

Repression of Dissent

July 2022



Army soldiers assaulted the protestors and forcibly removed them and their tents from the protest camp outside the Presidential Secretariat, on July 22, 2022. Photo Courtesy: Twitter [@saiyafs](https://twitter.com/saiyafs)

INFORM

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Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka in July 2022.
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INFORM was established in 1990 to monitor and document human rights situation in Sri Lanka, especially in the context of the ethnic conflict and war, and to report on the situation through written and oral interventions at the local, national and international level. INFORM also focused on working with other communities whose rights were frequently and systematically violated. Presently, INFORM is focusing on election monitoring, freedom expression and human rights defenders. INFORM is based in Colombo Sri Lanka, and works closely with local activists, groups and networks as well as regional (Asian) and international human rights networks.

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1. Executive Summary

Context: Continuing trend of higher inflation was reported the same as the previous months, contributing to hunger, lack of nutrition and other issues. Food inflation increased to 90%, while non-food inflation reported as 46%, along with 85% of households reporting loss of income due to the economic crisis. On 9th July, the protestors stormed into several major government buildings including the Presidential secretariat, official residence of the President and the Prime Minister and started occupying them demanding the resignation of the ruling government. President Gotabaya Rajapakse resigned from his position after fleeing to Singapore. Then Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe, a close ally of the Rajapakse family, became the incumbent President. Under his regime, a wave of arrests, intimidation, and attacks were launched cracking down the anti-government protesters, and dissent.

Updates on Court cases: Police informed the court that extracts relating to the investigations on senior Police officer Tennakoon's failure to issue due orders to prevent attack on protesters, were submitted to the Attorney General Department. Two fundamental Rights petitions were filed by Transparency International Sri Lanka and a few individuals against 13 respondents including high profile politicians and top state officials, for their alleged responsibility for the economic crisis. After the President Rajapakse fled the country, after petitioners sought an order to prevent others from fleeing the country, the Supreme Court ordered foreign travel ban on former Finance Ministers Mahinda Rajapaksa and Basil Rajapaksa, former Central Bank Governors Ajith Nivard Cabral and Professor W. D. Lakshman and other senior financial officials.

Repression of Media and Journalists: On 22nd July early morning, the military raided and took over the Presidential secretariat, and surrounding area. At least five Journalists covering the military raid were assaulted, some were detained and tortured, their phones were confiscated and videos were deleted by military. Persons in civilian clothes, claiming to be policemen, had visited the office of *Xposure News*, demanded the security guard to identify persons in photos and to see CCTV footage and monitored the entrance for around one hour. Eight journalists from Sirasa TV NewsFirst were allegedly attacked by the Sri Lanka Police Special Task Force while they were live broadcasting a tense situation that occurred in the Prime Minister's private residence on 09th July 2022. Another journalist Pradeep Sanjeewa Wickramasinghe reporting for Derana TV has experienced breathing difficulties and was hospitalised after facing dozens of tear gas attacks while covering protests.

Repression of Freedom of Assembly: On 21st July, the protestors publicly announced that they are ready to hand over the Presidential Secretariat premises to the authorities. While everything was ready to hand over the building, the sleeping protestors occupying the Presidential Secretariat, and those who were in the huts set up on the road sides were brutally assaulted with batons by the military in the early morning of 22nd July 2022, without any prior warning. More than 50 people were injured and at least 9 others including a lawyer and a few journalists were arrested. Colombo Fort magistrate issued an order preventing protestors from gathering around 50 metres radius from the SWRD Bandaranike statue

located inside the occupying protest site. On 7th July 2022, the Fort police obtained a court order against a protest demonstration by a group of religious leaders demanding the resignation of the President. Former Parliamentarian Hirunika Premachandra and 11 others were arrested by the Police for staging a protest opposite the president's house in Colombo on 06th July 2022. On 31st July 2022 a student activist and an undergraduate student of the University of Kelaniya, Management Faculty was abducted by unidentified people. He was left out at a roadside, after being interrogated about well known student leaders. Cinnamon Gardens Police in Colombo went to the court seeking a restraining order against a protest organized by student activists, which the court rejected. On 8th July, with effect from 9pm in the night, Police imposed curfew in multiple areas of Colombo District. Sri Lanka Bar Association stated in a letter and said that the Inspector General has no power to impose such a curfew on oppression of the fundamental rights of the people. On 25th July, a travel ban was issued against six prominent activists who have been involved in the Galle Face protest site. On 28th July, another travel ban was issued against 21 protesters who were involved with the Galle Face protest site. Pathum Kerner, a social media activist who claimed to have introduced #GotaGoHome hashtag was arrested on 28th July 2022 for allegedly gathering protesters for a protest that happened in front of the Parliament. On 27th July 2022 a special police team raided a church in Ratnapura searching for Fr. Amila Jeevantha Peiris, who was a prominent figure in the anti-government protest site in Colombo. Colombo Magistrate court issued arrest warrants against two prominent anti-government protest leaders Lahiru Weerasekara and Tempitiye Sugathananda Thero who were at the forefront of GotaGoGama protests. Protesters who were attempting to march towards the Galle Face through the lotus road were blocked by the Sri Lanka Navy and video footage showed that the navy soldiers were attempting to attack the protesters with batons on the evening of 22nd July 2022. On 28th July, another Galle Face protester named Ismat Maulavi got arrested. Thugs have attacked and destroyed the anti-government protest site located in the Embilipitiya on 21st July 2022. The police arrested four people who counted and handed over the money to the authorities that was found in the presidential residence after protesters stormed into the Presidential residence on 9th July 2022. Police arrested Udeni Kalutanthri, former port union vice president of Samaghi Sevaka Sangamaya on 29th July for allegedly stealing the president's flag on 09th July 2022. Sahan Ranjaka Weerawardana, a young social media activist was allegedly detained and assaulted by Sri Lankan Air Force troopers, during the military raid on 22nd July. Journalist and student activist of the Inter-University Student Federation Veranga Pushpika was abducted by the police while he was returning on a bus after taking part in a demonstration held in Colombo. Police carried out searches at the office of the Frontline Socialist Party on 29th July. A teacher named A. M. Kumara Addarege in Badulla district was suspended from duty over a facebook post he had published supporting people's protests against the government.

