Annexure I

ORDERS OF COURT

A. Guidelines to Combat Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions.

1. Every Higher Educational Institution[1] (HEI) shall establish a Victim Support Committee for victims of ragging,[2] including representatives from the academic and non-academic staff,[3] a qualified counsellor and/or clinical psychologist,[4] an independent person from outside of the HEI with experience in the field of law enforcement, health, or social services,[5] and not more than three (03) Final Year Students with unblemished academic and disciplinary records with a minimum running GPA of 3.5, appointed by the Council of the HEI,[6] for fixed terms, and which Committee shall exercise the powers, discharge the duties, and perform the functions set out below:

    a) Operate a 24/7 emergency hotline/call center for victims and witnesses of ragging to make complaints/report incidents;
    b) Receive complaints/reports of incidents of ragging which are made directly to the Committee or any member thereof;

[1] The term "Higher Educational Institution" has the meaning assigned to it in the Universities Act, No.16 of 1978.
[2] The term "ragging" has the meaning assigned to it in the Prohibition of Ragging and Other Forms of Violence in Educational Institutions, No.20 of 1998. For the avoidance of doubt, it shall include ragging committed on cyberspace and social media.
[3] The academic and non-academic staff may comprise *ex officio* members (such as the Deputy Vice Chancellor, if any, Deputy Registrar/Senior Assistant Registrar/Assistant Registrar in charge of Student Affairs and the Marshal/Warden/Student Affairs Director/Chief Student Counsellor of the relevant HEI), members nominated by the UGC, on the recommendation of the Centre for Gender Equity and Equality (CGEE), and members appointed by the Vice Chancellor (such as a specified number of Senior Lecturers).
[4] Where a HEI already has Student Counsellors, one or more such Student Counsellors appointed by the Council of the HEI may be co-opted to the Victim Support Committee. If not, the HEI may identify qualified counsellors and/or clinical psychologists from outside who are willing to offer their professional services *pro bono*.
[5] Such person should preferably be a person who has retired from the public service or private sector, having reached a senior position.
[6] There may also be appointed on volunteer basis, alumni or retired Professors of the relevant HEI.

c) Provide a swift response (at least within 03 days) upon receipt of a complaint or report, including mobilising internal support staff such as the Proctor, Marshalls, Wardens, or Security Officers and, where necessary, seeking the assistance of law enforcement authorities;
d) Provide necessary support for a victim to make a formal complaint (at least within 05 working days from the date on which the complaint or report reaches the Committee), without fear of further harassment or embarrassment;
e) Where necessary, provide an alternative safe space in a neutral location other than a police station, to facilitate the police recording the first complaint from the victim;
f) Provide advice to parents or other family members of the victim on the importance of making and maintaining complaints of incidents of ragging;
g) Follow up (not later than 14 days from the date of the complaint) on the investigations conducted by the police, and be entitled to be informed immediately if the victim has withdrawn the complaint;
h) Ascertain the reason for withdrawal of the complaint and, if found to be have been unduly influenced to do so by any member of the staff of the HEI, other student or any other person, the same shall be promptly informed to the Proctor, who shall forthwith inform the Vice Chancellor for steps to inquire into such incident and take necessary action;
i) Where the police fail to commence investigations of a complaint of ragging within 30 days of the complaint or unduly influences a victim or his family members to have the complaint withdrawn, the Committee shall notify the Vice Chancellor who shall make a complaint against the relevant police officers to the Inspector General of Police, with a copy to the Attorney General;

j) Identify and seek the assistance of a panel of attorneys-at-law, who have sufficient experience and preferably having a practice within the province in which the HEI is located, who are willing to provide *pro bono* legal representation for victims[7] and facilitating access to justice for victims;

k) Require that a member of the Committee, as well as an attorney-at-law from the aforesaid panel, accompanies a victim to the police station to report the alleged incident of ragging, where the victim has not already lodged a complaint by himself;

