HATE CAMPAIGNS AND ATTACKS AGAINST THE MUSLIMS IN RECENT SRI LANKA

Ahamed Sarjoon Razick[1*], Nagoor Gafoordeen[2] & Seyed Mohamed Mohamed Mazahir[3]

[1*] Corresponding author, Department of Islamic Studies, South Eastern University of Sri Lank Oluvil, Sri Lanka
[2] Arabic and Islamic Civilization Unit, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
Department of Islamic Studies, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Oluvil, Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka is a country located in South Asian region and where multi ethnic and multi religious people live. Buddhists are the predominant religious group constitutes 70.19% of the total population and Muslims are the second largest minority next to Tamils in the country. There are plenty of records accessible in history to prove well of the friendly relationship existed between Buddhists and Muslims for more than 100 decades. However, within the last 5 years, especially the aftermath of the governmental victory of civil war in 2009 an unrest trend has come to observe among Buddhists and Muslims in Sri Lanka. This is because of hate campaigns against the Muslims which recently undertaken by a few Buddhist Nationalist Groups (BNGs), which have caused the range of disfavor among them. The groups have been carrying on protests against a number of aspects on Muslims' socio-cultural practices such as issuing *halal* certification, slaughtering of cattle, conducting prayer services, woman's *hijab* and *niqab* and questioning the origin of Muslims to mother country, with attacking Muslim trade stores and a number of worship places. Given the above backdrop, this paper attempts to analyze the detailed facts of the scenarios and to measure the characteristics and quantum of the hate campaigns against Muslims in Sri Lanka in recent past years. According to the analysis, it can be found that the Muslims who live in Buddhists majority districts are largely affected by the BNGs' hate campaigns and attacks especially in Western and Southern part of Sri Lanka rather than the Muslims living in North and Eastern regions. Also these campaigns and attacks have become initial stage in between 2009 and 2012 and it has gradually intensified in 2013 and 2014.

Keywords: Hate campaigns, attacks, Muslims, Buddhists, Sri Lanka.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Sri Lanka, historically the Buddhist-Muslim relationships have been significant, and both of them have jointly maintained their social and cultural associations in a healthy manner. However, soon after the Government victory of war against the LTTE in 2009, the Buddhists Nationalist Groups (BNGs) such as Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), Sinhala Ravaya or Sinhala Echo (SR), Ravana Balaya or Ravana Force (RB) initiated various hate campaigns and attacks to break the unity of Buddhists and Muslims in the country. The campaigns were intended to spread across different angles throughout the entire country, including the Tamil majority regions (North-East). In particular, the BNGs instigated the Buddhist public to go against the Muslims. Especially, a group of monks who gained membership in respective organizations with the support of laity had started this agitation struggle. The origin of the Muslims in Sri Lanka was put into question and their existence were criticised. The prayer services at the mosques were obstructed. The renovation and rehabilitation of the mosques were hindered

and public demonstration were organised to voice hatred slogans against the Muslims. Some mosques were encroached and declared as Buddhist sacred lands. In the same way, the Muslim women's hijabs and niqabs were laughed at by these protesters and they chanted to ban them in Sri Lanka. They opposed the issuance of *halal* certification to consumer goods. They watched the Muslims trading cattle derogatorily and refused to allow them to be slaughtered and requested the Government to ban it. They advocated the population growth of Muslims to be brought under control. Apart from these all, they declared through the media and the rallies that the Muslims should return to the Arab countries mentioning which is the native place of them. This is the manner as to how the Muslim of Sri Lanka were condemned and attacked by the BNGs during the last five years. Given the above backdrop, this paper attempts to analyze the detailed facts of the scenarios and to measure the characteristics and quantum of the above hate campaigns and attacks against Muslims in Sri Lanka in last five years.

2. An Introductory Note on Buddhist Nationalist Groups (BNGs)

Several BNGs were whipping up anti-Muslim sentiment, although being led by Buddhist monks such as BBS, SR and RB. The following subsections explain each movement in nutshell.

2.1 Bodu Bala Sena (BBS)

The BBS was formed in 2012 as a breakaway from the nationalist JHU (Wickramasinghe, 2014). The original founders were four monks including Galagoda Atte Gnanasara Thero, Kerama Wimalajothi Thero, and two other unnamed monks, as well as lay Buddhist Dilanthe Withanage. Wimalojothi, the BBS' founding president, has since renounced the organisation, leaving Gnanasara Thero as the General Secretary and Mr. Withanage as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). These two are the main spokespeople for the BBS in press conferences, speeches, and interviews. Gnanasara Thero claims that they are supported by almost 80% of monks in Sri Lanka.

Withanage (CEO) has never been ordained or, in his own words, formally trained in Buddhism. His background is in Information Technology (IT), which he studied in the Soviet Union during the 1980s. His LinkedIn profile states that he holds a M.Sc. degree from the Georgian Technical University, and that he began working towards a PhD in artificial intelligence (https://lk.linkedin.com/in/dilanthe). He returned to Sri Lanka and began working in IT and computer literacy before turning to policy and public service in 2000s. In 2011, he served as an advisor to the Minister of National Languages and Social Integration and assisted in developing a programme for engaging Sinhalese-Buddhists, Tamils, and Muslims in joint development projects before transferring to the now-defunct Ministry for Consumer Welfare. He has known Gnanasara Thero since 2011, when they were both members of the Sinhalese Buddhists delegation to a Norwegian conference on post-war reconciliation (The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Sri Lanka, 2015). In 2012, he cofounded the BBS, along with Gnanasara Thero and Wimalajothi Thero. In 2013, the ministry asked for his resignation, and has worked full-time as CEO of the BBS since (Jerryson, 2011).

The BBS' early campaigns included a protest against *halal* food certification and Muslim dress codes. They caught international attention in mid-2014 after organising a public rally

that devolved into violence near Aluthgama and Beruwela[1], resulting in Tamil and Muslim deaths (Farook, 2014).

The BBS see themselves as fulfilling a historical duty to save the heritage of Sri Lanka and Sinhalese Buddhism from frightening foreign invaders (Jones, 2016). In post-war Sri Lanka, these invaders, according to the BBS, are Muslims, although being the most modern incarnation of a historical threat. Sinhalese Buddhism nationalists framed their fight against the LTTE as defending the sacred heritage of Sinhalese Buddhism against impious foreign invaders. They claimed this fight had its origins with the invasion of Elara described in the Mahavamsa (Jones, 2016).

