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இலங்கைச் சட்டத்தரணிகள் சங்கம்
BAR ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA

12th December 2023

RE: SPECIAL ENTRANCE EXAM FOR HOLDERS OF DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF LAWS (LL.B) FROM FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) has become aware that an Adjournment Motion is to be discussed in Parliament in relation to the afore-captioned matter. Please find below the position of the BASL in relation thereto.

The BASL after many discussions together with other stakeholders had proposed to regulate the entry criteria for holders of Degree of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B) from foreign universities. After much deliberation, the Incorporated Council of Legal Education (ICLE) with the concurrence of the Hon. Minister of Justice, had published by way of a Gazette dated 15th of May 2023, the said essential and vital regulations. These regulations aim to establish minimum qualifications for individuals to become Attorneys-at-Law. Similar to other professions such as medicine, these minimum requirements are common and necessary for the preservation of the standards of the legal profession.

The entry into the legal profession is further regulated to provide equal opportunities to individuals from different educational backgrounds, whether from the national education system or private education system. Currently, there are government universities in Sri Lanka that award Degree of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B). Each year, many of these students enter the Sri Lanka Law College and sit for the Final Year Examinations in the Sri Lanka Law College. Additionally, graduates from General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University (KDU) and Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) have been allowed to sit for Final Year Examinations in the Sri Lanka Law College based on the discretion of the Incorporated Council of Legal Education (ICLE).

A Sub-Committee of BASL had identified that some Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B) awarded by private institutions operating in Sri Lanka were not satisfying the quality and standards recognized in Sri Lanka, and the said Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B) awarded by private institutions had not been recognized in their respective countries either. Furthermore, certain foreign universities had not met the necessary standards for entry qualifications to the Sri Lanka Law College. To ensure the quality of the legal education, a criterion has been introduced to assess foreign Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B), focusing on well-rounded education encompassing knowledge, skills, training, and ethical standards.

Previously, holders of foreign Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B) had to enter the first year of the Sri Lanka Law College and pass all three examinations. However, there had been a palpable decline in the quality and standards of the foreign Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B) awarded



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by some of the institutions. The Sri Lanka Law College has limited facilities and can only accommodate a certain number of students for lectures and examinations.

Holders of Foreign Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B), cannot request automatic entry into the legal profession based solely on their Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B). In the United Kingdom, an LL. B is considered an entry qualification, and individuals still need to go through a selective process to be eligible for Bar Examinations.

The special entry examination would place holders of Foreign Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B) in an advantageous position. Instead of sitting for all three examinations in the Sri Lanka Law College, they would be sitting for one examination, covering subjects from the first and second years in the Sri Lanka Law College, and if successful they would proceed directly to the examinations of final year. This shortens the process, saving time and effort for holders of Foreign Degrees of Bachelor of Laws (LL. B).

Overall, the objective would have to be to maintain the quality of legal education and ensure fairness in entry criteria for the legal profession in Sri Lanka.

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