l) Facilitate victims to obtain medical treatment, including professional counselling and mental health services, where necessary;

m) Facilitate victims and witnesses to avail themselves of the provisions under the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No. 10 of 2023;

n) Recommend, after assessment, whether a victim should be granted welfare and relief measures such as extra tutoring, a leave of absence and extension of academic deadlines, in terms of the applicable rules and regulations,[8] with a view to minimizing drop-outs due to the trauma of ragging;

o) Facilitate all victims, until the completion of their degree, to access continuous counselling services within the HEI, if available, or as provided by professionals or relevant authorities outside the HEI;

p) Ensure that, in the course of exercising the functions of the Committee, every member thereof shall respect the privacy of the victim and maintain confidentiality;

[7] Alternatively, the UGC may provide for a central panel of attorneys-at-law from among whom each HEI may seek, *pro bono* legal assistance in respect of incidents of ragging, as and when necessary, on a case by case basis. The HEI or the UGC, as the case may be, may seek the assistance of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka in order to constitute the panel of attorneys-at-law,

[8] If existing rules and regulations are inadequate to implement this guideline, the HEI should take steps to amend the same or make new rules or regulations.

q) Make recommendations to the Anti-Ragging Committee and/or the Gender Focal Point of the HEI, on measures to prevent ragging.

2. Every HEI shall have an effective internal disciplinary inquiry mechanism, which includes the following features:

   a) Strict compliance with the procedure set out in University Grants Commission (UGC) Circular No. 946 dated 10.02.2011 on *Common Guidelines on Student Discipline* including any amendments thereto, as well as any other Guidelines or Directives issued by the UGC with regard to ragging;
   b) During the pendency of the investigation and inquiry, the anonymity of the victim, perpetrator and any witness, as well as confidentiality, shall be maintained as far as possible, and any disclosure shall be made only where it is necessary in the interest of ensuring the transparency, credibility and efficacy of the formal inquiry process;
   c) Pending an inquiry during which period both parties continue to attend academic activities at the university premises, the perpetrator and, where necessary, any of his associates, should be imposed with no-contact orders restricting them from coming within close distance of or communicating with the victim or any witness. Subject to available resources, reasonable measures should also be taken to ensure that both parties do not share the same hostel/accommodation facilities during the pendency of the inquiry.

3. Every HEI shall facilitate any student against whom disciplinary proceedings in respect of an alleged incident of ragging are pending or have been concluded without an order for expelling such student, to access counselling services within the HEI, if available, or as provided by professionals or relevant authorities outside the HEI.

4. Subject to the availability of resources and requisite approvals from the relevant authorities, every HEI shall ensure the safety and security of its students, as well as its property, within the university and hostel premises, by taking steps including the following:

    a) Recruiting an adequate number of male and female Proctors, Marshalls, Wardens, Security Officers, Student Counsellors and other non-academic support staff, upon a reasonable ratio to the number of undergraduate students in the respective HEI, with particular consideration of the number of students in hostel accommodation;
    b) Providing adequate accommodation facilities for Wardens and Sub-Wardens within hostel premises;
    c) Providing for effective surveillance of public spaces within the University and hostel premises, by installing CCTV cameras in entrance and exit points, canteens, sports grounds, gymnasiums, corridors and pathways, as well as adequate illumination (preferably sensor lighting) in such areas, ensuring proper maintenance of the CCTV camera and illumination systems so that they are in good working condition at all times, and ensuring that CCTV recordings of incidents of ragging are saved and preserved in order to facilitate inquiries;
    d) Providing equipment such as night vision camcorders, voice recorders, body cameras high beam power torches and effective communication equipment such as walkie talkies to authorized personnel (Marshalls, Wardens, Sub-Wardens and Security Officers);
    e) Ensuring controlled entry and exit points at hostel premises[9];
    f) Ensuring that access to hostel accommodation is strictly limited to permitted students and authorized staff of the HEI only, and that

[9] A digital card/barcode on the student ID may be considered for purposes of effective access control.

