaid place which is a big coconut farm. One horse (sic-probably house) is there. The said meeting is alleged to have been held in February, 2018.
- (x) Intelligence Officer Suresh Sallay was there when he arrived. They waited for NTJ members to turn up. They came in a white van.
- (xi) Six people get off from the vehicle. Azad Maulana states Zaini Hassim Maulavi shook hands with him, and introduced his brother Zaharan, and referred to him as the Amir (Leader) of their group. Azad Maulana states he introduced Sallay;

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- (xii) The meeting had lasted three hours. After the meeting Suresh Sallay had said Rajapaksas need unsafe situation in Sri Lanka, and that is the only way Gotabaya can become President;
- (xiii) Azad Maulana states that at the place where the meeting took place a huge quantity of explosives had been stashed. A powerful explosive called 'urea nitrate' over 100 kg in weight was found; this information came from a muffled voice but the identity of the person was not disclosed;
- (xiv) The safe house or training base referred to above was run by Zahran, and they were members of the NTJ Group;
- (xv) The police had enough information to arrest Zahran and his NTJ followers but military intelligence reports later found to be baseless stifled the investigation at every turn;
- (xvi) If military intelligence had not misled, the CID would definitely have found out that the NTJ was involved in the Easter Sunday attack;
- (xvii) Rumours of a pending attack were circulating abroad. Two weeks before the said bombings Indian Intelligence had warned the Sri Lankan counterparts that Zahran was planning an attack;
- (xviii) A top police official read the warnings, and he tried to raise an alarm; he had sent a memo to the security services - the intelligence even specified Catholic Churches as possible targets. Shortly after the attacks the top government officials said the warnings never reached them nor the President;
- (xix) On Easter Sunday morning about 200 miles away on Sri Lanka's Eastern Coast Maulana states he received an unexpected telephone call from Suresh Sallay. Azad Maulana states he was told to go to the Taj Samudra Hotel,

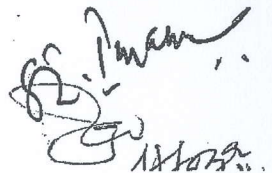


S. L. Indira
Attorney

and to take into his vehicle a person who is waiting for him. Azad Maulana had been instructed to take his phone and to drop him off where he wants. But Azad Maulana had informed Suresh Sallay that he was in Batticaloa;

- (xx) The CCTV footage from the Taj Samudra Hotel showed a member of Zahran's NTJ group in the restaurant at 8.50 in the morning. He was wearing a backpack laden with explosives. Azad Maulana states that he now believes that he was the man whom Suresh Sallay wanted him to meet in the Taj Samudra Hotel;
- (xxi) The person who was in the restaurant in the Taj Samudra Hotel was the person who exploded the bomb in the Tropical Inn Hotel, Dehiwala killing himself and two others;
- (xxii) Azad Maulana states the police were prevented from interrogating Suresh Sallay by military intelligence because he was Gotabaya Rajapaksa's most trusted confidante in the intelligence services;
- (xxiii) Suresh Sallay played a huge role in the Easter Sunday bomb attack. He facilitated it. He knew about the suicide bombers especially Zahran and his involvement;
- (xxiv) After taking office as President Gotabaya Rajapaksa derailed the investigation into the bombing;

Considering the aforesaid allegations made in the said Channel - 4 broadcast regarding the Easter Sunday bombings in April 2019, we find that the persons against whom the said allegations have been directly and specifically made are Sivanesathuran Santhirakanthan (Pilleyan) and Suresh Sallay. According to the said statement of Azad Maulana the plans for the said Easter Sunday bomb attacks were orchestrated for the benefit of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to win the Presidential Election. Except for hearsay statements that the Rajapaksas wanted an unsafe situation for Gotabhaya to



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become President, Azad Maulana's statement did not manifest any evidence of Gotabaya Rajapaksa's involvement in the plans for the said Easter Sunday bomb attacks in April, 2019. Azad Maulana did not appear before us to explain and clarify his statement. The evidence of Pilleyan and Suresh Sallay did not support the allegations of Azad Maulana. We did not, therefore, send any notices requesting the former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to testify before us. He did not respond to the general press notice either. We, however, sent notices to Pilleyan and Suresh Sallay, and they testified before us.

