

2972 CASE SUMMARY UPDATE

Case Name: Easter case against 25 Accused

Case no. : HC (TAB) 2972/21

Courts: Colombo High Court, Trial at Bar

About : The case HC TAB 2972/21 against 25 accused in connection with the Easter attacks was heard before a three-judge bench comprising High Court Judge Damith Thotawatte, High Court Judge Amal Ranaraja and High Court Judge Navaratne Marasinghe at the Colombo High Court.

DATE	COUNSEL	UPDATE	NOTES
19 th December 2024	Tharushi Dishara, AAL	<p>The judgment was delivered and comprised two parts: the first being a summary of the evidence, and the second, an analysis of the evidence. According to the judgment, the court accepted and believed the testimony of P.W. 2048, Retired Police Officer Saman Paddamasiri. The judgment also referenced several witness statements that corroborated P.W. 2048's testimony.</p> <p>The court ruled that the confession of the 11th accused was a voluntary statement made without coercion.</p>	
15 th January 2025	Tharushi Dishara AAL,	The subject case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar to proceed with the matter. All the accused were present in court except 17th accused and all parties were duly represented.	

		<p>Once the court proceedings began, the Chief Judge stated that they had been informed by the Supreme Court about an appeal against the order of the voir dire inquiry issued by the High Court on December 19, 2024. The Chief Judge further explained that the Trial-at-Bar not be able to proceed with the case until the Supreme Court delivers its decision on the matter. However, if both parties reach an agreement and petition the Supreme Court to allow the case to continue, the Supreme Court may issue an order permitting the High Court to proceed.</p> <p>Additionally, the legal representative of the 14th accused informed the court that he would no longer be able to represent his client and requested the appointment of another lawyer. The request was accepted, and a new lawyer was assigned.</p> <p>The next hearing date has been scheduled for January 30, 2025. The Chief Judge noted that only the representatives of the two parties involved need to appear on the mentioned date, and attendance by others is not required.</p> <p>Next Date - 30th January 1 .00 PM</p>	
30 th January 2025	Nilushi Dewapura , AAL	It was informed to the court by the prosecution that a decision has not been given by the Supreme Court as of yet, on the continuation of the case pending the appeal of the 11th accuse. Thus a further calling date was sought to inform the court of the Supreme Courts decision.	

		<p>Further , the counsel for the 6th accused informed court that a motion dated 24.01.2025 was filed seeking court's permission to get a special power of attorney signed by the 6th accused in order to manage affairs pertaining to his property.</p> <p>Subsequently the counsel informed that permission was obtained from the prison to sign said document and that said document was signed by the 6th accused.</p> <p>However, the prosecution stated that as per section 4 (a) of the PTA an accused pending inquiry cannot dispense of their property.</p> <p>The court delivered an order stating that the conduct of the prison commission to allow the 6th accused to sign said special power of attorney without the permission of court is unlawful, and directed that the prison commissioner is to be summoned in person on the next date to show cause on this matter .</p> <p>The matter is to be called on the 13th of February 2025 at 1 .00 PM.</p>	
13 th February 2025	Manushika Cooray , AAL	The subject case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar. All the accused were present in court except 17th accused (deceased).	

The Commissioner General of Prisons, Mr. H.M.T.N Upuldeniya, attended court following the summons that was issued by the court the day before. The court informed the Commissioner General that the properties of the accused in this case could be confiscated if they are convicted. While the 6th accused had filed a motion to inform regarding the writing of a power of attorney regarding his property, before the motion was called before the court, the court questioned the Commissioner regarding the prison allowing the 6th accused to sign the power of attorney.

In response, the Commissioner General stated that an investigation had been conducted into the matter. Stating that the law is not clear in this regard, he further stated that although permission is granted in the case of a prisoner, in the case of a remand prisoner, it is customary to grant permission to the remand prisoner after consulting the court. However, the Commissioner General stated that in this case, the officers had not obtained permission from the court. The Commissioner General also stated that in some courts, they have been instructed to do it without asking the court. He also submitted a report to the court regarding the steps he took after receiving the summon.

