

JSC/SEC COR: 3

**To: All High Court Judges and All Judicial Officers**

The prevailing pandemic situation in the country calls upon all concerned to take preventive action against the spread of COVID-19 virus. In this regard the overriding objective is to take steps to ensure that the personal contacts among people are avoided to prevent infection. Taking into account the present conditions in prisons, these guidelines are issued with the aim of easing the congestion.

The guidelines below are intended to be followed with immediate effect preferably on or before 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020.

1. All Magistrates and Additional Magistrates are required to strictly comply with Section 3 (1) of the Release of Remand Prisoners Act No. 8 of 1991.
2. In other instances where a person is languishing in remand custody due to his inability to furnish bail, despite bail having been granted by a competent court, Magistrates and High Court Judges may exercise their discretion and order that such bail be furnished within a specific time period, preferably on or before 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2020, and until such time consider the release of such person upon entering into a bond without sureties.
3. Judges/Judicial Officers should make necessary arrangements to obtain the services of the staff as required, to carry out this directive, preferably the Registrar, the record keeper and subordinate staff of the record room.
4. The Judicial Service Commission has requested the prison authorities to provide the respective courts with a list of suspects/accused along with the case numbers which will be furnished in due course.
5. All High Court Judges and Judicial Officers are requested to maintain statistics of the suspects released in giving effect to this circular as well the initial circulars of the JSC dated 16.03.2020, 19.03.2020 and 20.03.2020.
6. In the event any clarification is required with regard to the implementation of this circular, the Judicial Officers may contact the Secretary JSC and the High Court Judges may contact either the Chairman or either of the remaining two members of the JSC through the Secretary JSC.

Under the command of the JSC.

  
H.S. Somaratne

Secretary, Judicial Service Commission

26<sup>th</sup> March 2020