



**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES
UNION INTERNATIONALE DES MAGISTRATS
UNIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE MAGISTRADOS
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG DER RICHTER
UNIONE INTERNAZIONALE DEI MAGISTRATI**
PALAZZO DI GIUSTIZIA - PIAZZA CAVOUR - 00193 ROMA - ITALY

ANAO STATEMENT ON SRI LANKA

The Asia, Australia, North America and Oceania (ANAO) Region of the International Association of Judges (IAJ), herein expresses its deep concern about developments in Sri Lanka affecting the independence of the judiciary.

On March 3, 2023, Sri Lanka's Supreme Court issued an interim order to the Secretary, Ministry of Finance and the Attorney General, representing the Minister of Finance, preventing them from withholding funds earmarked for the 2023 local government elections through the budget passed by Parliament.

In consequence, a question of privilege has been raised in Parliament and the matter referred to the Committee on Ethics and Privilege.

Subsequently, the State Minister of Finance has requested the Deputy Speaker to advise all relevant authorities not to proceed further or take any action on the interim order of the Supreme Court until the Privileges Committee concludes its enquiry. The interim order has now been included as an agenda item of the Privileges Committee meeting due to be held on March 22, 2023 for future activities.

The United Nations Basic Principles on the independence of the judiciary call upon the State to guarantee the independence of the judiciary. It demands that all government and other institutions respect that independence.

Moreover, there is to be no inappropriate or unwarranted interference in the judicial process, and judicial decisions of the courts are not subject to review by the legislature.

The Government (Latimer House) Principles on the Three Branches of Government, November of 2003, demands that the relations between Parliament and the Judiciary be governed by respect for Parliament's primary responsibility for enacting laws on the one hand, and the Judiciary's responsibility for interpreting and applying them consistently with overarching constitutional principles and the rule of law on the other.

The ANAO Region of the IAJ has serious concerns about the consistency of the actions taken here with these fundamental principles.

It asks that Parliament consider the universally recognized primacy of the judiciary in protecting the rule of law as it goes forward.