	<p>The court, which heard all of this, stated as follows. It was noted that the previous judges in this case had also warned the prison officials. It was also noted that it was important to inform the court and take action to prevent questionable situations from arising in such an event.</p> <p>Accordingly, the Prison Commissioner was released.</p> <p>It was informed to the court by the prosecution that according to the registrar of the Supreme Court, they have received the original and one copy of the case and they need six copies. The prosecution informed the court that it was stated that a date could be given after receiving the relevant number of copies. Accordingly, the Registrar of the High Court was ordered to speak to the Registrar of the Supreme Court and send the required number of copies.</p> <p>The lawyer appearing for the 13th accused stated that the 13th accused suffers from arthritis and that the condition has become serious. The lawyer further stated that although the Mahara Prison doctor had informed that he be taken to the Ragama Rehabilitation Hospital for appropriate treatment, the prison officials had requested that permission be obtained from the court for that purpose.</p>	
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12th of March 2025	Nilushi Dewapura , AAL	<p>The case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar, with all accused present except the 17th accused, who is deceased.</p> <p>The assigned lawyers for the 4th, 15th, and 16th accused informed the court that their clients had retained new lawyers to represent them.</p> <p>The Attorney General's Department stated that they did not have sufficient time to submit their submission to the Supreme Court. The judge accepted this, noting the extensive documentation and attachments, which make it difficult to file a submission at this stage.</p> <p>However, the judge mentioned that the High Court registrar had sent an update on the case to the Supreme Court.</p> <p>The next date: 2nd of April at 1:00 PM. (Calling)</p>	

02 nd April 2025	Nilushi Dewapura , AAL	<p>The case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar, with all accused present except the 17th accused, who is deceased.</p> <p>All accused were represented in court. The state counsel informed that the high court case record is currently with the registrar of the Supreme Court and that a case number has not been assigned yet to the appeal. Court requested for the Attorney General's department to take steps to expedite the process if possible and to get a direction from the Supreme Court on the way forward.</p> <p>Thus, the matter is to be called once again on the 14th of May 2025</p> <p>The next date: 14th May at 1:00 PM. (Calling)</p>	
14th May 2025	<p>Although Tharushi was supposed to attend, she was unable to appear. (Tharushi's short note has been updated and sent.)</p>	<p>105th day of the Main Easter Attack Criminal Trial against 24 Accused</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Date : 14.5.2025</p> <p>Case No.: HC(TAB) 2972/21</p> <p>The State Counsel informed the Court that the Supreme Court appeal has been registered under the case number SC(TAB) 01/2025. The case</p>	

		<p>record has been forwarded to the Chief Justice for the appointment of a bench to hear the appeal. However, a date for hearing has not yet been notified by the Supreme Court.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Attorney General and the Counsel representing the 11th Accused have made arrangements to file a joint motion requesting the case be called for hearing at the earliest possible date. The signature of the 11th Accused's Counsel is going to be obtained today.</p> <p>Taking into account the facts presented by the State Counsel, the Court scheduled a further calling date to determine the next step.</p> <p>The case has been fixed for mention on 12 June 2025 at 1:00 PM.</p>	
12th June 2025	Tharushi Dishara AAL,	<p>The case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar. All accused were present except the 17th accused, who has passed away.</p> <p>The State Counsel informed the Court that the Supreme Court will hear the appeal on 23rd June 2025. Therefore, the State requested a new calling date after that hearing.</p> <p>Mr. Marasinghe (The chair judge of the Trial at Bar) also informed the Court that the Court of Appeal has dismissed the bail applications of the 9th and 24th accused. This decision has already been communicated to the Trial-at-Bar.</p>	

		<p>The next calling date is fixed for 1st July 2025 at 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>The next date: 1st July at 1:00 PM. (Calling)</p>	
1 st July 2025	Tharushi Dishara AAL,	<p>105th Day of the Main Easter Attack Criminal Trial against 24 Accused</p> <p>Date: July 1, 2025</p> <p>Case Number:HC(TAB) 2972/21</p> <p>The case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar. All accused were present except the 17th accused, who has passed away. The state counsel informed the court that the case has been sent to the Chief Justice, and he has indicated that he will appoint a five-judge bench to hear this matter.</p> <p>Mr. Marasinghe, the Chair Judge of the Trial-at-Bar, also informed the court that the 21st accused has submitted a bail application, and copies of the application have been provided to the co-judges in the bench. However, the Attorney General's department informed the court that they have not received copies of the bail application.</p> <p>The next hearing date is fixed for August 6, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.</p>	