Sivanesathurai Santhirakanthan (Pilleyan)

Pilleyan in his evidence admitted that because of the war situation in the country in 1991 he joined the LTTE, and had been a member of the LTTE, from 1991 till 2004. He had separated from the LTTE when the LTTE split into the North and East factions. From 2004 to 2007, he and others fought against the LTTE. He and Karuna Amman established a political party under the name of Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) in 2008 and registered it at the Elections Commission. When the party was registered both he and Karuna Amman were not present as the leaders. The leader was Nanthakovan. In 2005 Pilleyan had been the leader.

Pilleyan is presently a Member of Parliament and the Minister of State for Rural Development. In 2008 May he had become the Chief Minister of presumably the Eastern Province. He had been Chief Minister until May, 2012. He had contested at the Provincial Council elections in 2012, and had been elected a Member and had functioned as such until the Provincial Council was dissolved in 2017.

Pilleyan denied the allegations made against him in the Channel - 4 broadcast. Azad Maulana was a Member of the TMVP. He could write well, and the TMVP wanted a person with good writing skills - someone who could write to the newspapers. Azad Maulana was in charge of publishing a newspaper for the TMVP. Publication of the said newspaper was stopped after 2008.

When Pilleyan was Chief Minister, Azad Maulana had been his Co-ordinating Secretary. His private secretary was Nandakovan who was later shot dead. After Nandakovan's death Azad Maulana had become Pilleyan's private secretary. It appears from the evidence of Pilleyan that he had been Chief Minister till 2012. Azad Maulana



had been an Executive Committee Member of the TMVP from 2012 to 2022. Azad Maulana had left the country in 2022. Pilleyan's evidence is that Azad Maulana had also worked as an agent for American Waters in the Eastern Province.

Pilleyan was questioned regarding the variations of Azad Maulana's name. He confirmed that the name Hanzeer Azad Maulana and its variations refer to one and the same person.

Pilleyan stated that he has not seen the Channel - 4 programme. He states that he has read the Channel - 4 broadcast translated, and written in Tamil. A part of the Channel - 4 CD programme was played on the screen (**vide transcript annexed marked X2**), and he identified Hanzeer Azad Maulana. Pilleyan said that Hanzeer Azad Maulana has been to foreign countries many times during the period 2015 to 2020. Even Pilleyan has travelled to foreign countries with Hanzeer Azad Maulana. It appears from the evidence that Pilleyan and Hanzeer Azad Maulana have been close to each other.

Pilleyan states Azad Maulana was having problems with his first wife and his second wife. Both of them have complained to the Police. Pilleyan says because of his problems with his wives he has left for India. Azad Maulana has spoken to Pilleyan from India. He has applied for a job in an African country through the United Nations Organization. He has said that if he gets a job in an African country he will take it. Azad Maulana's position is he cannot come to Sri Lanka because of his problems with his two wives.

Azad Maulana's first wife's brothers are alleged to have beaten him up, and Pilleyan has intervened later, and settled the dispute.

Pilleyan states that the Channel - 4 broadcast is untrue.

Pilleyan stated that Joseph Pararajasingham was murdered in a church in Batticaloa in 2005. For a murder that had been committed in 2005, Pilleyan had surrendered to the Criminal Investigation Department in the fourth floor of the CID in 2015. He had thereupon been taken into custody, and produced before the Magistrate of Colombo. He had been remanded on October 10, 2015. Pilleyan had been on remand for five years and forty five days. Pilleyan's case had been transferred to the Batticaloa High Court, and a

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detention order had been obtained against him. He had been on remand in the Batticaloa Prison. Pilleyan was on remand for over five years from October 10, 2015. Pilleyan was indicted in the Batticaloa High Court. He was granted bail in November, 2020 after the Easter Sunday bomb attacks in April 21, 2019. Later Pilleyan was acquitted from the charge of murdering Joseph Pararajasingham on January 13, 2021.

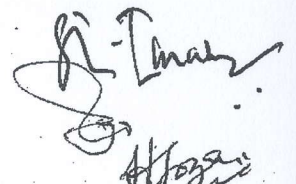
Pilleyan contested the Parliamentary elections of August, 2020 from jail, and was elected a Member of Parliament. As noted above Pilleyan now is the State Minister for Rural Development.