Although the BBS operated separately there was a common understanding of the battle fronts with SR and RB. The groups were allegedly together involved in a series of attacks on mosques, protests over cattle slaughter, and continuous attempt to further marginalize Muslims by outlawing the *halal* system of meat certification etc. (Farook, 2014).

2.2 Sinhala Ravaya (SR)

The Sinhala Ravaya means 'Sinhalese Roar; or Sound of Sinhala'. This organization, like BBS, is comprised of members of the Buddhist clergy and laity. The chairman and national secretary of this group are respectively Akmeemana Dayarathana Thero and Madille Panyaloka Thero. This organization claimed responsibility for the attack on the Shrine in Anuradapura, as well as the attack on a mosque in Dehiwela, in their official website (www.sinhalaravaya.com). However, as of January 30th 2013, this website no longer seems to function. Nonetheless, their Face book page continues to be active. Leaflets and handbills with inflammatory content and signed by 'clergy and laymen patriots' was distributed in 2011 weeks before the attack on a Muslim shrine in Anuradapura.

2.3 Rawana Balaya (RB)

The RB is a Buddhist nationalist organization established in 2012, comprising of the Buddhist clergy and laity named after the mythological ten headed demon king of ancient Lanka, Ravana. The RB leader is Ven Itthekande Saddhatissa Thero. The RB has been hitting the headlines in 2013 and 2014 through several campaigns among others, included threatening to throw eggs at Sri Lankan cricketers playing in India, demanding the banning of Tamil films from India, calling for a statue of Ravana to be erected before constructing a statue of Sita, and protesting against the naming of a cyclone as "Mahasen".

3. Hate Campaigns and Attacks against Muslims

There were expectations among the people that the following the end of 30 year old civil war peace, development and reconciliation would begin to drive in Sri Lanka. From 2010 to the middle part of 2013 the several positive developments have witnessed including rehabilitation and infrastructure. Nonetheless, various problems, including policy gaps, have hindered the transition from war to sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. There have been numerous incidents against the Muslim minority including mob attacks on places of worship, robberies and vandalism of religious places, protests and hate speeches on the internet, mass media and through the rallies and conferences. So, this topic attempts to portray a more

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[1] This is an incident that reportedly triggered the riots was a dispute between three Muslims from Aluthgama and a Buddhist monk. Following the incident, a large rally was organised by the monks and lay men to condemn the alleged attack on respective Buddhist monk. The BBS too participated in this rally and Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara Thero, the General Secretary of the BBS, made racist and inflammatory remarks against Muslims at the rally.

cohesive view of the post-war hate campaigns and attacks against Muslims in recent Sri Lanka.

3.1 Attacks on the Muslim's places of worship
The end of war offered the Muslim community, particularly in the east and north, an opportunity to rebuild their livelihood and enjoy their rights as citizens, including rights to religious freedom. While in some areas the post-war period offered space for reconstruction and religious revival, there were ongoing incidents of violence, intimidation and hate speech against the Muslims. These included attacks towards infrastructures such as mosques, shrines and Islamic religious schools (Madrasa) that were either damaged or destroyed. In addition, prayer services were disrupted, protests were held outside religious places, people were warned not to pray in certain centres and hate speeches were disseminated through handbills, leaflets and websites. These acts of violence resulted in Muslims feeling insecure ascertain parts of the country have become more hostile to them and that they have been observed with greater distrust. This was a systematic campaign with abusive slogans that goes against the rights to observe religious practices freely. It has also resulted in a lot of religious hatred and accusations for Muslims to return to their 'motherland' (i.e. Muslim countries).

The nature of the attacks on Muslim's places of worship differs from place to place. In some places, the perpetrators have been very open about their motives for targeting a place of worship. These attacks were part of a broader anti-Muslim agenda, predominantly from BNGs. The years 2013 and 2014 have seen an intensification of the anti-Muslim campaign, including the damaging and destroying of Muslim's places of worship. The attacks on religious places were tied to socio-economic and political interests at times, including arguments over ownership of land.

Physical attacks on Muslim religious places were not confined to any particular geographical location. Moreover, all reported cases outside the north and east regions, recorded at least one incident. Some of the reported attacks have been preceded by threats and intimidation such as disruption during prayer services; protests outside religious places, and prohibiting prayers performed in certain centres. For instance, Buddhist monks from a temple in the area are alleged to have entered the Al-Akram Mosque, Ariyawatte, Kurunegala mosque on 25th of May, 2012 and conducted Buddhist religious services inside (Farook, 2014). In another incident, a group of people including a Buddhist monk were alleged to have entered Makuluwewa Al-Akram Thakiya Mosque, Deduruoyagama in Wellawa Police Division and tried to prevent Muslims from performing religious observances during Ramadan on 24th of July, 2012 (CPA, 2013). The Inspector General of Police (IGP) of the area was informed. These incidents have taken place in a context that includes anti-Muslim protest and hate speech, which have been disseminated through handbills, leaflets and website. Some of the mosques and shrines that were attacked have existed for decades.

From many of these attacks, the perpetrators remain unknown while some groups have claimed responsibility of certain attacks. More than half of the attacks were allegedly carried out by Buddhist groups, sometimes including members of the Buddhist clergy. Some of these groups have opposed religious structures of other faiths in the compound of Buddhist temples, in some public spaces considered sacred to Buddhists, as well as on private lands in areas perceived by them to be in areas that are predominantly Buddhist. Leaflets and handbills with inflammatory content and signed by 'clergy and laymen patriots' was distributed in 2011, and the leaflets call for a reawakening of a Sinhala-Buddhist nation, for mosques established on Buddhist heritage sites' to be destroyed immediately, to stop

slaughter of cattle, boycott Muslim owned trade stores and businesses, and forbidding inter-marriage with Muslims (CPA, 2013). It also warns Muslims to be ready for a religious war.

