

**Media Statement**

**12.03.2017**

**Statements by the President discourage investigations of crimes against journalists – Free Media Movement**

Free Media Movement, who has been continuously lobbying for delivering the justice by expediting criminal investigations and ending impunity for crimes against journalists, expresses its discontent on the statement made by the President Maithripala Sirisena that leads to discourage such investigations. Free Media Movements observes that the recent statement made by the President at Palali Air Force Base is an extension of similar statements that were issued by the President and several other leaders.

With reference to the allegations made against certain activities of the security forces, the President stated that he will be responsible to protect the members of the tri forces and police, claiming that such allegations are made by NGOs. Even though these statements can be seen as normal as the President being the Commander of tri forces, such sporadic emphasizes are considered by the FMM, relative to the current context of the country.

Some names of the members of security forces are mentioned in relation with certain crimes perpetrated against journalists and media institutions. Today, all the investigations seem to be in a stalemate. The demand for expedite investigations and deliver justice for victims cannot be condensed to a mere request of a few NGOs; It is a broad social demand. In this context, such sporadic statements that condemn the above broad social demand and certain parallel actions taken might lead to further discourage stalemate investigations; also to breach the trust of people for the justice.

In these circumstances, the Free Media Movement expressing its discontent on the President's statements urges the government to expedite investigations and deliver the justice for all victims including journalists and media institutions who faced violence.

**Seetha Ranjane**

**Convener**

**C. Dodawatta**

**Secretary**