any other persons including other students are prohibited from entering into the same, except with the prior written permission of the relevant authority;

g) Requiring regular patrol of and random visits to university and hostel premises by authorized personnel, particularly between 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.;

h) Requiring the Proctor/Marshall to call for periodic reports from his subordinates on ragging-related incidents, and for the Proctor/Marshall to prepare and submit through the Student Affairs Director or the Deputy Vice Chancellor, as the case may be, a periodic report to the Vice Chancellor, unless an incident requires urgent attention and immediate reporting is necessary;

i) Employing physically and mentally fit resident caretakers to hostel premises;

j) Strictly prohibiting the consumption of alcohol within the university and hostel premises;

k) Conducting regular audits of safety and security measures;

l) Providing training to the relevant officers and security personnel on emergency responses, conflict resolution and modern security techniques and technology, as well as develop and determine clear protocols to be followed when an incident of ragging is discovered or reported[10];

m) Forming an internal intelligence force comprising a select group of persons from the academic and non-academic staff, guided by expert training, with a view to identifying potential threats of organized ragging events.

5. Every HEI shall address substance abuse among students, by taking steps including the following:

[10] The assistance of the UGC may be sought to facilitate the conducting of training programmes on safety and security, particularly in order to obtain the services of experts in the field.

a) Reporting forthwith to the nearest police station or the Police Narcotic Bureau any drug-related offence[11] committed within the university or hostel premises;
b) Making all students aware of the dangers of substance abuse, by providing continuous awareness-creation activities;
c) Permitting authorized personnel employed by the HEI to carry our regular and random searches for drugs in the university and hostel premises;
d) Obtaining the assistance of experts to provide training to academic and non-academic staff to identify students who may be suffering from drug dependency and to distinguish victims from suppliers;
e) Supporting students who have been referred to drug rehabilitation centres, to access such services;
f) Providing welfare and relief measures for students who are receiving treatment for drug dependency, such as extra tutoring, granting a leave of absence and extending their academic deadlines in terms of the applicable rules and regulations,[12] with a view to minimizing drop-outs.

6. The UGC shall develop a Foundation Course designed to create awareness of and combat ragging.[13] The course components should cover the following topics:

    a) The law relating to ragging and other forms of harassment, including online and sexual harassment;

[11] An offence under the Poisons, Opium and Dangerous Drugs Ordinance as amended or any other applicable law in respect of the prevention and combatting of substance abuse.
[12] If existing rules and regulations are inadequate to implement this guideline, the HEI should take steps to amend the same or make new rules or regulations.
[13] This Foundation Course must be in addition and complementary to any course already formulated by the Centre for Gender Equity/Equality (CGEE) of the UGC.

b) Case studies and testimonies of past victims and perpetrators of ragging to demonstrate the grave and harmful consequences of ragging;
c) Reasons for zero-tolerance of ragging and tools for new students to become agents of change;
d) Developing independence of thought and critical thinking;
e) Removing stigma related to mental health issues and tools for stress-management, including positive-thinking;
f) Encouraging the creation of peer support groups;
g) Non-violent conflict resolution;
h) Combatting substance abuse and alcoholism;
i) Instilling a sense of pride in receiving free education and the duty to avail of its opportunities and privileges to the fullest, without engaging in activities disruptive to the physical, mental, social and educational wellbeing of students;
j) Techniques of bystander intervention.

7. The aforesaid Foundation Course shall be offered by every HEI as a compulsory requirement for all First Year Students. A compulsory Refresher Course on the same should be offered annually to Senior Students (students who have completed their First Year) in their remaining Academic Years.

8. Subject to the availability of resources and requisite approvals from the relevant authorities, and with a view to preventing large numbers of students, particularly First Year Students and Senior Students, gathering together on a single site outside teaching hours and increasing vulnerability to ragging,

a) Every HEI shall identify alternative student accommodation in private lodgings and minimize hostel accommodation;

b) Each HEI should inspect and register such private lodgings, based on minimum standards, and make the register available for students to select their choice of accommodation[14];
c) Where such alternative student accommodation is not available for all First Year Students, hostel accommodation should be set aside, where possible, for First Year Students.

