

## **Tell Me Where I can find Justice -A woman asks the IGP and President Gotabaya**

**A statement by a female victim against police abuse**

**This is a translation of a transcript of a statement by a woman who told her story about police sexual abuse suffered at the Padukka Police station; Her statement was published in the you tube-**

See the link at; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2Kf1r9dmP8>

(The translation from Sinhala to English by Asian Human Rights Commission)

My husband, my two daughters and I went to the Padukka Police Station to make a complaint. The reason for the complaint was that my two daughters do their work online, through WhatsApp and a boy had sent one of my daughters some nude photos. As we did not know who this boy was, we went to the Padukka Police Station to lodge a complaint. When we went there, all the Police officers who were there looked at these photos. They then told us that as no female police officer is available, for us to come the next day morning. As I had to go to work the next day, we went to the Mirihana Police Station to make our complaint. We made our complaint to the female section of the Mirihana Police and came back home. As I had to go to work the next day, my husband suggested that we should go to the Padukka Police and tell them that we already made a complaint to the Mirihana Police and that therefore, it is not necessary for us to come the next day morning. My husband and I went to the Padukka Police Station and told that as we have already made a complaint to the Mirihana Police Station, it is not necessary for us to come to the Padukka Police Station the next day. But a police officer said no, and that our complaint has to be written down, and thereafter, got my husband to sit down and the officer wrote a statement. The complaint was not written in the way that we wanted. After writing, my husband's signature was taken and a receipt was issued. Then, a police officer called Bimalasiri took my husband to a police cell and held my husband by the neck and pushed him. Thereafter, they put a big lock to the door of the police cell. I was told that I better sit there. My eldest daughter was brought by the police officer who was at the entrance gate. Then, my younger daughter was also brought and the officer has told the three-wheeler to go away. Then, we were told to sit there. My husband shouted out loudly because of the injustice being done to us. With anger and sadness, he asked as to why they were doing such an injustice to us. My husband is not in good health as he has diabetes and cholesterol problems. After shouting, he sat down inside the cell. Then, the water pipe inside the cell opened and the water began to flow. The opening was done by these officers. The water flowed till the reserve section got wet. Then, the officer at the reserve section told my husband to close that thing. I told him not to do that because if the tap broke, we will be accused of damaging State property and then they will file a case against us. My husband slept. This incident happened in the early morning of 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

The two police officers that we met at the Mirihana Police gave us two telephone numbers stating that if we face an injustice to talk to Colombo. As both of my telephones were taken by the officers of the Padukka Police Station, I made a call from the Police sStation telephone itself. We were told by the Colombo officer that females cannot be kept at the Police Station, and to

therefore come in the morning to lodge a complaint. Then, I came back and sat at the place where I was earlier seated. My little daughter had some wounds in her hand. She began to cry. I told her that tomorrow when the big officer comes - the officer in charge (OIC), we will tell this, and therefore asked her not to cry. The eldest daughter was sleeping and she was not well as she had a toothache. Then, the children started crying, saying that they were hungry. I asked the officer at the reserve as to whether there is some food. He replied that there is no food at this time and for me to remain seated where I was. In my bag, there was some leftover food from what my daughter ate in the afternoon. I gave that to my little daughter. She was only nine-years-old. She began to cry. I asked the officer at the reserve to give some water. But he refused. They were so cruel. We were covered with water flowing from the tap. I told her not to cry. At around 2 a.m., I wanted to go to the toilet. There was no female police officer. There was a policeman whose name I do not know, but whose number was 14541. As other officers were young and as I could not tell what I wanted to them, I told this police officer [14541], sir, I want to go to the toilet, and asked him to show me where the toilet was as it was in the night. He took me to the back of the Police Station and then outside. When I was going, there was a restaurant and over that a big light. As I went out, the light was on. When I was coming back, the light had been put off. As I was coming, that officer [14541] caught me tightly by my hand. He said that my husband and three of us can be sent home if I fulfill his need. To tell the truth, I asked him the way to go to the toilet because he is as old as my father. I asked him as why he caught me by my hand. He said that I have a need and that I better take care of that for me. I shouted loudly. I was wearing a mask. He held my two hands to the back and held my mouth in a way that I could not even breathe. Because of my shouting, four or five officers came there. One of the officers hit me with a pole saying that just talking to her this way will not work. I still had the mask in my left hand. After that, I was also hit on the back. Then, somebody from the back came and kicked me. With that kick, I was pushed forward, and I fell down. Then, my eyes became dark. I do not remember anything. After that, they had brought me and put me where I was. When I regained consciousness, there was mud all over my body. I called my husband and told what happened to me. As I got up, my whole body was paining. My husband said that the OIC will come in the morning and that we would tell him the whole incident.