3.2 Threats against Religious Practices

There were attacks held in various places of Sri Lanka threatening the Muslims in mosques, especially, in Kuragala, Dambulla and Mahiyangana. Since there was a general misunderstanding of religious practices associated with Islam, these protests were organized by the BNGs outside religious places. The Muslims were warned not to pray in many religious places. On July 20th 2012, in Rajagiriya, Colombo, a group of people tried to forcefully enter the Jamiyathu Darul Iman mosque while religious prayers were taking place. Due to fear of further attacks, prayer services at this mosque have been stopped.

3.3 Restriction on Construction of Religious Places

Arising from these attacks, there has been attempts to use indirect means, such as Government regulations, to control the construction and activities of religious places. Government regulations have been used selectively by groups leading the attack, to demand the removal of existing places of worship, and restrictions on the construction of new mosques (CPA, 2013). There are accusations that some Muslim groups set up mosques and Madrasas without notifying the authorities. There is no legal requirement to register new or existing places of worship, although for construction of places of worship permission is required. In attacks, however, perpetrators leading the attack have often demanded for proof of registration and used this excuse thereof to claim illegality and justify threats and attacks. The attack on Dambulla Khairiya Mosque also saw allegations that it was an unauthorized construction, although the mosque has been built for over 60 years. It was reported that the 2008 Circular which requires permission from the Ministry of Buddha Sasana and religious affairs to build new religious places has restricted construction of new mosques (CPA, 2013).

The Muslims felt that the construction of new mosques or even Muslim religious schools is impossible in multi-ethnic, multi-religious areas, because of the inhabitant's dislike. This seems to stem largely from fears of Muslim suspicions over Muslim's socio-religious practices in general. Muslims are accused, mostly by Buddhist groups, of changing the demography of the country through their high fecundity. The recent all-island census, for instance, has raised renewed concerns that the Muslim population is growing at a faster rate than other communities. There are also fears that Islam will spread rapidly due to a resurgence of interest in orthodox forms of the religion and the mushrooming of mosques and religious centres.

Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU-is a Buddhist political party) said that,

> "When Muslims start a Madrasa in a neighbourhood, people fear that it will develop into a mosque and so people start protesting. There is not much consultation for these constructions, most of them are illegal and they don't seek approval from the local authorities. When many of these Muslims come to the mosques, they are arrogant, they are not disciplined, they slaughter animals. So unfortunately, people have found that building mosques in the vicinity is an obstacle to peace in the area (CPA, 2013: 60)."

3.4 Anti-*halal* Agitation

The BBS initiated a campaign against the *halal* certification issued by the All Ceylon Jamiyathul Ulema (ACJU) (Sri Lanka Council of Muslim Theologians) accusing the ACJU of profiting from the certification process, and directing funds to Muslim terrorist groups (Jones, 2015). The BBS members have openly called for a boycott of *halal* consumer

products, which are associated with Muslims. General Secretary of BBS Ven. Galagoda Atte Gnanasara was quoted as saying "If Muslim people want *halal* goods they can buy it from their mosque" (CPA, 2013: 56), and have threatened an island-wide campaign to get people to reject *halal* products. The anti-halal campaign also has a strong online presence with Facebook groups and pages. There have been a number of protests against *halal* including in Kuliyapitiya, Kurunegala and Embilipitya, Ratnapura districts on 25th December 2012 (Farook, 2014). There have been other protests such as in Kuliyapitiya on 24[th]January 2013 against *halal* labelled foods (CPA, 2013). Although the protests were carried out on a relatively small group of people, there were reports of a knock on impact on Muslim-owned businesses while the economic boycott continues to spread. Consequently, it will have multiple repercussions towards both the Muslim community and the Buddhist-Muslim relations. The steady and seemingly unchecked growth of this campaign has increased fears within the Muslim community that the protests, individual incidents of violence against buildings and the hate speech could incite widespread violence.

3.5 Anti-slaughtering Movement

The anti-slaughtering discourse has been carried by the Buddhists in Sri Lanka during recent decades because of an overarching motive to protect the lives of bulls and cows out of a sense of Buddhist compassion towards animals. The anti-slaughtering movements have intensified in post-war Sri Lanka during the aftermath of the hate campaigns undertaken by the BNGs. They have highlighted this among Buddhists as a main anti-Buddhist activity conducted by the Muslims. In fact, cattle slaughtering, conducting butchery and cattle trading are common practice by Muslims in Sri Lanka, since and an unknown time, to date. Moreover, during the Hajj season, Muslims slaughter cattle as a sacrificial activity to celebrate their Hajj festival with meat to consume and distribute to relatives and the poor.

Animal sacrifice as a practice is not uncommon among other communities, e.g., during the Buddhist 'Thovil' (an exorcism ceremony by sacrificing chickens) and the Kovil (Hindu temple) in 'Munneswaram', Jaffna (CPA, 2013). Also, most Buddhists in Sri Lanka have adapted to eat meat from butcheries conducted by Muslims. However, since 2011 onward, this practice was questioned and opposed by the BNGs, particularly by the BBS and SR, with a demand to curtail animal abuse within Sri Lanka. They have carried out attacks on Muslim butcheries with the reasoning that it is inhumane and offensive to Buddhist values and the majority's sensibility. As a result of the activity, during the Hajj festival in October 2012, some divisional secretariat divisions of the Central Province did not issue permits for animal slaughter (CPA, 2013). In September 2012, the Kandy Municipal Council was also reported to have passed a resolution banning cattle slaughter within municipal council limits (CPA, 2013). This restriction of permits to cattle slaughtering has caused a number of difficulties for the Muslim community, particularly when it comes to performing their religious practices. This is especially realized by them during Hajj, during which Muslims perform *udhuhiya* by slaughtering cattle.

3.6 Boycott of Muslim-Owned Trade Stores

A number of Muslim businesses, including major clothing chains, have come under intimidation and threats from Buddhist nationalism. The Muslims feel insecure and threatened by the increasing incidents towards business establishments. Muslims businessmen were intimidated and harassed at the import and export customs point (Farook, 2014).Unjustified raids on business establishments by the tax and customs department has resulted in the Muslim business community feeling targeted unjustly, causing a sense of hopelessness. This led to growing doubts or uncertainty in investment, and even migration.

The fear and uncertainty of Muslims is more pronounced in rural areas and villages where they live in isolated pockets as a small community. The online groups associated with BBS calling for the boycott of Muslim-owned companies included No-limit and Fashion Bug. Protests outside the No-Limit store in Maharagama on January 19th were widely attributed to the group, but the organization has since denied their involvement in the incident.