9. Every HEI shall, through its respective Gender Focal Point and with the assistance of the UGC and relevant experts, address ragging on cyberspace and social media, by taking steps including the following:

a) Developing and enforcing a comprehensive social media policy to address cyber-related ragging and related activities;
b) Providing expert training to Student Welfare Staff on how to identify online ragging;
c) Putting in place monitoring and intelligence systems to identify organization of ragging events in advance and reporting them promptly to the relevant authorities;
d) Making all students aware of the dangers of online ragging and how to deal with/report such incidents.

10. Every HEI shall ensure that Student Unions and any other organized student groups within the institution do not initiate or promote ragging, by taking steps including the following:

a) Ensuring gender parity and ethnic balance in elections to Student Unions and their office bearers, and conducting elections in a

[14] Financial support over and above the Mahapola Scholarsip should be allocated for the accommodation of needy students in the registered private lodgings. The payment of rent may be made directly by the HEI to the property owners. A template tri-partite agreement may be formulated, including the terms and conditions upon which such student accommodation is provided, including liability of the student for any destruction of the property due to negligence or willful act or omission, the obligation of the lessor to ensure adequate security and hygiene at the premises, and permission for authorized staff of the HEI to access the premises for the purpose of ensuring the safety and security of students.

manner where individual candidates can contest for each post instead of being elected on the basis of a list of nominated officer-bearers submitted by a contesting group, subject to written law[15];

b) Collaborating and establishing partnerships with Student Unions to promote anti-ragging activities and to inculcate positive attitudinal and behavioural changes among students;

c) Providing continuous leadership training to representatives of Student Unions, with the aim of capacity building based on universal values, rights and freedoms of human beings and skills of positive influence on peers and other students;

d) Encouraging student unity, where all students including First Year Students and Senior Students treat each other with equal respect;

e) Assigning special Student Counsellors/Mentors for representatives of Student Unions and requiring regular and close contact between them. For this purpose, such Counsellors/Mentors should liaise with Senior Treasurers appointed to the Student Unions by the HEIs;

f) Creating Student Support Groups, including students in hostel accommodation, to assist in safety and security measures taken by the relevant authorities, as well as to assist the Victim Support Committee and the Anti-Ragging Committee to carry out the functions vested in it in terms of these Guidelines.

11. Every HEI shall introduce as part of its Orientation Programme for First Year Students, a leadership training programme to build their confidence and resilience, prior to the commencement of studies. Emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion should be included in such training programme.

[15] The Ministry of Higher Education, in consultation with the UGC, shall identify the amendments required to be made to the Universities Act, No. 16 of 1978 and any other written laws, in order to implement this guideline.

12. Every HEI shall introduce a mentorship programme so that a group of students is assigned a Mentor who shall be in regular and close communication with that group. If the Mentor identifies a student as continuing to display a pro-ragging mentality, he should be directed to obtain specialized services from the Student Counsellor or any other qualified professional.

13. Every HEI shall establish an Anti-Ragging Committee comprising representatives from the academic staff appointed by the Vice Chancellor, student counsellors of the HEI, where available, and *ex officio* members such as the Head of the Victim Support Committee. The Committee shall exercise the powers, discharge the duties and perform the functions set out below:

    a) Formulate and recommend measures to enhance and improve anti-ragging measures;
    b) Involve the Student Union in the development and implementation of anti-ragging measures;
    c) Ensure the dissemination and effective implementation of the Zero-Tolerance for Ragging Policy;
    d) Use creative strategies, including social media, to create awareness on ragging;
    e) Maintain statistics on incidents of ragging and outcomes of complaints and provide periodic reports to the Vice Chancellor, who shall forward the same to the UGC;
    f) Publicize the identities of those who are expelled or convicted after the conclusion of internal disciplinary inquiries or court cases, as the case may be;
    g) Engage stakeholders, including parents and families of students, to strengthen awareness amongst the community with regard to ragging and the importance of supporting victims to make and maintain complaints without disrupting their education, as well as

the importance of advising perpetrators of the serious consequences of ragging.