After that, the OIC came in the morning. I was asked to come. The officer who was working in the morning took me to the OIC. I was not allowed to even tell a single word. The OIC said that I am not the one who fathered your children, am I the one who fathered your children, am I the one who is feeding your children, and am I the one who got telephones to your children. The OIC of Padukka blamed me in a very bad way. And then he told my husband, are you a thug? Everything you have done has been video recoded. I will bring you to court so that you will not be able to come out for years. After that, at about 1:30 p.m., we were given bail.

We went to make a complaint, but we were kept as if we were suspects. The bail for my elder daughter and my husband was given by a friend of my husband. We both came home. My body was paining all over. My legs were swollen. Next day, we went to the women's section at the Colombo [Police headquarters]. I told everything to a female officer having three stars. She said that this must be reported to the headquarters, and brought it before a higher officer. That officer's name is Sub Inspector Herath. That officer wrote down the complaint and gave a form

and asked us to go to the hospital. I went to the Avissawella Hospital. I had to stay in the Hospital from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>.

Up to now, we have received no kind of justice. Still my two telephones are at the police station. I lost my job also. My husband also has no job. Because of that, I asked back a load of sand which we have collected for building purposes to be sold because we had no money. In the afternoon, the sand was filled into a lorry. Officers from the Padukka Police came and took the sand and the workers to court and they have been asked to pay 50,000 Rupees each as fines. We sold the sand which belonged to us because we needed money for food. After I went to the Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), some neighbours came to our house and started shouting. My husband told them that we are facing a problem and for them to go away. When they started using filthy language, my husband called 199 [the official number for emergency police]. Then those police officers came. We told them that my husband has made a complaint against the officers of the Padukka Police. However, they did not take notice of that. The officers from 199 wrote a complaint and left. The assault on my husband by those people was also mentioned. But nobody was arrested.

Those people had made a complaint against my 13-year-old son saying that he assaulted somebody. My son was taken to the police station and produced before a court. I went to the court and got him bailed.

I am asking the Inspector General of Police (IGP), and the President of Sri Lanka, why are such injustices being done. Those people [the Padukka Police officers] have not stopped coming back against us. This is injustice. We have not done any wrong to anybody. These officers are spreading all kinds of bad gossips, stating that we are selling arrack and illicit liquor. In all our history, we have not done anything like that. We have not sold drugs, ganja or any bad thing. There are no complaints against us in the police books. The Inspector General of the Police (IGP) and the President of Sri Lanka should punish these people for doing such things. I am asking the IGP not to keep these kinds of police officers in the police force. Still, nothing has been done. Only a taking down of statements. There was a receipt even from the police headquarters in Colombo, and a statement was taken down. That is the day we lost our jobs. The ASP of Homagama also took down a statement. Now, one month has passed. There is no justice. The telephone that children use for their education is being kept at the Padukka police. They say that it would be produced in court. We ask them to solve this and give these things back. Officers who did bad things and injustice to us are still working as police officers. They have not been punished. Nobody wants to take down a statement. The Judicial Medical Officer of the Avissawella Hospital also did not do justice to us. They know the law. We do not know the law. If I knew the law, I would have done something more. I ask that the injustice done to me should not be done to anyone else. Injustice has come to the top. Justice has gone down. In such a society, I am asking for justice. They should be punished. I should be allowed to have justice. That is what I ask from the Inspector General of Police. We cannot enforce the law. To tell the truth, all this is very ugly and shameful. There is nothing good with our police. There is nothing good in any place of the Government. In fact, these kinds of people should be reduced to beggars. We are small people. Others may also be like that. However, I do not want to stay like

that. I am a mother with three children. I am telling the people that for whatever reason, I do not give sexual bribes to the police or anyone. Do not give bribes even in money. We are all human beings who take our breath in the same way and want to live. I am telling the IGP, do not merely transfer these police officers to other police stations. If they go there, they will harass other women. They should be removed from their jobs and sent back home. Then only, there would be justice for the innocent people. For these kinds of people, even hanging is not enough. These kinds of people should be punished like they do in Arabian countries by publicly punishing them. It is women who take responsibility for everything. People who torture women should be publicly punished. I went to a place where I thought the law is being protected. That is the place where I found this injustice.

I ask from everybody to what place should I go. Is there a place which protects the law? Therefore, as the IGP, I ask you to provide me justice. I ask not for myself only, but for the whole society.