3.7 Pressuring to Evict the Muslims from the Sacred Areas

In some areas, physical violences were intended to push Muslims away from a particular area. Both in Dambulla and Anuradapura, there were efforts to declare them as 'sacred areas'. The identification of these areas as sacred areas is also combined with urban development and cultural protection, hence Muslim religious places and even residents have faced legal processes to evict them from these areas. For instance in Dambulla, following the attack on the *Khairiya Mosque*, people in the area were issued eviction notices from the Urban Development Authority (UDA) to vacate the area by the end of October 2012 on the basis of the area being sacred. It is reported by the Muslims in Anuradapura opposition to them settling within town limits, with demands for people and some places of worship to be relocated. In 2011, the land that was due to be given to 200 families relocated out of Kurunegala Junction in Anuradapura, has instead reportedly been used for development of a Bhikku University for female Buddhist monks (CPA, 2013). The involvement of UDA in some of these relocations raises concern that there is a concerted effort both by nationalist Sinhalese-Buddhists and the Rajapaksha government to evict Muslim families from the centre of specific towns and cities.

This issue of land is a key source of contention. In Kandy town there have been accusations levelled against Buddhist clergy and others being involved in attempts to seize land or force individuals and traders to sign new agreements with representatives of particular Buddhist temples, on the basis that the land originally belonged to the temples.

3.8 Anti-hijab Agitation

The BNGs called for the Government of Sri Lanka to ban the head scarf (*hijab*) and face cover (*niqab*) which are traditional dresses of Muslim women, citing security reasons. In particular, the BBS demanded that the government ban the covering of faces and headdresses insisting that recent events have proven it to be a security threat. The reasoning provided by the BBS was that a recent underworld member disguising as a Muslim woman wearing the enveloping garment was arrested in Colombo.

3.9 Accusation of Unethical Conversions

In recent years, the Muslims were accused of unethical organized conversions of people through education, inter-marriage and the organized purchase of land around Buddhist places of worship. On 25th October 2012, the BBS conducted a protest in Badulla town against the conversion and vandalism of Buddhist heritage in Bangladesh and the threat to Bodh Gaya, India by the Mujahideen group. In a widely published case, Sara Malani Perera, a Buddhist converted to Islam, was detained by Sri Lankan authorities on 20th March 2010, for writing two books about her conversion in 1999 (CPA, 2013), which was allegedly offensive to Buddhism.

4. Analysis on Recent Hate Campaigns and Attacks against Muslims

The end of the civil war, in May 2009, raised expectations of an end to religious and ethnic violence in the country. Ironically post-war discourses have provoked a resurgence of Sinhala-Buddhists nationalism and identity politics within Sri Lanka. These discourses

produced fault lines and fresh tensions, and fostered an environment in which attacks on Muslim minority took place with impunity. Thus, this segment discusses classifications of religious attacks in Sri Lanka and the actors associated with those attacks. This section also discusses the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts in which religious violence took place. In the process, the topic attempts to deconstruct religious violence in terms of its nature and context. It focuses on violence specifically aimed at religious minorities.

4.1 Categorisation of Religious Attacks

Only a small number of studies on religious violence in Sri Lanka offer a clear categorisation of the types of religious attacks. In March 2014, the One Text Initiative (OTI) published a report, by the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), that proposed 50 types of 'attack'. The report was delivered to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In this analysis normally, the term 'attack' is defined as physical violence against a religious place, and includes damage to buildings, theft or damage to items within the building and injury or death of persons within. The topic offers a useful categorisation of attacks as follows:
1. Physical violence
2. Property destruction
3. Threat and intimidation
4. Hate campaigns or derogatory speeches
5. Discriminatory practices

The table below provides a list of examples of incidents that fall within the different categories for greater clarity of this matter. The defining feature of these attacks is that they are religiously motivated or targets a specific religious group. The examples are taken from the SLMC study.

Table 4.1 Example of incidents according to categories of attacks

Category	Incidents
Physical violence	A Muslim female employee attached to the Mannampitiya post office was assaulted. The assailants attempted to remove her *hijab*. (18 March 2013, Polonnaruwa).
Destruction of property	A group of monks damaged a Muslim restaurant in Beruwala (23 January 2013, Beruwala).
Intimidation, threat or coercion	BBS stormed a media conference organized by the Jathika Bala Sena (JBS-is a group of monks established against BBS) ,verbally abused and threatened Muslim clerics and JBS General Secretary Vatareka Vijitha Thero present.(9 April 2013, Slave Island, Colombo).
Hate campaigns or propaganda	BBS General Secretary stated that 'the majority of crimes such as smuggling, avoidance of income tax, trafficking of drugs are perpetrated by Muslims' (13 July 2013, in the media).
Discriminatory practice	Media reported that Muslims would not be permitted to wear the *hijab* or *fez* cap for the new national identity cards.

Source: Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, Religious Violence in Sri Lanka 2013

4.2 Categorization of Perpetrators
In addition to the categorisation of attacks, the classification of perpetrators is also necessary to analyse trends in attacks. The perpetrators of religious attacks in Sri Lanka broadly fall within the following categories:
1. Public institutions or public servants
2. Politicians and social organizations
3. Clergies or religious organizations
4. Corporate sector firms or business related groups
5. Unknown individuals or groups

The above classification is useful, as it covers the actors in various spheres, including the socio-political, the public and private sectors, and the religious community. The following paragraphs will discuss each category in more detailed.