August 6, 2025	Manushika Cooray , AAL	<p>The case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar. All accused were present except the 17th accused, who has passed away. The Deputy Solicitor General Mr. Sudarshana De Silva informed the court that the Supreme Court still has not appointed a five-judge bench to hear the matter.</p> <p>11 September 2025 at 1:00 p.m.</p>	
September 11, 2025	Nilushi Dewapura, AAL	<p>The case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar. All accused were present except the 17th accused, who has passed away. The Deputy Solicitor General Mr. Sudarshana De Silva informed the court that the Supreme Court still has not appointed a five-judge bench to hear the matter and stated that the Attorney General's department has not received communication on the constitution of the bench.</p> <p>14 th October 2025 at 1:00 p.m.</p>	
October 14, 2025		<p>The Deputy Solicitor General Mr. Sudarshana De Silva informed the Court that the appeal relating to this Trial-at-Bar case is still pending before the Supreme Court and has not yet been concluded. It was further brought to the attention of the Court that all the judges who previously constituted the bench in this Trial-at-Bar have now been transferred to other courts, and therefore, they are unable to</p>	

		<p>continue participating in this case. In light of these two circumstances, the Deputy Solicitor General Mr. Sudarshana De Silva, respectfully requested the Court to bring the matter to the attention of the Hon. Chief Justice. The counsel appearing on behalf of the 1st to 15th accused submitted to Court that the accused have already been in remand custody for a considerable period of time and that a bail application has already been made on their behalf. Accordingly, counsel requested the Court to make appropriate orders for the progression of the case. The Registrar was directed to refer the matter to the Hon. Chief Justice for consideration regarding the appointment of new judges to continue the proceedings of this Trial-at-Bar case. Additionally, learned counsel appearing for the 10th and 13th accused informed the Court that the required medication for the said accused is not available at the prison. Considering this, the Hon. Judge directed the Superintendent of Prisons to take appropriate action in this regard. The matter is to be called on the 26th of November 2025 at 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Next date - Nov 26th 2025 1.00 PM</p>	
November 26 th 2025	Nilushi Dewapura	<p>The case is moved to the new Special Trial at Bar in No. 409, (CC-76 Premises), Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07.</p> <p>When this case was taken up today, ASP Saman Perera was summoned to give evidence in the trial of the case tomorrow.</p>	

		<p>The Additional Solicitor General, President's Counsel Haripriya Jayasundara requested the Defense Counsel's to consider the document submitted proposing the admissions. However, two attorneys at law informed the court on behalf of their clients that they have not received such admissions. Accordingly, the court ordered that the relevant document be provided to the said attorneys via email today itself.</p> <p>Next Dates: The trial will commence on 27th November 2025 from 9.45 am to 5 pm. The case will be called again on December 1st at 1.30 pm.</p> <p>Source: From a journalist who observed the proceedings. (No appearance for the Aggrieved party today)</p>	
December 1 st 2025	No lawyer appeared for aggrieved party. Only two judges were present. Some defense lawyers also absent.	<p>One judge was absent. Some defense counsel's and the counsel for the aggrieved party were also not present due to the adverse weather conditions prevailing in the country.</p> <p>Next date : 2nd day of December 2025 at 10.00 a.m.</p>	
December 2 nd 2025	Sumiri	<p>Today, State Counsel sought to mark the confessionary statement of the 5th Accused (recorded before former Magistrate of Mawanella MC) as P-170, and the sealed cover as P-169. Learned Counsel for the 5th Accused objected to P-170, arguing that voluntariness was already challenged. Court ordered to start the voir dire inquiry of the 5th Accused. Court then proceeded</p>	