Allegations against Pilleyan are allegations Nos. (v) and (vi) set out above. The implication of the allegation is that Pilleyan wanted to muster the support of the members of the National Tawheed Jamaat which is an Islamic extremist group to whom life and death did not matter presumably to create a situation in Sri Lanka which would be conducive to Gotabhaya Rajapakse's victory at the Presidential Election.

There is no evidentiary material before us to prove these allegations against Pilleyan.

Pilleyan states that Azad Maulana by his first marriage has two children, and that he had family problems. Pilleyan states that he was not aware that Azad Maulana had got married a second time. Because of family problems, Azad Maulana had left for India. Pilleyan did not know where Azad Maulana had gone from India. Azad Maulana had also forged documents to contract his second marriage.

Pilleyan had not felt that Azad Maulana had connections with Zahran. But there was a bomb blast in which Zahran's brother Rilvan was involved, and a doctor from the same village where Maulana is from treated the wounded Rilvan. It appears that Azad Maulana had helped the doctor to escape from Sri Lanka. Rilvan is the youngest brother of Zahran. He lost a hand when he was checking a motorcycle in Batticaloa, and a bomb exploded. Five days after the Easter bombings Rilvan was killed according to Pilleyan along with Zahran's family and children in the Sainthamarathu explosion. Azad Maulana and the doctor who treated Rilvan are from the village of Marathamunai. The doctor's name is Dr. Shafras. He is a neighbour of Azad Maulana at Ebenezer Road(Place), Dehiwela and at Kattankudy. It is thus reasonable to state that Azad Maulana was probably



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in league with Zahran. This may be a reason why Azad Maulana does not wish to live in Sri Lanka.

Azad Maulana's travel details were marked X3, X4 and X6. Pilleyan's travel details were marked X5 (**vide annexes marked L (i), L(ii), L(iii) and L(iv)**) respectively. In January, 2022 Azad Maulana had left Sri Lanka. Azad Maulana has had a university education. He knows how to make an application for a UN appointment.

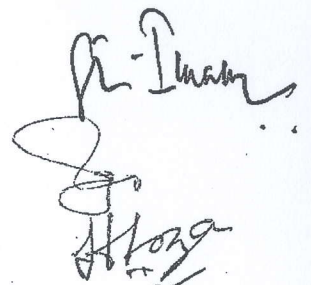
Azad Maulana had returned to Sri Lanka, and in two weeks' time left for India in early February, 2022. Benazir who is Azad Maulana's second wife has said both of them got registered in September, 2021 and after a short time Azad Maulana has gone abroad. Azad Maulana had later wanted to get a UN job. Since he was associated with two wives, he was feeling ashamed to come back to Sri Lanka.

Azad Maulana states that he does not like to come to Sri Lanka and live in Sri Lanka.

Suresh Sallay

After Pilleyan Major-General Tuan Suresh Sallay gave evidence. The direct allegations against Major-General Suresh Sallay are allegation Nos. (vii), (viii), (x), (xi), (xii), (xix), (xx), (xxii) and (xxiii).

Sallay has served in the military intelligence corps from 1993, and he has served in the Eastern Province from 1993 till 1996. Thereafter, Sallay has served in the Directorate of Military Intelligence at Army Headquarters. From 2006 to 2009 Sallay has served as the First Secretary of the Sri Lankan Embassy in France. Thereafter from 2009 Sallay has reverted to the Ministry of Defence, and served there as the Co-ordinator, Foreign Intelligence from 2009 to 2012. From 2012 to 2016 Sallay was appointed Director, Military Intelligence, and served in the Army Headquarters. From November 2016 to December 2018 Sallay served as the Minister Counsellor of Sri Lanka's High Commission in Malaysia. Sallay had come to Sri Lanka on November 04, 2017 and remained in Sri Lanka till November 13, 2017 to attend an inquiry conducted by the FCID. Sallay has come to Sri Lanka on that occasion on official leave.



Sallay said he was appointed as Director, Military Intelligence by the Commander of the Army. Sallay also said he was made Director, Military Intelligence when the government was headed by Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa. Sallay claimed he was the senior most serving officer of the Military Intelligence Corps at the time of his appointment.

