



PEOPLE FOR EQUALITY AND RELIEF IN LANKA

PEARL condemns Easter attacks

(Washington DC; April 21, 2019) PEARL condemns the horrific violence against Christians and hotel staff and patrons in Batticaloa and Colombo. We express our sincere condolences to the victims and survivors of these cruel attacks that occurred in churches and hotels on Easter Sunday. Those responsible for these acts must be brought to justice.

The bomb blasts mark another terrible moment in Sri Lanka's long and bloody history of violence. These violent acts, the deadliest attacks on civilians by a non-state actor in Sri Lanka's history, risk exacerbating persisting ethnic and religious tensions on the island.

We urge the state, including its security forces, to respect and protect human rights while investigating and responding to this attack. This is particularly important in Muslim communities, which have been specifically targeted by Sinhala Buddhist extremists in recent times, and in Tamil communities, which are already subject to heavy militarization and surveillance due in part to repressive counterterrorism legislation. We are concerned that, as it has done in the past, the state will use these laws to crack down on political expression, media work, and civil society organizing.

We also urge the state and the public to refrain from spreading false information in the face of these attacks to ensure they do not further fuel Sri Lanka's cycle of violence. We call for close monitoring of the state's response to these attacks.