	<p>with inquiry into the admissibility of the 5th Accused's confessionary statement (V1). V1 is the confession of the 5th Accused, (17th Accused in Mawanella MC Case No. B-11330/2018.) Registrar of Kegalle Magistrate Court forwarded the original statement in a sealed cover. PW 2140, former Magistrate of Mawanella, gave evidence that: He recorded the confession of the 5th Accused in accordance with Section 127 of the Criminal Procedure Code. He assessed the accused's Sinhala literacy and confirmed the voluntariness of the confession. He made observations during the recording and supervised the placement of signatures of both himself and the accused on the statement. He identified PW 1945 – a ASP and PW 1948 – a SI as the police officers who had produced the accused before him for the purpose of recording the confession; both officers were summoned to appear tomorrow. During cross-examination, defence challenged the inconsistencies between V1 and Journal entry dated 05.09.2019. Defence marked 5VD1, 5VD2, 5VD2A, 5VD3 on the journal entries of the original case record of the Mawanalla MC case No.B/11330/2018 On re-examination, State tried to clarify that the defence's suggestions were incorrect. Next date : 3rd day of December 2025 at 10.00 a.m. – continuation of evidence of the voir dire of 5th Accused; through the witness PW 1945 and PW 1948</p>
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December 3 rd 2025	Hiruni Perera	<p>Upon re-examination, the State Counsel sought to clarify that the 5th accused was taken to the Mawanella Magistrate's Court by PW 1945 on the instructions of senior officers and that he was not produced in MC Case No. B/11330/2018 because he requested not to be produced together with the other suspects in that case. The State Counsel further clarified that the medical treatment received at the National Hospital on 6th September 2019 was not exclusively for the 5th accused. The Court ordered that Summons be issued to the second additional witness, Sandamali Nanayakkara, the translator at the Mawanella Magistrate's Court, as well as to PW 2141 Nimali Iresha and PW 1544 Judicial Medical Officer, Dr. Shashanthi Wasanth. State Counsel also informed the court that, since no objection had been raised by the defence regarding the fact that Chief Inspector Marasinghe, the OIC of SIU-2, is currently overseas, a record in this regard would be made on the next date.</p>	
December 8 th 2025			
December 18 th 2025	Hiruni Perera AAL	<p>The case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar with all accused present, except for the 17th accused, who had passed away. All parties were represented. The 7th, 8th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 19th, and 20th</p> <p>2</p>	

