

06 February 2025

Hon. Harini Amarasuriya, M.P.,
Prime Minister of the Republic of Sri Lanka,
Temple Trees,
Colombo 03,
Sri Lanka

Dear Madam Prime Minister,

Call for impeachment of the Attorney General for gross abuse of power / gross neglect of duty in connection with the criminal proceedings on the assassination of Lasantha Wickrematunge

I write with grave concern about the action taken last week by the Attorney General, Mr. Parinda Ranasinghe, to discharge three individuals who had been named as suspects in Mount Lavinia Magistrates Court Case Number B 92/2009, the inquiry into the assassination of my father, Lasantha Wickrematunge. I am also grateful to your government for its swift announcement that it will review the decision despite the political risks stemming from the NPP's pledge to foster a criminal justice system independent of political interference. However, I fear that the government believes that applying pressure on Mr. Ranasinghe to reverse his decision will be a sufficient solution.

The facts of what transpired last week make clear that this decision was no accident. It was no innocent mistake. It is the result of the culture that Mr. Ranasinghe has fostered and allowed to flourish in several parts of the Attorney General's Department – a culture of nonchalance, callousness, complacency and utter disregard for their duty to victims of crime and the witnesses who risk their lives to protect the integrity of our justice system.

My father was ambushed and assassinated on January 8, 2009, as he drove to work. The attack took place in broad daylight inside the high security zone surrounding the Ratmalana Air Force Base. His assailants fled towards the base and were never identified. Neither the assassination nor its blatant coverup were ever seriously or credibly investigated until the case was transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) following the displacement of the Rajapaksa regime in 2015.

During the subsequent investigations from 2015 to 2019, the CID painstakingly investigated hundreds of leads and amassed a mountain of evidence totaling over 50 volumes of investigative material. To my knowledge, no single investigation in the history of the CID has ever been so meticulous. The CID understood that the only hope of uncovering the truth behind my father's

assassination after so many years was to unravel the threads of how and why the crime was covered up.

In doing so, the CID followed up on the allegation that my father's driver had been abducted and threatened. In doing so, they published a sketch of the suspect and published it with the permission of the Mount Lavinia magistrate. They then investigated possible suspects leading to the arrest of Premananda Udalagama, who was identified in a parade.

The CID also investigated why there was no record of my father's field notebook in the crime scene evidence. On the day my father was killed, his notebook had been widely recorded in the media, on the front seat of his car, smeared in his blood, with two motorcycle numbers written on its cover.

These investigations led the CID to discover that the initial inquiry officer, Tissa Sugathapala of the Mount Lavinia Police, had indeed discovered my father's notebook, separated and documented it in his branch's evidence register. He had taken note of the motorcycle numbers, assessed that they were written by my father, and he began investigating those numbers, having made the appropriate entries in police records and informing his superiors.

However, after police leadership learned that Inspector Sugathapala had found a lead to identify my father's assailants, he was summoned to the office of the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) for the Colombo South Range, Prasanna Nanayakkara. Inspector Sugathapala was ordered to bring with him the field notebook and all police records that mentioned it. This was an extremely irregular request, as such records are almost never meant to be removed from a police station.

Therefore, Inspector Sugathapala took steps to make and hide photocopies of my father's notebook as well as all the relevant pages of the police investigation books (IBs) and production registers on his way to the DIG's office. While at the DIG's office, Inspector Sugathapala alleges that DIG Nanayakkara ordered him to rip out the pages of the IBs and production registers on which the notebook was mentioned, and to surrender the pages to him along with the notebook. The DIG allegedly told the Inspector to doctor the original records to mask any records of the notebook's existence, and warned him that if he continued investigating the murder, my father's fate would await him too.

This account was corroborated by Inspector Sugathapala's Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Hemantha Adikari, who was an eyewitness to the events. Several then officers of the Mount Lavinia Police have also corroborated Inspector Sugathapala's discovery of the notebook, and hastily making copies after being summoned with the registers and evidence to the DIG's office. DIG Nanayakkara on the other hand has denied on the record that my father's field notebook was produced into evidence.