Within the public institutions category, a number of organizations that carry out executive and administrative actions are included. The terms "executive and administrative" correspond to the reference made in Article 126(1) of the Sri Lankan Constitution, which defines the scope of fundamental rights applications. The jurisprudence pertaining to these terms may be helpful in interpreting their meaning. The Supreme Court in Jayakody V. Sri Lanka Insurance and Robinson Hotel Company Ltd and Others (cited by Gunatilleke, 2015) interpreted the terms to include state agencies that fall within the "effective ownership and control" of the state. The significance of this definition is that the actions of institutions falling within the definition become potentially responsible for the violation of fundamental rights guaranteed by Article 10 of the Constitution. Government institutions therefore refer to all government departments, corporations, statutory bodies, government-owned enterprises and "agents of the state" as defined above. "Public servants" include individuals employed by the state and those who generally carry out executive and administrative functions. This sub-category may additionally include judicial officers, who are not ordinarily included within the scope of 'executive and administrative' action described above. It is not clear whether the SLMC study actually includes judicial officers within its definitional scope, as none of the attacks listed in the study directly relate to a judge. Nevertheless, it is noted that the remedy for addressing a religious attack by a judicial officer involves a separate process of inquiring misbehaviour, which is outside the framework of a typical fundamental rights application. Removal of a judge for proven misbehaviour may either involve disciplinary proceedings by the Judicial Service Commission (for lower court judges) or impeachment proceedings (for judges of the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court).

The Politicians category includes elected members in legislative or executive bodies, those who come forward as candidates at elections, and those holding leadership positions in recognised political parties. Political movements and social movements refer to political parties, political associations and informal political and social interest groups that pursue specific goals and objectives. Charles Tilly (2004) provides separate definitions for "political movements" and "social movements", indicating a subtle, yet an important distinction, between the two types of movements. He defines "political movements" as an organised grouping of people around a single issue or set of issues, or around a set of shared concerns. Such movements often desire to seek "political space and benefits". A movement to secure or expand the interests of a particular ethnic or religious group falls within this definition. Social movements, by contrast, means a large informal grouping of individuals, groups, or organisations focused on political or social issues (*Ibid*). Movements focusing on issues such

as women's rights, child rights, the environment and marriage equality may be placed within this category.

Religious organizations or Clergies refers to faith-based organisations and ordained individuals. The category is not limited to formal institutions (i.e. institutions that are registered under the law and therefore recognised by the state). Therefore, the scope of the category extends to informal faith-based organisations and those holding themselves out to be representatives of certain faiths.

Business related groups and corporate sector firms refer to all incorporated and unincorporated entities in the private sector. Chambers of commerce and business associations typically fall within the definition of commercial interests groups. Industry or sector specific associations and groups that may not be formally recognised as legal entities but represent certain "commercial interests" may be included. For example, an informal association of business owners in a particular locality would still fall within this category. The category also includes both incorporated and non-incorporated private business entities.

Finally, individuals and groups who are not affiliated to a particular organisation or whose identity is unknown are considered as a separate group. Physical violence and destruction of property carried out by unidentified persons invariably fall into this category.

4.3 Mapping of the Religious Attacks

In order to find the actual number of religious attacks, the records were collected by at least 3 national non-governmental organizations in Sri Lanka including Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), the Secretariat for Muslims (SM) and Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC).

There are 63 cases of attacks recorded by the CPA on places of religious worship since 2009 to 2012, as illustrated by Figure 4.1 below.
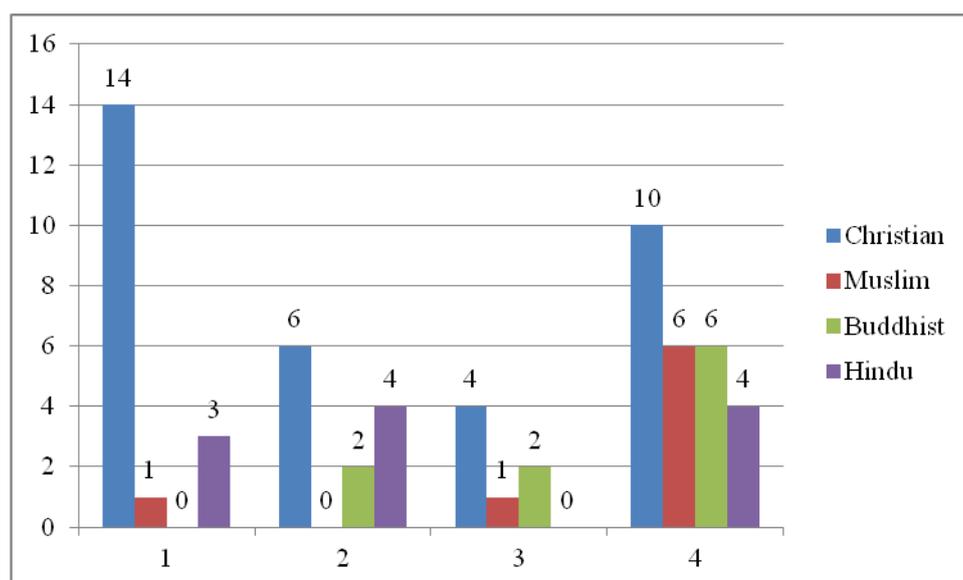

Figure 4.1:   Religious Violence in Post-War Sri Lanka: Incidents and Attacks between May 2009-January 2012

Figure 4.1 illustrates that all religious communities are facing some form of violence. The majority of these cases are from the Christian community (34). There are 10 cases of attacks on Buddhist temples, 11 attacks on places of Hindu's worship and 8 attacks on Muslim religious places. This was the starting point of attacks towards Muslims by the BNGs. Most of the 8 incidents since the end of the war to 2012 were carried out by the respective BNGs.

