



National Shoora Council

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MEDIA RELEASE (by NSC – Rasheed M Imthiyaz Gen Sec NSC Contact No: 0777314207)

Do not burden Magistrates with more inquests but enhance office of Inquirers into Sudden Deaths on par with Presidents of Labour Tribunals-

-NSC

The National Shoora Council (NSC), an apex body of Muslim civil society organisations in Sri Lanka has urged Justice Minister Harsha Nanayakkara not to overload the already overburdened judiciary with additional work related to inquests into sudden deaths currently handled mostly by Inquirers into Sudden Deaths (ISDs).

Presently only in instances of ‘reasonable suspicion of crime’ including criminal negligence, Magistrates are required under section 370(3) of the law relating to criminal procedure to handle inquests of deaths. That should remain, the NSC has said, but do not add the work of ISDs on to the Magistrates!

NSC’s letter to the Minister dated 5th October 2025, while welcoming the Justice Ministry efforts to streamline the country’s justice delivery system to be people friendly, less costly to the public and minimize the perennial problem of laws delays, has pointed out that some of the new proposals, if accepted, will contribute to laws delays. It will also make the release process through Courts much more costly to the grieving families.

Past records indicate that almost 99% of deaths though sudden, happen in the ordinary course of nature! It does not seem just or fair that these 99% should be subjected to the exceptional process of a magisterial inquiry and post mortems required without doubt for the less than 1% of the cases where crime is suspected!

Post mortems cost the government considerable additional sums of money and additional costs also to the grieving families. Dead human bodies are also entitled under international humanitarian laws and customary laws to respect and dignity. All religions too mandate dignified last rites to the dead!

We urge the government not to burden further the regular Courts of law but to enhance the office of the ISDs with facilities on par with the office of Presidents of Labour Tribunals, provide for higher educational qualifications for new recruits with fair emoluments.

As pledged by the government, changes to the existing laws should minimize laws delays, make the process less costly and the system, people friendly, the representations made by NSC President M M Zuhair PC and General Secretary Rasheed M Imthiyaz Attorney at Law have said. **(End)**