

7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

MEDIA PRESS STATEMENT  
BY WESTERN HOSPITAL REGARDING ALLEGED KIDNEY ' RACKET '  
NO. 218 COTTA ROAD, BORELLA

We write with reference to the calculated and coordinated smear campaign against Western Hospital situated at No. 218 Cotta Road, Borella, based on an alleged illegal organ smuggling racket that has now been given wide publicity in the media.

Western Hospital in no circumstances has been involved, nor would we ever be involved in any manner whatsoever in 'organ trafficking' or the 'smuggling of organs'. The Colombo Crimes Division (CCD) has now arrested what it terms a 'main suspect'. We hope the investigations would soon reveal the truth into the claims reported by the media.

Western Hospital were the pioneers in the field of Nephrology. We conducted the very first Kidney Transplant in the country and were the first to conduct dialysis on patients, having imported a machine with our own funds as far back as in 1984. Today Western Hospitals is home to over 150 people who are employed in various capacities whose lives and livelihoods are now in jeopardy together with ours and the lives of our patients- to whom we dedicated our lives to serve.

During our existence over the last three decades Western Hospital gained a reputation locally and internationally for providing some of the best health care to patients with world class processes, procedures, staff and facilities. Over the years we have conducted over 1200 Kidney transplants and over 10,000 patients have been dialyzed in the Hospital giving life to all these patients.

However as much as the Hospital received many accolades it has also been the subject of envy among many.

For instance, immediately in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attack, one prominent politician made public allegations that the hospital had treated a terrorist, namely Zaharan's brother 'Rilwan'. The news spread far and wide on social media resulting in grave loss of reputation and goodwill for the Hospital. This statement was blatantly false, and orchestrated as a smear campaign against the Hospital. The story resulted in extensive investigations by the Criminal Investigations Department at the time at the cost of tax payers money and valuable resources, all based on an absolute lie.

Similarly, now there is also a deliberate and concerted attempt to implicate the Hospital. Thus, on or around the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 a group of persons stormed the Hospital premises, demanding exorbitant sums of money which they said was due to them in lieu of their donation of Kidneys. They claimed they had only been paid a part of it. Such transactions are illegal, and our staff promptly informed them of the same- that you cannot sell your organs for any consideration. The entire demand and show of force was illegal and amounted to threat, intimidation and extortion including the threat of setting fire to the institution This was also a calculated affair with the presence of media.

In fact, there is a stringent procedure by which consent is obtained of any Donor No donors organs are taken against his will. These include a comprehensive interview with an independent committee headed by Professor Ravindra Fernando and comprising a Consultant Physician, & an Attorney-at- law, among others.

Following that there is a three-tier process by which the Health Ministry grants approval. Any Donor can at anytime prior to the transplant revoke their consent including whilst on the way to surgery. The Donors have to comply with rigorous legal requirements prior to agreeing to donate their organs. Five other Private Hospitals conduct Kidney Transplants in the Island and each and everyone of them follow the same process and procedures we follow.

The media reports and the sensationalism surrounding the issue has been both malicious and false. These include fantastical stories such as the promise of moneys for the 'transplantation of testicles'. Similar to the media frenzy surrounding the medically and scientifically impossible

story of mass sterilization by Dr. Shafi Shihabdeen, many today believe that our Hospital is also guilty of the claims laid bare in the media.

Whilst, the Hospital iterates in absolute assistance to any legitimate investigation carried out in the usual course, we wish to put the record straight in order to stop the injustice that is being perpetuated on the Hospital by parties with vested interests for reasons best known to them.

Management

Western Hospital