

Colombo Bishop condemns anti-Muslim violence Anglican Communion News Service, 20 June 2014



Bishop Canagasabay: "I call upon the Christians of Sri Lanka to uphold in prayer, to assist and to support all targets of religious and communal hatred."

From the Diocese of Colombo, Church of Ceylon

I am deeply perturbed and concerned at the large scale violence unleashed on members of the Muslim community last week (15 June 2014), in Aluthgama, Beruwala, Dharga Town, Walpitiya and Welipennaareas. My thoughts and prayers are with all those affected in their time of sorrow. This violence was wholly avoidable; that it was allowed to happen brings us shame as a country and as Sri Lankans.

God is especially concerned for the victims of this world. Therefore, in the grace of God I express solidarity with all those who have suffered from the violence, and especially with our fellow Muslim who have been thrown into climate of uncertainty and fear. Many Christians across the country have also been the target of violence in the past and can empathize today with the targeted victimisation of the Muslims in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is home to different communities who have co-existed for centuries, all of whom have partnered in the country's development and must be allowed to enjoy the right to security and dignity as equal citizens of a united Sri Lanka.

This right is directly and critically dependent on the genuine commitment of the relevant authorities to take honest steps to prevent the denigration of any community by any other. If the law enforcement and security apparatus is prevented from acting in a timely and effective manner to protect any community from attacks, that apparatus will lose their credibility and the confidence of the citizenry. That can in turn lead to a dangerous escalation of violence.

It is a cornerstone of genuine democracy and the right of every citizen not to suffer attacks on the basis of religious affiliation or worship. In fact, the life Gauthama Buddha exemplified that respect to see the utter abandonment and denial of this important basic right being propounded in the name of Buddhism.

I call upon true adherents and leaders of the Buddhist community and all other communities regardless of religious, political or other affiliation to unequivocally demand that the

extremist perpetrators of the attacks face due justice and that meaningful and effective steps be taken to prevent the recurrence and facilitation of such atrocities in the name of religion.

Let us pray especially for the families of those killed, and injured. I also call on Christians to pray every day that God would enable wise and inclusive leadership in our country that would permit all our citizens to secure real justice and enjoy the full complement of their rights as Sri Lankans, without oppression, persecution and fear.

Hatred begets more hatred, on account of which our country has already suffered enough. In the name of Jesus Christ, and together with all the Christians in Sri Lanka, I say, "Enough".

With prayers and blessings to all

Rt. Revd Dhiloraj R. Canagasabey
Bishop of Colombo
18 June, 2014