



**Press Release of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Colombo
on the statement made by Ven. Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara Thero
before the Presidential Commission of Inquiry
(Colombo, 16 June 2020)**

The Embassy strongly rejects the baseless allegations made by Ven. Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara Thero before the Presidential Commission of Inquiry probing last year's Easter Sunday attacks, associating the Republic of Turkey with extremist activities in Sri Lanka. The statement published online in Lankadeepa on 15th June 2020, reads:

හිටපු අමාත්‍ය රිෂාඩ් බද්දිදින් මහතාගේ මෙයෙවීමෙන් සහ තුර්කි ආධාර යටතේ ක්‍රියාත්මක වන අන්තවාදී ඉගැන්වීම් සිදුකරන අරාබි ජාත්‍යන්තර පාසල් ජාලයක් මෙරට තුළ ක්‍රියාත්මක වෙතවා. එවැනි පාසල් 30කට ආසන්න සංඛ්‍යාවක් මෙරට ස්ථාපිතයි. එම පාසලක නමක් සඳහන් ප්‍රකාශයක් කළොත් ඊට පසුදිනම එම පාසලේ නම වෙනස් කිරීමක් සිදුකරනවා. විශේෂයෙන්ම අන්තර්ජාලයේවත් එවැනි නමක් සොයා ගන්න බැහැ ඊට පස්සේ.

“There is a network of Arabic international schools that conducts extremist teachings in the country under the guidance of former Minister Rishad Bathiudeen and with Turkish aid. Nearly 30 such schools have been established in the country. If a name of such a school is declared, the name of the school will be changed the next day. You can't find such a name, especially on the internet.” (Unofficial translation)

Turkey has maintained strong and friendly ties with Sri Lanka over centuries. In recent years and particularly since the Tsunami in 2004, the Republic of Turkey provided humanitarian and technical assistance to help capacity building in the country. However, sending direct funds to beneficiaries has never been a method adopted by the government of the Republic of Turkey. All projects were and will be conducted in full transparency and collaboration with Sri Lankan authorities.

The Embassy wishes to place on record that, as a country that has been suffering from terrorism for many decades, Turkey has always stood in solidarity with Sri Lanka in her fight against terrorism. The two countries have always supported each other's initiatives and developed a strong cooperation to this end in the international arena.

The Embassy also would like to recall that, as early as July 2016, the Sri Lankan relevant authorities were warned against the activities of the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETO), which perpetrated a coup attempt on 15th July 2016 in Turkey, killing 251 civilians and

wounding thousands. FETO was also operating in Sri Lanka under the cover of schools, cultural foundation, business chamber and enterprises.

The Embassy wishes to reiterate that, Turkey deeply values her long lasting relations with Sri Lanka, she considers as a reliable friend and partner. As such, Turkey is committed in supporting Sri Lanka in all her endeavors to combat extremism and terrorism.