

The Divisional Secretary  
Divisional Secretariat  
Verugal.

Dear Sir,

**Request to safeguard the rights and well-being of the people of Verugal Vattavan**

The general public, women-headed households, farmers, fishermen, civil society organizations, and human rights activists from the Verugal area in the Trincomalee District, have been affected in many ways. On this day, Wednesday, 08.01.2025, we are submitting our collective demands to you through a democratic protest in front of the Verugal Divisional Secretariat.

We would like to inform you that the people of the Verugal division have been impacted by both natural and man-made disasters, including the past war, tsunami, floods, economic crises, loss of life, disappearance of loved ones, loss of property, destruction of social structures, and displacement both within the country and internationally.

We also wish to inform you that we continue to face challenges under the governance of Sri Lanka's authorities. Specifically, despite 15 years having passed since the conclusion of the war, the agricultural lands, fishing areas, residential lands, lands for public use, and places of worship in the Northern and Eastern provinces are still being legally and illegally seized and taken over by various state authorities.

We also want to highlight that in Verugal ds division, multiple lands and places of worship have been confiscated by these government authorities and etc. On Monday, 06.01.2025, a signboard was placed by the Archaeological Department in the Vattavan area of the Trincomalee–Batticaloa Main Road, identifying the area as the "1 KM Vattavan Archaeological Site."

This area, which is about 1 km from the main road, has been marked as an archaeological site. This has caused fear and anxiety among the people of the Verugal division, particularly since many areas identified as archaeological sites in the Northern and Eastern provinces are now home to Buddhist temples and new Sinhala settlements.

"For instance, the Kurundoor Mountain Sivan Temple in Mullaitivu District, the Niraaviadi Vinayagar Temple, the Kanniya Hot Springs in Trincomalee, the Thiriyai area, the Kutchaveli Karadimala Pillaiyar Temple, the Sembimalei Temple, the Muthur

64th Post, and the premises of the Verugal Kalladi Malaniliyamman Temple are some of the locations where such changes have occurred."

Not only have Tamil people been displaced from lands marked as archaeological sites, but places of worship have also been interrupted, with Buddhist temples being constructed in those areas, promoting Buddhism, and the agricultural and residential lands being taken over by Buddhist monks.

Therefore, we are concerned that the identified "1 KM Vattavan Archaeological Site" may eventually see the construction of Buddhist temples and other Buddhist activities as part of the Sri Lankan government's efforts to promote Buddhism in the area.

We request the Sri Lankan government and the relevant authorities to provide the following assurances:

**Demands:**

1. The Gazette Notification related to this archaeological site should be made visible to the people in the area.
2. No permission should be granted for the construction of Buddha statues or Buddhist temples in the identified archaeological site and its surrounding areas.
3. Agricultural lands near the identified areas should not be seized by any government authority, either legally or illegally.
4. This issue should be discussed at the monthly meeting of the Verugal Divisional Development Committee, and a firm commitment should be given regarding our demands.

Thank you.

Verugal Civil Society Organizations

Verugal, Trincomalee, Sri Lanka

08<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**Copies to:**

1. District Secretary, District Secretariat, Trincomalee.
2. Hon. Governor, Eastern Province, Trincomalee.
3. Hon. Parliamentarian of the Trincomalee District.