	<p>witnesses named in the additional witness list were present before Court, and prosecution witnesses numbered 7, 8, 12, and 13 were temporarily released.</p> <p>It was marked as an admission under section 420 of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act No. 15 of 1979 that, while on duty on 31 st October 2019 at 10.35 a.m., a Medico-Legal Examination Form (MLEF) bearing No. 167/19 was issued for the purpose of producing the 15 th accused before the Judicial Medical Officer (JMO) and was handed over to Police Constable Liyanage (No. 87100), and that after the 15 th accused was produced before the JMO together with Police Inspector Sugath,</p> <p>the accused was brought back and handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) at 1.40 p.m. on the same day.</p> <p>PW14, Police Constable Liyanage (No. 87100), was called to give evidence. He testified that he served at the Special Investigation Unit 2 of the CID from 2010 to 2022, and that, on the order of the Officer-in-Charge of SIU Unit 2, Chief Inspector Marasinghe, he was assigned the duty of producing the 15 th accused before the JMO on 31 st October 2019. He further testified that at 10.35 a.m. on that day, Officer Nirosha handed over the 15 th accused together with MLEF No. 167/19 to him, and that he, together with Police Inspector Sugath, took the 15 th accused to the JMO, Dr. K. Vasutheva, at the National Hospital, Colombo. He further testified that while transporting the 15 th</p>	
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	<p>accused to the JMO, the accused remained in his custody, and neither he nor Police Inspector Sugath exerted any influence, threats, or offered any promises to the 15 th accused. He testified that if the 15 th accused had been subjected to any such influence, there would have been no obstacle preventing the accused from informing him. The witness, PW14, also testified that there were no externally visible injuries on the 15 th accused, and that after being produced before the JMO, the accused was returned to the CID at 1.40 p.m. on the same day. PW14 then identified the 15 th accused in Court.</p> <p>During cross-examination, it was suggested by the defence that PW14 was unaware of the specific reason for which the 15 th accused was presented before the JMO on 31 October 2019, and that the PW14 was therefore providing false evidence in Court. It was further suggested that, under the pretext of taking the 15 th accused for medical treatment, the witness, PW14, had taken him without allowing him the opportunity to receive treatment and presented him before the JMO. The defence also suggested that the office of the JMO and the general hospital were distinct locations, and although the 15 th accused was taken to receive treatment, no treatment was in fact provided to him on that day. Moreover, it was suggested that PW14 had detained the 15 th accused for approximately two hours prior to presenting him to the JMO on 31 st October 2019, and that during this period the</p>
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	<p>witness had made a phone call to the 15 th accused's wives. PW14 rejected all of these suggestions and stated that the 15 th accused informed him of his desire to make a phone call to his wives only after being presented before the JMO. The defence suggested that the 15 th accused had informed PW14 of his wish to make the call before being presented to the JMO, and that he was presented before the JMO without his consent and against his wishes. It was further suggested by the defence that the 15 th accused was presented before the JMO merely to show that he had not been subjected to any assault or influence. PW14 rejected all of these suggestions.</p> <p>Upon re-examination, PW14 testified that he was not authorized to make any decision on his own regarding taking the 15 th accused for treatment, and that there was no necessity to present him before the JMO in the absence of a need for treatment. He further testified that he was never informed that the accused was under any duress, and that the 15 th accused had not requested to make a telephone call to his wives prior to being presented before the JMO.</p> <p>3</p> <p>PW19, S.W. Gunasekare was called to give evidence. Documents temporarily marked C01 and C03</p>	
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	<p>were given to the witness. PW19 testified that the document marked C01 was typed by her on 26 th September 2019 in relation to case No. B11330/18, and that the document marked C03 was typed by her on 1 st November 2019 in relation to the same case. PW19 further stated that both documents contained statements made by the 15 th accused before the Hon. Magistrate, Mawanella, and that these statements were recorded in the official chamber of the Hon. Magistrate. PW19 also testified that, according to these documents, on both 26 th September 2019 and 1 st November 2019, the 15 th accused was produced before the Hon. Magistrate by Sub-Inspector Dias and Police Sergeant Wijerathne, and that on both occasions, the 15 th accused gave his statement in Sinhala. PW19 further testified that in the document marked C03, the name of Sub-Inspector Dias was typed as the officer who produced the 15 th accused before the Hon. Magistrate on 1 st November 2019 and stated that this was a typographical error on her part, and that she clearly remembered that it was not Sub-Inspector Dias who attended on that day. However, PW19 also testified that she did not know the name of the officer who was actually present on that date.</p> <p>During cross-examination, PW19 testified that she became aware of an error in the document she had typed on 1 st November 2019 only today, while reviewing the document. The defence suggested</p>	
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	<p>that PW19 was giving evidence in Court based on assumptions. PW19 rejected this suggestion and was not re-examined by the prosecution.</p> <p>PW20, the typist at the Magistrate's Court, Mawanella, Nimali Withanage, was called to give evidence. Documents temporarily marked C02 and C2A were given to the witness. PW20 testified that both C02 and C2A were typed by her on 18 th October 2019 in relation to case No. B11330/18, and that both documents contained statements made by the 15 th accused before the Hon. Magistrate,</p> <p>Mawanella, on 18 th October 2019. PW20 further testified that these statements were recorded in the official chamber of the Hon. Magistrate, Mawanella, and that the document marked C2A was the original copy containing the statement given by the 15 th accused on that date.</p> <p>During cross-examination, it was suggested that the PW20 was giving false evidence before the Court, and that on 18 th October 2019, while giving his statement, the 15 th accused was referring to a piece of paper in his hand.</p> <p>Upon re-examination, PW20 testified that she was confident that the 15 th accused did not have any piece of paper in his hand while giving his statement on 18 th October 2019. She further testified that she did not see the 15 th accused possessing any such paper, and that during the recording of the statement, both she and the 15 th accused were seated in a position clearly visible to the Hon. Magistrate.</p>	