Figure 4.2 below illustrates the distribution of 166 location-specific anti-Muslim attacks in 2013 (e.g. attacks toward a specific place of worship). A further 75 incidents were not location-specific (e.g. hate campaigns in the Media), bringing the total number of attacks to 241.
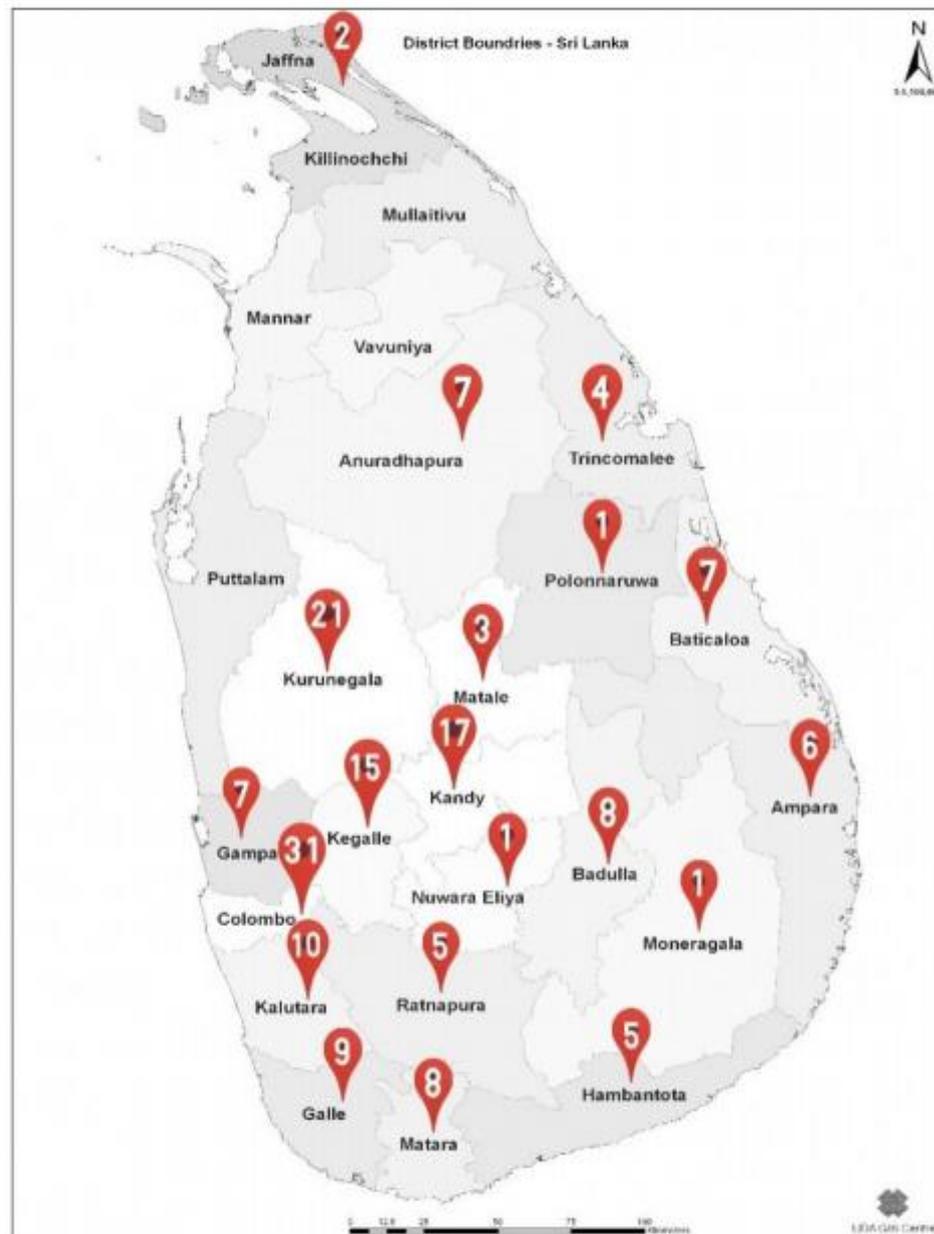

Figure 4.2: Anti-Muslim attacks in 2013
Source: Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, Religious Violence in Sri Lanka 2013

In 2013, most of the attacks were carried out by the BNGs in Gampaha, Kurunegala, Kandy and Kegalle districts. The data concludes that the attacks in 2013 were intensified as compared to the years before.

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 on religious attacks in Sri Lanka have received attention at the 24th and 25[th]sessions of the UN Human Rights Council (High Commissioner for Human Rights 2014) (Cited by Gunatilleke, 2015).The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the time, Navanethem Pillai, expressed concerns during the latter session in February 2014, stating that she was disturbed by the significant surge in attacks against religious minorities and the incitement of violence by the BNGs in Sri Lanka.
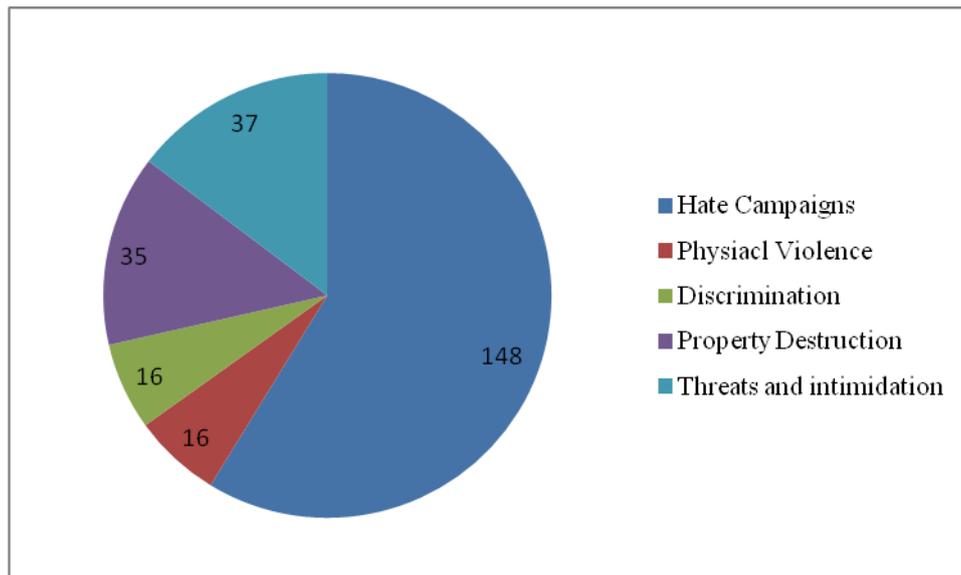

Figure 4.3: Anti-Muslim Attacks in 2013 by type of attack

According to Figure 4.3 above, it could be observed that the highest number of attacks in 2013 alone was the hate campaigns, amounting to 148 events of attacks. These attacks mainly targeted the many aspects of Muslims socio-culture, such as issuance of *halal* logo, *hijab* and *niqab*, slaughtering of cattle, mosque activities and so on. It is worth noting that under these attacks, Muslims owned properties were also vehemently targeted.

