



LANKA REALTY INVESTMENTS

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1st February 2024

"Without Prejudice"

Hon. Tiran Alles M.P.
Minister of Public Security
No. 345/33, Kuruppu Lane
Colombo 08.

Dear Sir,

RE: PRESS CONFERENCE HELD ON 18th JANUARY 2024 ON THE YUKTHIYA OPERATION WHEREIN FALSE AND IRRESPONSIBLE STATEMENTS WERE MADE BY YOU

We, Lanka Realty Investments PLC, are a public listed company on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) with several prominent foreign investors.

We are a member of The Hotel Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) and operate the 'W15 Weligama' boutique hotel in Weligama, which is owned by our wholly-owned subsidiary Almond Trees (Pvt) Ltd. We also own and/or operate a collection of boutique hotels under the 'W15' brand, including 'W15 Ahangama', 'W15 Lake Gregory', 'W15 Hanthana' etc.

On or about 18th January 2024, you, along with *inter alia* the Acting Inspector General of Police, held a press conference in connection with the 'Yukthiya' Operation being conducted by the Colombo Crimes Division (CCD) of the Sri Lanka Police. The recordings of the proceedings are available online and the links are attached hereto for your reference:

<https://youtu.be/1eQ5v5s5KCK?si=P7WpsjLupmxv4fJU>

https://youtu.be/dq-K9kZ-MZQ?si=0p5OzmumUk_kKVWI

You have made several false, misleading and irresponsible statements during the press conference with reference to an incident that took place in the vicinity of our 'W15 Weligama' hotel, which statements are of serious concern to us, as a public listed company, and also to me, personally.

As you are well aware, the said incident took place in the early hours of 31st of December, 2023, on the public road, outside the 'W15 Weligama' hotel, when it is alleged that a covert operation led by the Colombo Crimes Division (CCD) to apprehend criminals in the drug trade was being carried out. Being the height of tourist season in Sri Lanka, our hotel was fully booked with 100% foreign clientele, when certain officers in plain clothes who were in an unmarked vehicle in the area, which later transpired to be attached to the CCD, started firing gunshots in an ad hoc manner. Although these gunshots caused damage to our property, fortunately, none of our guests or employees were injured.

However, a Police Patrol unit from the Weligama Police, on witnessing gunshots being fired from an unmarked vehicle, had retaliated gunfire assuming that this was an armed gang since no communications of an operation had been received. The shootout led to the loss of a police officer's life. This incident has shocked the Nation and a special investigation unit has been appointed to investigate the same.

Although the Police had hitherto maintained that this incident had nothing to do with our 'W15 Weligama' hotel, you have clearly insinuated otherwise in the said press conference by implicating our hotel without providing even an iota of evidence to support your spurious allegation. In particular, you have falsely and irresponsibly alleged that there have been 15 instances of persons with narcotic drugs being apprehended during raids at our 'W15 Weligama' hotel premises. We wish to categorically place on record that your statement is false and false to your own knowledge.

Furthermore, you have by innuendo alleged that we are connected to the notorious drug dealer known as 'harak kata', which is once allegation is also utterly false.

The Weligama bay is a public beach. The Hotel cannot control any incidents that take place in a public beach/area.

You have also referred to the meeting I had with you, in my capacity as the Managing Director of Lanka Realty Investments PLC. I specifically state that I had no reason whatsoever to ask you to 'save the hotel' as falsely alleged by you. To the contrary, I met with you to demand an explanation as to why the CCD had acted in this reckless manner without any regard to the law or the safety of the public and foreign tourists, for which you are answerable as the Minister in charge of the portfolio of Public Security. I had also requested for an impartial inquiry to be conducted into this incident, but there has been no meaningful steps taken in this regard.

Further, you have wrongly alleged that the 'W15 Weligama' hotel is owned by me personally, whereas it is owned by our wholly-owned subsidiary Almond Trees (Pvt) Ltd. However, as the Managing Director of our company Lanka Realty Investments PLC, I am the face of the our company and a respectable and successful business personality, and you have by innuendo implicated me personally since it is clearly understood that you have referred to me (M.H. Jamaldeen) personally as the 'owner' of the W15 hotel. As a result, I have personally had several friends and business acquaintances who have called me to inquire about the said false statements made by you during your press conference.

Your several statements made as aforesaid during the said press conference, which are totally false, unlawful, malicious, threatening and irresponsible, are also tantamount to defamatory statements made against our companies, our Directors, and to me personally. Your said statements are per se and in their natural and ordinary meaning defamatory, and also defamatory by innuendoes. We have been greatly injured in our good name, credit, reputation, business, status, respect, goodwill and loss of business reputation and have been brought into public scandal disgrace ridicule and contempt as a result of your said statements, which have also caused and continue to cause significant harm to our businesses. We wish to place on record that your defamatory statements have caused severe harm and irreparable damage to the reputation of our company and also the 'W15' hotels.

You have also made a thinly veiled threat, to arrest the 'owner', which has been taken serious note of by our foreign investors. You have obviously failed to appreciate the serious damage such irresponsible statements, coming from a Cabinet Minister, would have on the tourism industry of Sri Lanka.

We are also constrained to point out that you were not entitled to use your office as Minister of Public Security to defame our group of companies, its Directors, the owners and managers of the 'W15' hotels and myself personally. In any event, we are entitled to hold you personally responsible for your unlawful and wrongful acts.

ACCORDINGLY, YOU ARE HEREBY REQUIRED TO CEASE AND DESIST FROM ANY SUCH FURTHER AND SIMILAR DEFAMATORY STATEMENTS.

This communication is sent strictly without prejudice to our rights, and does not constitute a waiver of any of our rights under law. We hereby expressly reserve the legal rights of our group of companies, its Directors, the owners and managers of the 'W15' hotels and myself personally, to make appropriate claims against **you in your personal capacity** for loss and damage our group of companies, its Directors, the owners and managers of the 'W15' hotels and myself personally have suffered and continue to suffer as a result of your said defamatory statements.

Yours faithfully,



M H Jamaldeen
Director

C.C.

H.E. Ranil Wickremasinghe
President of the Democratic
Presidential Secretariat
Galle Face
Colombo 01

Hon. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana,
Speaker of Parliament
Parliament of Sri Lanka,
Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte,
Sri Lanka.

Mr. Saman Ekanayake
Secretary to the President
Presidential Secretariat
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Mr. Viyani Gunathilaka
Secretary
Ministry of Public Security
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Mr. M.W. Deshabundu Tennakoon
Inspector General of Police (Acting)
Sri Lanka Police
Police Headquarters
Colombo 01

The Chairman
National Police Commission
Block 9, BMICH Premises
Buddhaloka Mawatha
Colombo 07

The Secretary
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