Legal and Policy actions : In early July, a gazette notification was issued declaring several services as essential services. Such declarations are a well known tactic to prevent trade union actions. The proclamation of the state of emergency, announced by the President on 17th July and it was passed in Parliament with a majority of votes on 27th July 2022. Curfew was imposed in the commercial capital of Colombo for several days. President issued a gazette calling out for armed forces for the maintenance of public order from 22nd July 2022.

2. Context

Economic Crisis: Continuing trend of higher inflation was reported the same as the previous months, contributing to hunger, lack of nutrition and other issues. Food inflation (Y-o-Y) increased to 90.9% in July 2022 from 80.1% in June 2022, while Non-Food inflation (Y-o-Y) increased to 46.5% in July 2022 from 42.4% in June 2022.¹ According to a survey done by Save the Children Sri Lanka, 85% of households have reported a loss of income since the economic crisis, while 58% have reported losing more than half of their income, and 11% losing all their income. Around 74% of households have reported changing their food habits during the economic crisis, including 40% having reduced the portion of the meal, and 30% having reduced the number of meals.²



Demonstrators protest inside the Presidential Secretariat premises, after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled. July 9, 2022. Photo Courtesy: REUTERS/Dinuka Liyanawatte

Resignation of the President: On 9th July, the protestors stormed into several major government buildings including the Presidential secretariat, official residence of the President and the Prime Minister and started occupying them demanding the resignation of the ruling government.³ In the same evening, a group of protestors set fire to the private residence of the Prime Minister in Colombo.⁴ Amidst of this mayhem, Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksha resigned from his position, after fleeing to Singapore.⁵ Prime Minister

1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_NBbu9pOeE&t=2s

2 <https://www.themorning.lk/police-obtains-court-order-preventing-protest-by-religious-leaders/>

3 <https://www.thecolombopost.org/en/politics-en/95345/>

4 http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22B/Jul08_1657300329CH.php

5 <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/pathum-kerner-33598b1a1>

Wickremasinghe remained in power, despite him initially expressing willingness to resign from his position in order to establish an all-party government.⁶



Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as the new president of Sri Lanka by the Chief Justice in parliament. Photo Courtesy: BBC/ Reuters

On 13th of July, Ranil Wickremesinghe was appointed as the acting (interim) President, on the instructions given by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, to the Speaker of the parliament.⁷ On 15th of July, he was sworn in as the acting President before Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya⁸ and he was elected as the 8th Executive President through voting of parliamentary members.

Case Updates: The hearing of the case on the attack on peaceful protestors on 9th May by pro-government mobs was taken at the Fort magistrate Court on 20th July. The Police informed the court that the extracts related to the investigations carried out on Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police (SDIG) Deshabandu Tennakoon regarding the incident were submitted to the Attorney General. Tennakoon is the most senior Police officer present at the situation, who is allegedly responsible for not taking required steps to prevent the attack.⁹

In June, former president of the Chamber of Commerce Chandra Jayaratne, swimming champion Julian Bowling, Jehan Kanegaratne and Transparency International Sri Lanka filed a petition against 13 respondents including high profile politicians and officials including Former Finance Ministers Mahinda Rajapaksa and Basil Rajapaksa, former Central Bank Governors Ajith Nivard Cabraal for the lack of accountability and transparency on decision making that led the country into the economic crisis. Though the petition initially included the

6 <https://www.dailynews.lk/2022/07/30/law-order/284060/pathum-kerner-remanded-till-august-4>

7 <https://www.ucanews.com/news/police-hunt-for-sri-lankan-priest-deplored/98217>

8 <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/83934/arrest-warrants-issued-on-lahiru-weerasekara-and-sugathananda-thero>