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	<p>PW18, the JMO, Dr. K. Vasutheva, was connected to give evidence via Zoom from the High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa. The Court was informed that the provisions under the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No. 10 of 2023, Sections 82(1)(b), 82(2)(a), and 84, had been properly complied with. Thiloka Sulochani Perera, First Secretary (Commercial) at the High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa, facilitated PW18's evidence via Zoom and, by responding to preliminary questions first asked by the Court, verified the identity of JMO, Dr. K. Vasutheva. She further confirmed that he was the relevant JMO competent and willing to give evidence in relation to this case. PW18 was not cross-examined by the defence.</p> <p>4</p> <p>PW18 was shown a document marked C04 and testified that on 24 th September 2019, the 15 th accused was presented to him along with the MLEF No. 155/19. He further stated that, in accordance with the information in C04, he prepared and submitted a Medico-Legal Report (MLR) to the Court on 15 th December 2025. Accordingly, the MLR corresponding to the MLEF No. 155/19, which had already been marked in Court as 15VD3 by the defence, was marked as C06 by the prosecution. PW18 also testified that the 15 th accused informed him that, following his arrest by</p>	
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	<p>the Kegalle Police in connection with the Easter attack, he had been handed over to the CID. PW18 further testified that he examined the 15 th accused and observed that he had no physical disability, and that there were no injuries, either fresh or healed, on his body. PW18 also testified that the 15 th accused's mental state was normal, he exhibited normal behavioral patterns, and that, based on his interactions with PW18, he did not appear to be under any duress.</p> <p>PW18 was shown a document marked C05 and testified that on 31 st October 2019, the 15 th accused was presented to him along with MLEF No. 167/19. He further testified that, in accordance with the information in C05, he prepared and submitted a MLR to the Court on 15 th December 2025. Accordingly, the MLR corresponding to MLEF No. 167/19, which had already been marked in Court as 15VD4, was marked as C07 by the prosecution. PW18 also testified that the 15 th accused informed him that he had been assaulted by the police, however, the 15 th accused did not provide details to PW18 regarding whether the assault was committed by officers of the Kegalle Police or the CID, nor did he specify the type or manner of the assault. PW18 testified that he examined the 15 th accused and observed that there were no injuries on his body, no marks of injury resulting from</p>	
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	<p>assault, and no healed or fresh injuries. PW18 further testified that the 15 th accused's mental state was normal, which was confirmed through a Mini Mental State Examination.</p> <p>During cross-examination, PW18 testified that, according to the document marked C04, on 24 th September 2019 at 1.15 p.m., the 15 th accused was produced before him by Police Sergeant Wijerathne, and that the corresponding MLR was prepared and submitted on 15 th December 2025. The defence suggested that PW18 had prepared the MLR six years after the examination and that, ordinarily, the MLR should have been prepared and completed for submission to the Court at the earliest opportunity. It was further suggested that 15 th accused had refused to provide certain details in the short history section because he had been given promises. The defence also suggested that the 15 th accused had refused to answer questions posed by PW18 due to fear. Furthermore, the defence marked the statement "I was assaulted by the Police," appearing in the short history section of the report marked C07, as 15VD4A.</p> <p>Upon re-examination, PW18 testified that the 15 th accused's mental state was normal, that there were no signs of any assault on his body, and that there were no fresh, healing, or healed injuries. Accordingly, the prosecution informed the Court that evidence had been recorded from all of the</p>	
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		<p>prosecution witnesses listed in the additional witness list relating to this Voir Dire inquiry.</p> <p>The defence informed the Court that they intend to submit to both the Court and the prosecution a list of witnesses it expects to call and that they expect to obtain evidence-in-chief from the 15 th accused.</p> <p>The counsel for the 13 th accused informed the Court that the 13 th accused was required to attend a dental clinic on 19 th December 2025 and, therefore, could not be produced before the Court on that day, and that there was no objection to proceeding with the Court proceedings in his absence.</p> <p>The matter was fixed to be called again on 19 th December 2025 at 10.00 a.m. for further trial.</p>	
December 19 th 2025	Hiruni Perera AAL	<p>The case was taken up before the Trial-at-Bar with all accused present, except for the 13 th accused, who had been produced for a dental clinic, and the 17 th accused, who had passed away. All parties were represented, and the Court was informed that there was no objection to proceeding with the trial in the absence of the 13 th accused.</p> <p>The defense called the 15 th accused to give evidence and he testified that he was arrested by the Kegalle Police on 28 th April 2019 and was subsequently handed over to the CID on 29 th April 2019.</p> <p>He further testified that during the period he was held in CID custody, his daughter named Ahla,</p>	

who was suffering from a heart ailment, passed away, and that he became aware of her death only after her burial had already taken place. He also testified that he was later permitted to visit the Mawanella cemetery, where his daughter had been buried, on 26th September 2019, and that the said cemetery is situated approximately 2 km from the Magistrate's Court, Mawanella. He further testified that the individual who had been working as a driver using a vehicle belonging to him was also in CID custody and is the 21st accused in the present case.

The counsel for the 15 th accused informed the Court that, as the Jumu'ah prayers were due to commence at 12.05 p.m. on this day, he requested that a further date be granted to continue the evidence-in-chief of the 15 th accused.

Accordingly, the Court ordered that Summons be issued to 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd witnesses on the additional witness list on behalf of the 15 th accused and fixed the matter to be called again on 7 th January 2026 at 10.00 a.m. for further trial.