14. Every HEI shall apply disciplinary measures against any member of the academic or non-academic staff who fails to report an incident of ragging or influences or attempts to influence a victim or witness to refrain from making/maintaining a complaint or cooperating in an inquiry/investigation into such incident.

15. The UGC shall, through the Centre for Gender Equity/Equality (CGEE), establish a central Victim Support Committee comprising academics, qualified counsellors and/or clinical psychologists, medical professionals and attorneys-at-law, which is available to render services, particularly where a Victim Support Committee of a HEI is unable to effectively provide the necessary support in a complex case.

16. The UGC shall establish a multi-disciplinary task force and create a network of persons who shall visit HEIs and conduct periodic anti-ragging programs. They may include awareness creation through forum theatre, role-playing, performing arts, and other innovative forms.

17. The UGC shall provide all necessary support to HEIs to implement these Guidelines, including the taking of proactive measures to secure the necessary budgetary allocations and relevant approvals for increasing the number of staff, facilitating the organization of expert training programs, assisting the development and designing of Foundation Courses to combat ragging, and monitoring the incidents of ragging and the effectiveness of the responses thereto by the HEIs.

18. Subject to the availability of resources and requisite approvals from the relevant authorities, the UGC, together with the Ministry of Higher Education, shall establish a Victim Support Fund to consider applications for financial assistance, where a victim requires professional healthcare services (physical or psychological), disability-related equipment, special learning equipment necessitated by impairments caused by ragging, or special accommodation, which cannot otherwise be provided free of charge.

19. Every student who is admitted to a HEI shall be provided with a copy of these Guidelines prior to the commencement of their academic programme. The orientation programme of every HEI shall include a compulsory session to create awareness of the provisions of these Guidelines and the remedies available in the event of a breach thereof. These Guidelines and other mechanisms to address ragging must be communicated to students on a regular basis, including via social media.

B. The Higher Educational Institutions under the 3rd, 4th and the 6A to 21A Added Respondents are directed to make By-laws in terms of Section 135(1)(d) of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, to give full effect to the aforesaid Guidelines Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 19.

C. The 1st Respondent is directed to take steps in pursuance of its powers under Section 15(xii) of the Universities Act, to implement the aforesaid Guidelines Nos. 6, 15, 16 and 17.

D. The 22B Respondent is directed to order the 1st Respondent in terms of Section 20(2)(a) of the Universities Act, to investigate compliance by the aforesaid Higher Educational Institutions of the aforesaid By-laws and report thereupon, every 6 months.

E. The 22B Respondent is also directed to take expeditious steps to ensure that necessary financial, technical and other assistance is secured from the relevant authorities for the implementation of these Guidelines.

F. Where any person holding office in any of the aforesaid Higher Educational Institutions, including an Officer of the University in terms of Section 33 of the Universities Act, fails to exercise powers, discharge duties or perform functions in compliance with the aforesaid By-laws, he shall be reported to the relevant appointing authority or disciplinary authority, as the case may be, as well as to the 1st Respondent, for disciplinary measures to be taken against him in terms of the applicable written law.

G. The 23B Respondent is directed to issue necessary instructions to the Sri Lanka Police to seek the advice of the Attorney General in respect of every investigation conducted into an incident of ragging, including matters connected therewith, such as obstruction of justice where any attempt is made by any person to unduly influence a police officer, victim or witness concerned with such investigation.

H. These Directions are complementary to existing mechanisms in operation under the authority of the Respondents, to address ragging. However, in the event of any inconsistency between such mechanisms and these Directions, the latter shall prevail.