Sallay had returned to Sri Lanka from Malaysia on December 10, 2018. Thereafter Sallay had proceeded to the National Defence College in New Delhi for an year's programme. From there Sallay was selected to go to Russia and the Czech Republic and to Bangladesh on study tours.

The thesis submitted by Sallay to the National Defence College was selected as the best thesis out of the theses submitted by twenty-five foreign students. He had been given a prize, and also a certificate by the Madras University.

As Director, Military Intelligence Sallay reported to the Commander of the Army.

It appears from Sallay's evidence that Security Council meetings were regularly held from 2012 to 2015. From 2016 to 2019 initially Security Council meetings have been regularly held but after some time Security Council meetings were not held. After Sallay's involvement in the Security Council from December, 2019, Security Council meetings are taking place regularly every fortnight. Intelligence Co-ordinating Meetings are held every week. The presence of the members is mandatory at these meetings.

Sallay said in evidence that the President summons the Security Council Meetings, and the Secretary, Defence summons the Intelligence Co-ordinating Meetings. Sallay said he is unable to comment regarding these meetings during the Easter Sunday period because he was not in Sri Lanka. But Sallay said that as an Intelligence Officer he learnt that there have been no regular sessions especially of the Security Council during the period prior to the Easter Sunday bomb attack. The President, the Secretary to the President, the National Security Advisor, the Prime Minister, Chief of Defence Staff, Foreign Minister, Foreign Secretary, Commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force amongst others participate at the meetings involving national security. Sallay was unable to state when the last Security Council Meeting was held before the Easter Sunday bomb blast occurred. The CID was represented by a young Inspector of Police.

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Sallay said that there was a quite a build-up of intelligence information prior to the Easter Sunday bomb attack. Even during the last ten days prior to the attack intelligence reports have come; just twelve hours before the attack also intelligence reports have been received. Sallay claimed to have the WhatsApp message sent from a foreign country specifically stating twelve hours before the attack that there will be a suicidal bomb attack on April 21, 2019. This message has been forwarded to the Inspector-General of Police, Senior DIG (CID), and to the Secretary, Defence. One reply from the CID stated twenty-four hours before the attack "Thank you Nilantha". Replies from the Secretary, Defence and Inspector-General of Police simply said "Noted". Two hundred reports had been sent by the Intelligence Community to the respective authorities about Zahran.

A foreign Intelligence Agency has given a report just ten days prior to the attack that there is a group of suicide cadres, namely, Zahran and others who will in the near future launch a suicide attack. Nilantha Jayawardena has been informed of the attack twelve hours prior to the attack. Nilantha Jayawardena has passed this information to everyone except the President. Ten days prior to the attack information was received that Zahran and his NTJ associates are planning to carry out a suicide attack shortly. Information was also received that they have planned to target some important churches. It was also learnt that the associates of the attackers have carried out a reconnaissance of the Indian High Commission or a part thereof for the purpose of the attack. It was also informed that the team of attackers is likely to consist of Zahran Hashim, Jalai Quithal, Rilvan (brother of Zahran), Sajid Moulavi, Shahid Mihlar and others. This information has been received twelve days prior to the attack.

The letter sent to the IGP is in the following terms:-

“ජාතික තව්හීඩ් සමාජයේ නායක මොහමඩ් සහරාන් විසින් මෙරට මරාගෙන මැරෙන ප්‍රහාරයක් දියත් කිරීමට සැලසුම් කිරීම පිළිබඳ තොරතුරු කියලා Director (SIS) දරිනවා IG ට. සහරාන් හෙවත් හමීම් ඔහුගේ අනුගාමිකයින් සමග මෙරට මරාගෙන මැරෙන ප්‍රහාරයක් එල්ල කිරීමේ සූදානමක් පවතින බවට විදේශීය බුද්ධි අංශ තොරතුරු වාර්තා කර ඇත. මෙම ප්‍රහාර සඳහා මෙරට ප්‍රසිද්ධ කතෝලික පල්ලි සහ ඉන්දියානු මහා කොමසාරිස් කාර්යාලය ඉලක්ක කරන බවට වැඩිදුරටත් සඳහන් කර ඇත. ඇමුණුම (අ) බලන්න”.

This was revealed in the course of the evidence of Mr. Sallay.

