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வெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள் அமைச்சு  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

ජනරජ ගොඩනැගිල්ල, කොළඹ 1, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව, குடியரசு கட்டிடம், கொழும்பு 1, Republic Building, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

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## Media Release

### **Rescue and Repatriation of Sri Lankan victims of human trafficking in Myanmar**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is aware of the situation that has been evolving in Myanmar where Sri Lankan nationals have become victims of human trafficking for cybercrimes.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Myanmar have continued to actively seek the assistance and cooperation of the Myanmar authorities on the safe repatriation of Sri Lankan nationals who have been trafficked to Myanmar. It may be noted that this situation has been an ongoing issue since 2022.

As a result of the rescue and repatriation efforts spearheaded by the Consular Affairs Division of the Foreign Ministry in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Embassy in Myanmar and the Myanmar Government authorities, from time to time 32 victims were rescued in the 2022/2023 period.

Given the grave nature of the situation, Foreign Minister M U M Ali Sabry raised concerns on the safety of Sri Lankan nationals with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar Than Swe on the sidelines of BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok, Thailand. The Foreign Ministry officials continue to raise serious concerns on the safety of Sri Lankan nationals with the Myanmar Ambassador in Colombo and seek assistance and early intervention to secure their rescue and repatriation.

As per the information available to the Ministry, at the moment 56 Sri Lankan nationals being held in the Myawaddy area in Myanmar. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is taking all possible steps to liaise with Myanmar Government authorities and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to resolve this issue. The Myanmar Government has informed difficulties in accessing that area due to prevailing situation.

The Ministry has already taken action to inform and continuously engage with all stakeholders including, National Anti - Human Trafficking Task Force (NAHTTF), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Human Trafficking, Smuggling Investigation and Maritime Crime Division, and the Department of Immigration & Emigration regarding this issue.

On 19 December 2023, Sri Lanka's Ambassador in Myanmar Janaka Bandara met Home Affairs Minister of Myanmar Lieutenant General Yar Pyae, and Director General Consular Affairs of the Foreign Ministry of Myanmar, U. Aung Kyaw Oo, in Nay Pyi Taw. During the meeting the Ambassador requested for urgent assistance from the Myanmar Government to rescue the Sri Lankan nationals who were trafficked.

It is learnt that the job offers are mainly in the IT sector and Sri Lankan nationals travel to Myanmar using visit visas, instead of work visas and contracts. These workers travel to Myanmar, without registering with the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been requesting all Sri Lankan nationals, seeking job opportunities in the Southeast Asia region not to fall prey to human trafficking and criminal syndicates who offer large salaries without proper job contracts and work visas.

The Ministry will continue to seek all possible avenues to ensure the safety and security of our nationals and seek early repatriation in consultation with the Government of Myanmar.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Colombo

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