Furthermore, the CID discovered that DIG Nanayakkara had also been in close contact with the Judicial Medical Officer, K. Sunil Kumara, who originally fabricated a series of false medical

reports claiming my father had shot himself. When questioned by the CID, unlike most of the other officers, Mr. Nanayakkara claimed to have no recollection of any of these events.

A review of these facts alone, all of which have been reported in open court and widely reported in the media, cannot lead any right minded individual to conclude, as Mr. Ranasinghe did, that there was “no material” to support an allegation of destruction of evidence by either DIG Nanayakkara or Inspector Sugathapala.

Any lawyer who had ever forwarded an indictment or won a conviction in a high court trial would appreciate the mountain of evidence against DIG Nanayakkara, and the value of Inspector Sugathapala as a prosecution witness against those who sought to prevent an investigation into my father’s assassination. If there was a gap in the evidence, any competent prosecutor would have directed the CID to conduct further investigations, not to throw out one of the most critical investigative avenues in this case outright. I understand, however, that during Mr. Ranasinghe’s career, he has never won a single prosecution of a single accused for any offence.

To understand the gravity of Mr. Ranasinghe’s neglect of duty and abuse of prosecutorial discretion, it is also important to consider the circumstances under which the Attorney General’s Department opened a file into my father’s assassination, CR1/40/2020.

Following the victory of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) in November 2019, the new government moved swiftly to dismantle and scuttle all ongoing criminal investigations into complex or emblematic crimes, and to punish those police officers who dared to investigate these crimes as well as witnesses who had dared to come forward.

As a part of this effort, the new CID leadership cherry-picked a smattering of evidence and forwarded a request to the Attorney General’s Department in 2020 to discharge all suspects and to wind down investigations. The material forwarded did not highlight most of the facts that are outlined above. The then Attorney General, Dappula De Livera, was aware of what the government was trying to do and instructed his officers, at great risk to themselves, to decline the CID request and to withhold a formal response, thereby preventing the CID from taking further action in connection with the case until investigations could one day resume.

I became aware of these facts through correspondence I began with the National Police Commission (NPC) on June 17, 2020, to protest the appointment of another suspect in my father’s case as the Director of the CID. The NPC confirmed to me on January 11, 2021, that the then CID Director, SSP Prasanna Alwis, was indeed suspected of sabotaging my father’s investigations. They however took no action to remove him or protect the integrity of the investigations. I wrote back on March 9, 2021, copying the Attorney General, referencing his file number, CR1/40/2020, highlighting the risks to the integrity of the investigations.

Yet it is these doctored and cherry-picked extracts from five years ago that Mr. Ranasinghe relied upon to reach his decision to drop the cases against Premananda Udalagama and DIG Nanayakkara.

This is a simple matter.

If Mr. Ranasinghe was not aware of the above facts when he made his decision, he is guilty of gross neglect of duty.

If Mr. Ranasinghe was aware of the above facts when he made his decision, he is guilty of gross abuse of his office.

In either event, he is no longer fit to serve as Attorney General. My family is fortunate that my father's career and reputation resulted in this matter receiving wide publicity and publish outcry. But if the Attorney General could act so callously in such a high-profile matter, I cannot imagine the anguish suffered by ordinary people who rely on Mr. Ranasinghe to lead the public's efforts to bring criminals to account.

I could not be more grateful to President Anura Kumara Dissanayake for his ceaseless attempts to hold the Attorney General to account. However, it should not be the job of the head of state to brandish a fire extinguisher and chase behind an Attorney General who is running around with a box of matches. The Attorney General is responsible to Parliament. The only way to fulfill the government's pledge to repair the justice system is to impeach him before Parliament and seek his removal from office.

Yours Sincerely,



Ahimsa Wickrematunge

cc. Hon. Minister of Justice

cc. Leader of the Opposition