Sallay on being questioned stated that it is the responsibility of the Director-General (SIS), and the Secretary, Defence to have brought these matters to the notice of the President.

The Director-General (SIS) was Nilantha Jayawardena, Chief of National Intelligence was Sisira Mendis, and the Secretary, Defence was Hemasiri Fernando. In Sallay's words these three are the Eyes and Ears of His Excellency.

Sallay said if the President had been informed of Zahran's plans, a Security Council Meeting would have been summoned, and the bomb attack which took place on Easter Sunday in April, 2019 may have been prevented.

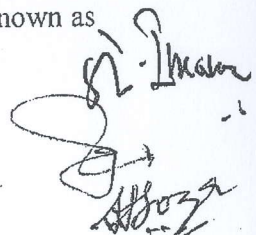
Sallay was out of the country from 2016 to 2019 November.

Sallay's alibi is an irreversible fact. There is no evidence at all to show any involvement on the part of Sallay with Zahran or the members of the National Tawheed Jamaat whose mission in life is death during the aforesaid period and thereafter.

Azad Maulana made a fatal blunder in making allegations against Sallay as though he was in Sri Lanka during the material times. The alleged meeting in the coconut farm at Karadiyapuval is demonstrably a hoax. The video clip of the Channel - 4 telecast does not show Sallay at the meeting at Karadiyapuval nor a big coconut farm. Sallay is not seen in any part of the video clip in conversation or interaction with either Zahran or the members of the National Tawheed Jamaat. At the time of the bomb attack in April, 2019 Sallay was in New Delhi following a course in defence studies.

We are, therefore, compelled to reject all the allegations made by Azad Maulana in the Channel - 4 telecast as unproved. The Channel-4 telecast appears to us to be an illusory drama created by Azad Maulana presumably to make out a case to get permanent residential status in a country like Switzerland. The evidence is that Azad Maulana does not like to live in Sri Lanka. The UNHCR has found him employment as a shelter cluster co-ordinator in Mali in the Democratic Republic of Congo by letter dated January 19,, 2022 but he does not seem to have accepted it - **(vide annex marked M)**.

Sally also said that Zahran started developing extremist ideologies from about 2017, and that his extremist ideology was Sunni ideology which is commonly known as



Wahabism, Sallay spoke at length on this subject but it appears that this evidence of Sallay is not relevant to our mandate.

Channel - 4 has telecast Azad Maulana's story as presented by him without checking its veracity.

We considered the voice recordings of Pilleyan and Azad Maulana respectively marked X14 and X15 which are in Compact Disc formats. We could not find therein information relevant to our mandate.

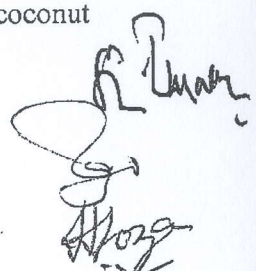
W.A.S. Gunawardena

Chief Inspector Wijayalath Arachchige Sujeewa Gunawardena from the Prevention of Terrorism and Inquiries Division was called specially to ascertain the frequency of telephone calls between Zahran and Azad Maulana, and also Pilleyan and Azad Maulana, and the location from which and the period during which such calls were made and received. Nothing useful to our mandate emerged from this endeavour.

A.V. Wijyaratne, Police Sergeant, CID

Atugodagedera Vijithakumara Wijyaratne of the CID spoke about a coconut estate about 80 acres in extent situated in Vanathavilluwa in the Karadiyapuval Grama Niladhari Division. This estate had to be accessed through jungle land. The access road was not a straight road but a road with several bends. There was a house built out of cement blocks. The two persons whom the Police were looking for were Abu Haneefa Mohamed Mufees and Abu Hansar Mohamed Hamas. They were wanted in connection with the destruction of the statues of Lord Buddha. According to Mufees' statement recorded on 16.01.2019 the house with the cement blocks had been constructed about five months prior to 16.01.2019, i.e. in or about August - September 2018. The Police had also found another house which had been constructed in or about August - September 2018. These houses were obviously not there when Pilleyan allegedly requested that a meeting be arranged at the said coconut estate in February, 2018. Azad Maulana was obviously not speaking the truth in regard to the alleged meeting on the coconut estate.

