

## HATE CAMPAIGNS AND ATTACKS AGAINST THE MUSLIMS IN RECENT SRI LANKA

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### 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.