Besides that, Figure 4.4 above illustrates that the perpetrators of the attacks were mostly political and social organizations. This portrays that the BNGs have gained strong support from the ruling party during attacks against Muslims in 2013. It is also blameworthy to note that some of the perpetrators have not yet been identified by the government investigations department.
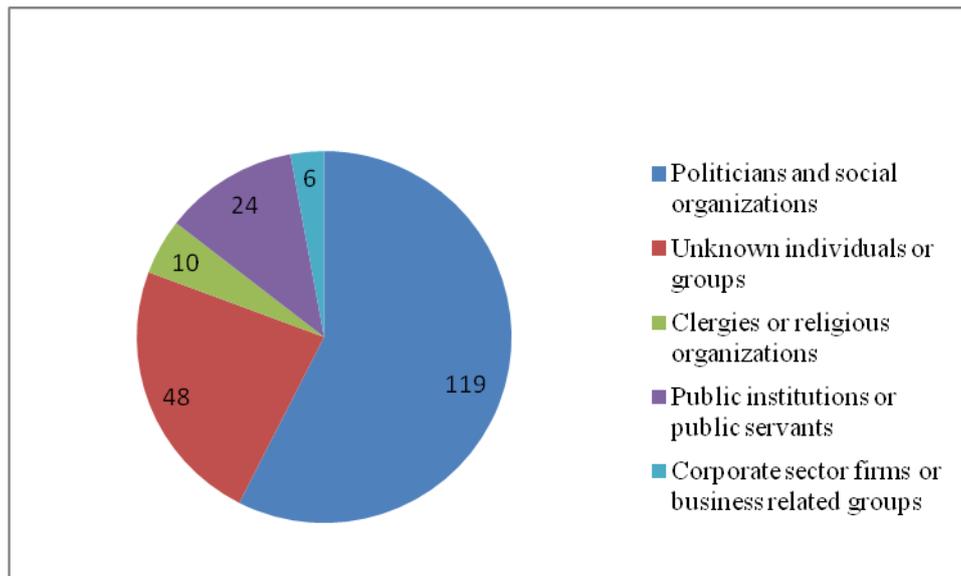
Figure 4.4: Anti-Muslim Attacks in 2013 by type of perpetrator

The trend of violence continued in 2014 and at least 200 attacks against Muslims were recorded in the year. Figure 4.5 below shows the distribution of attack locations throughout the island.

Similar to the data from 2013, incidents that were not location-specific were not marked on the map above. The incidents on the map are purely location-specific incidents of anti-Muslim violence that occurred in 2014.According to Figure 4.5, most of the attacks or campaigns were recorded in Colombo and Kalutara districts. This data could deduce that most of the BNG's activities against the Muslims were set out based on these respective districts during their events. So, one important conclusion is that most of the supporters, referred as lay people, who were associated with the BNGs were also from these districts. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 depict the breakdown of these attacks by the type of incident and type of perpetrator.

According to Figure 4.6, in 2014, the highest type of attack, 123 cases, were of derogatory speech and propaganda against the Muslims and destructions of Muslim-owned properties increased from the 2013 data. At the same time, as illustrated in Figure 4.7, the BNGs have gained support to their activities against Muslims from the political side and social organizations similar to that in 2013.
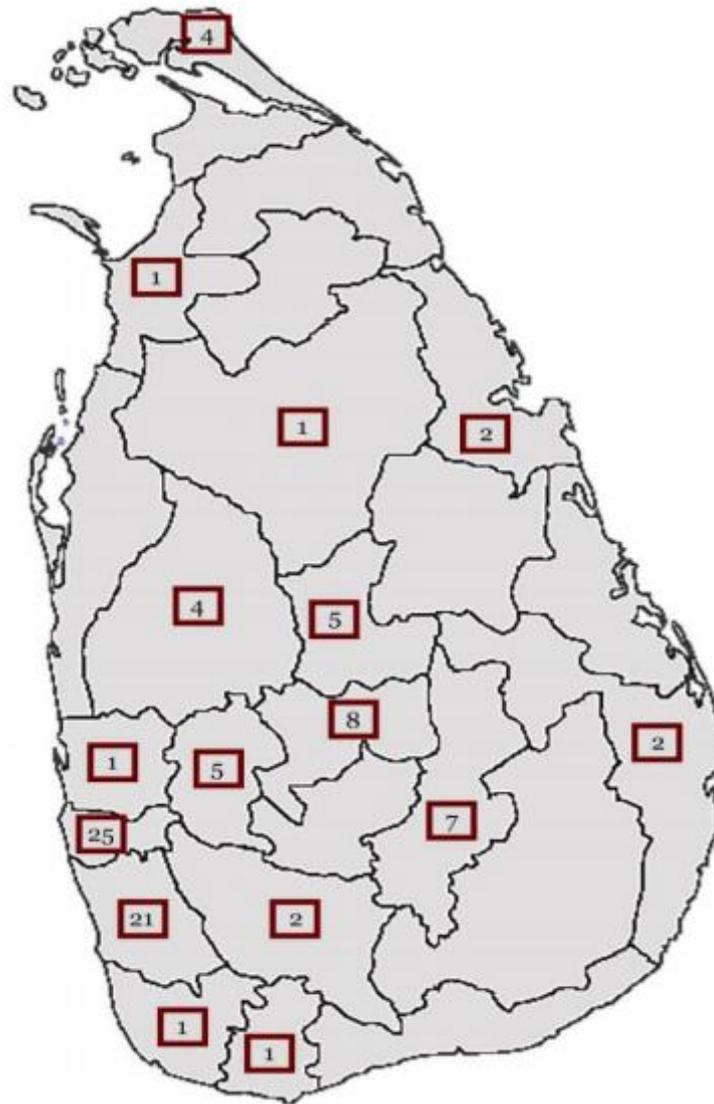
Figure 4.5: Anti-Muslim attacks in 2014
Source: Secretariat for Muslims, Anti Muslim Sentiment in Sri Lanka 2014

In summary, the data from 2013 and 2014 reveals two trends in terms of attacks against Muslims. First, more than 50% of the attacks were non-physical and related to hate speech and propaganda. Second, political actors and political or social movements perpetrated more than 50% of the attacks. More than a quarter of all attacks were, in fact, attributed to the BBS as the sole perpetrator. Hence, the increase in attacks against Muslims during 2013 and 2014 corresponded to the rise in the prominence and influence of a particular organisation.