It appears that highly inflammable material has been stored on the said coconut estate for manufacture of explosives.



We have however, inadequate material to connect the evidence of Sergeant Wijeratne to the April 2019 Easter bombings.

J.P.Y.Y. Jayasinghe

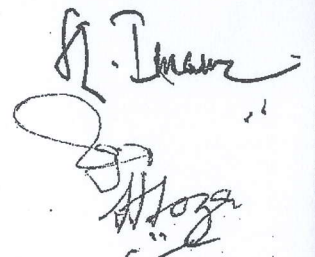
The evidence of Jayasinghe Patabendige Yasanka Yehan Jayasinghe did not provide any information relevant to this inquiry. He is a Sub Inspector of Police attached to the CID - Technical Aid Unit.

His evidence regarding telephone communications between Zahran, Azad Maulana, Zaini Hassim Moulavi, M.M.M. Hanzeer, Saddick and Saheed shows that the telephone calls have been made and received in places such as Batticaloa and Kattankudy in the Eastern Province but not in the Puttlam District.

We did not find any acceptable evidence to link the ISIS with the bomb attack in April, 2019 though such a claim had been vaguely made.

3. FINDINGS

Our unanimous finding is that as noted above the allegations made in the Channel-4 telecast by Azad Maulana are unproved at this inquiry. The truth as to who masterminded the Easter Sunday bombings in April, 2019 is shrouded in Byzantine politics. We did not have material at the inquiry to unravel the political manoeuvres of various parties. This was beyond our mandate. Throughout this inquiry we were guided by the ordinary safeguards of the presumption of innocence, proof beyond reasonable doubt, the audi alteram partem rule of natural justice etc. usually adopted for the imposition of criminal liability. We felt that the former President Maithripala Sirisena would be able to provide us relevant information in view of his recent outburst as to who organized and orchestrated the Easter Sunday bombings in April, 2019, and indeed as to his own conduct as the Head of the country and the armed forces. It is regrettable that he declined our request (**vide his letter dated April 03, 2024 marked annex N**) to testify before us. We are disturbed that despite reports and information being readily available regarding the impending April, 2019 Easter Sunday bomb attack no action was taken to prevent the occurrence of that tragedy.



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the aftermath of the Easter Sunday bombings in April 2019, we make the following recommendations on the material placed before us:-

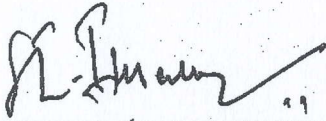
- (i) The Security Council with the prescribed composition of its membership must meet to assess the security situation in the country as frequently as possible;
- (ii) The Intelligence Units with the prescribed composition of their membership must meet prior to the meetings of the Security Council to weigh and consider any information regarding activities which would impact national security;
- (iii) Suitable action must be taken against Azad Maulana for making false allegations in the Channel-4 broadcast; investigations must be carried out to ascertain whether Azad Maulana had links with the suicide bombers;
- (iv) When information threatening national security is available, the security personnel must take timely action to prevent the occurrence of damage, destruction, and loss of life, and inform the targeted institutions and bodies to take measures to prevent the occurrence of damage, destruction and loss of life, and provide security to the vulnerable places;
- (v) The procedures and the responsibilities of Intelligence Services at the higher levels with regard to information and reports pertaining to national security must be clearly defined and laid down with measures to ensure compliance on the part of the responsible officers.



H. Imran

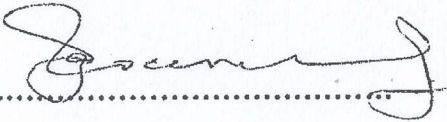
It remains now for us to thank Ms. Sarathanjali Manoharan, Senior Assistant Secretary to the President and her staff, and Ms. Dishna Warnakula, Deputy Solicitor-General, for their invaluable services, and the assistance they rendered to us to hold this inquiry and prepare this report.

Justice S. I. Imam
Retired Judge of the Supreme Court



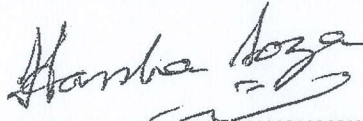
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Air Chief Marshal Jayalath Weerakkody
Retired Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force



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Mr. Harsha A. J Soza
President's Counsel



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This 25th day of June, 2024.