Type of Incidents

Discriminatory practices — 19
Hate campaigns or derogatory speeches — 123
Threat and intimidation — 11
Property destruction — 41
Physical violence — 15
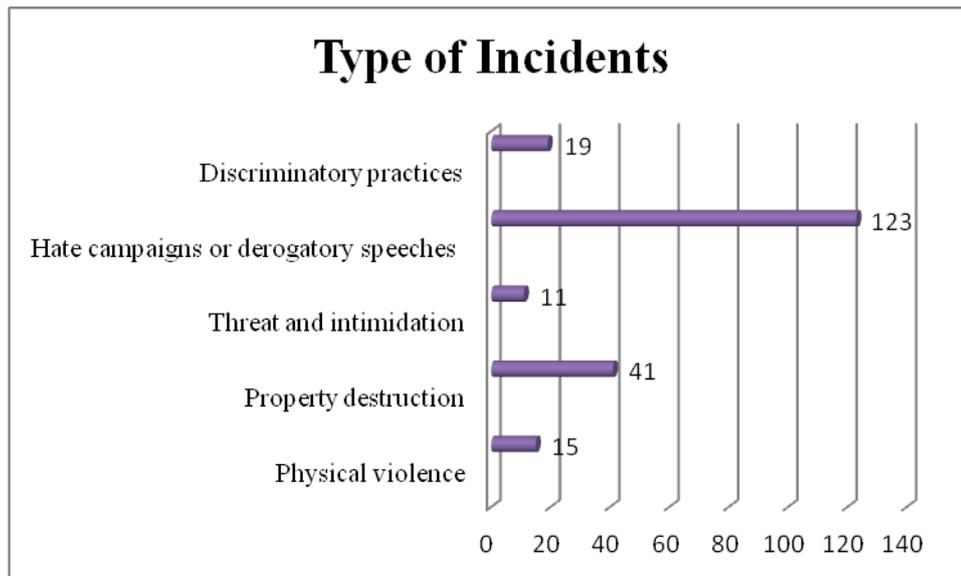
(scale: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100, 120, 140)

Figure 4.6: Anti-Muslim attacks in 2014 by type of incidents

According to a recent report of the Secretariat for Muslims, at least 37 religious attacks against the Muslim community have been recorded since January 2015 (Secretariat for Muslims, 2015). Among these incidents included an attempt to demolish a mosque in Kuragala, Ratnapura on 4th April 2015. The demolition was prevented through the intervention of the police, who dispersed a mob of about 150 protesters, reported to be members of SR.

Main Perpetrators

Corporate sector firms or business related groups — 6
Public institutions or public servants — 24
Clergies or religious organizations — 10
Unknown individuals or groups — 48
Politicians and social organizations — 119
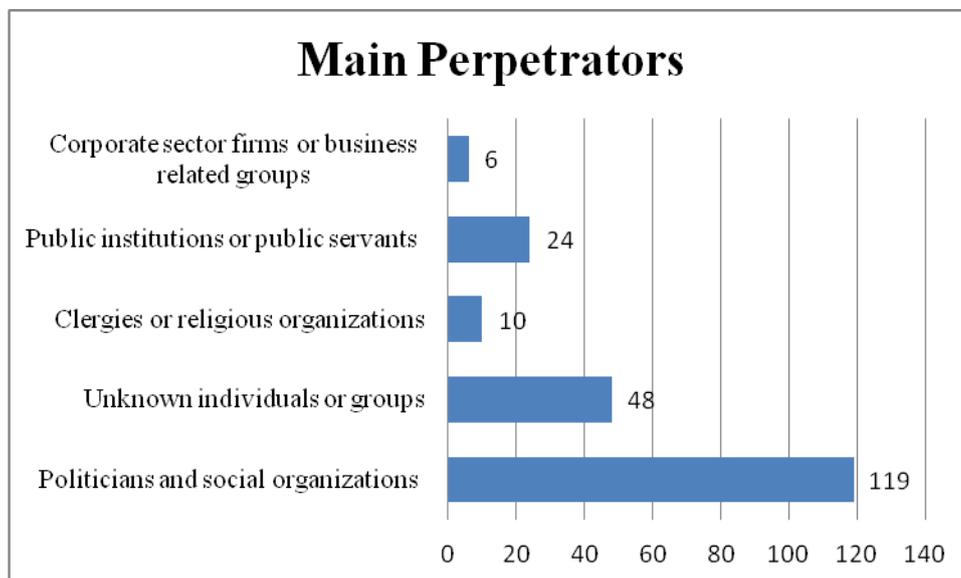
(scale: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100, 120, 140)

Figure 4.7: Anti-Muslim Attacks in 2014 by type of perpetrator

Meanwhile, there has been no progress on prosecuting perpetrators of past religious violence. For example, those suspected of involvement in acts of violence during the Aluthgama riots are yet to be prosecuted. In this context, the post-January 2015 era has only ensured a reduction in egregious forms of religious violence. It remains to be seen if the new administration fails to take more radical steps to end impunity and drag past perpetrators to justice.

5. CONCLUSION

Many organizations, especially Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and Muslim Secretariat (MS) have listed the attacks carried out by the BNGs, in proper manner. These organizations have identified the attacks in various order and views. In this regard, SLMC and MS have fully noted all the events of attacks. Accordingly, CPA recorded a total of 63 attacks on places of religious worship, SLMC reported 241 anti-Muslims attacks and MS recorded 284 incidents including threats, attempted attacks, harassment, incitements and provocations in 2013. In 2014, a total of 213 incidents against the Muslims recorded by MS nation- and district-wide. According to the analysis of respective documents, it can be concluded that in the regions with majority Buddhists, the Muslims are largely affected by the BNGs' hate campaigns and attacks especially in the Western and Southern part of Sri Lanka than the Muslims living in the North and Eastern regions. Though between 2009 and 2012 these attacks became intense, it gradually further intensified in 2013 and 2014. The BNGs furiously undertook these attacks as the Government of former president Mahinda Rajapaksha (2009-2014) did not take any action against these hate campaigns. Finally, the aim of this research is to define and understand the deepening the characteristic of the attacks and hate campaigns. Also, here the gap has arisen to carry further researches in above areas that examining the view points of the Buddhists and Muslims on the recent hate campaigns and attacks, identifying the impacts of it on the Buddhist-Muslim relationships and evaluating the current nature of the community relationship between them.

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