9 <https://twitter.com/Welikumbura/status/1550440093701525504>

name of President Ranil Wickramasinghe, the petitioners later withdrew his name.^{10 11} When the case was taken up at the Supreme Court 4th July, the lawyer appearing on behalf of respondent Cabraal requested the court that further time be given as he intended to file limited objections against these petitions, for which petitioners objected as previously the time given for the same purpose. Soon after President Gotabaya Rajapakse fled the country, the petitioners filed a motion seeking an order to ban foreign travel of former Finance Ministers Mahinda Rajapaksa and Basil Rajapaksa, former Central Bank Governors Ajith Nivard Cabral and Professor W. D. Lakshman and other senior financial officials.¹² As a result, the court issued the order and extended it till 5th of September.¹³

Colombo High Court ordered the case against former Minister and incumbent MP Wimal Weerawansa – for allegedly illegally earning more than Rs. 75 million in assets and money beyond his legal income while serving as a Minister – on 13 September for a pre-trial conference.¹⁴

Non-dissent related arrests of protesters: A number of activists and protesters were arrested after the new President was appointed in July 2022. While this report covers a considerable number of the incidents, we might have missed some of the incidents as all incidents were not reported in the media. Also some incidents were excluded as they were not connected to our theme, repression of dissent. For example, a number of arrests were reported for allegedly stealing various petty items including President's iron from occupied buildings.^{15 16 17} Daniz Ali, a protester who forcibly entered the premises of Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation and demanded to disrupt the broadcasting, was arrested on 26th July, while he was inside the flight to travel to Dubai UAE. The Videos related to the incident show a group of officers of the CID dragging him forcefully from the boarded aircraft despite the resistance from other passengers, and without even presenting an arrest warrant. Later that night the Police Media Division in a press release stated that Dhaniz Ali was arrested for allegedly interrupting the broadcasting of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation. Police has further stated that Dhaniz Ali is a suspect in the June 20th Protest that blocked the gate of the Ministry of Finance, 9th June protest held in front of the Police Headquarters and he was bailed out for that.¹⁸

10 <https://twitter.com/JDSLanka/status/1552642684006932480/photo/1>

11 <https://twitter.com/JDSLanka/status/1549826559607029761>

12 <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/07/29/desecration-of-president-s-flag-trade-union-leader-arrested/>

13 https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/Man-who-stole-Presidents-flag-and-used-as-bed-sheet-arrested/108-242022

14 <https://twitter.com/JDSLanka/status/1550301599465197568>

15 <https://twitter.com/JDSLanka/status/1550278546274263040>

16 <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/07/28/key-gotagohome-activist-arrested/>

17 https://www.dailymirror.lk/top_story/Police-arrest-IUSF-activist-Veranga-Pushpika/155-241908

18 <https://www.themorning.lk/emergency-proclamation-passed-with-huge-majority/>

3. Repression of Media and Journalists



Army soldiers assaulted the protestors and forcibly removed them and their tents from the protest camp outside the Presidential Secretariat, on July 22, 2022. Photo Courtesy: Twitter [@saiyafs](#)

Five Journalists assaulted, some detained and tortured, their phones confiscated and videos deleted: On 22nd July early morning, the military raided and took over the Presidential secretariat, and surrounding area, forcibly removing protestors huts, and assaulting the unarmed protestors and ¹⁹ several journalists covering the incident. At about 1:20 a.m. on July 22, Sri Lankan Army officers attacked Jareen Samuel, a camera operator and video editor with BBC Tamil News. Despite Samuel and his team having shown their press IDs and foreign accreditation cards to the officers, the officers have then repeatedly slapped Samuel, pushed him to the ground, and kicked him several times in the abdomen. An officer has confiscated his phone, deleted videos from it, and then returned it. Also early that morning, officers with the Sri Lankan Air Force had attacked three journalists working for Xposure News while they were covering a protest in the Kollupitiya area of Colombo. Shortly before 3 a.m., officers first attacked Chaturanga Pradeep Kumara, a videographer, video editor, and researcher with the outlet, taken him to a dark area, and tortured him for around 3 hours, beating with batons. They have also confiscated his mobile phone and press ID cards, deleted videos from the phone, and returned them at the end. Shortly afterwards, Xposure News digital head Rasika Gunawardana and freelance journalist Shabeer Mohammed also working for Xposure News were assaulted with batons behind their heads,

¹⁹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/9/sri-lanka-protesters-storm-president-house-demanding-resignation>

when they were covering the raid.²⁰ In addition a journalist attached to Sri Lanka Press Institute Kasun Kumarage has been assaulted according to the Free Media Movement.²¹



Firefighters try to douse a fire at the Sri Lankan prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's private residence, in Colombo, Sri Lanka , Saturday, July, 9, 2022. (AP Photo)

Police visits the Office of Xposure News: Persons in civilian clothes, claiming to be policemen, had visited the office of *Xposure News*, demanded the security guard to identify persons in photos and to see CCTV footage and monitored the entrance for around one hour. *Xposure News* had provided extensive coverage of the raid on Galle Face protest site.²²

Police assaulted the Sirasa TV news reporters covering a protest: Eight journalists from Sirasa TV NewsFirst were allegedly attacked by the Sri Lanka Police Special Task Force while they were live broadcasting a tense situation that occurred in the Prime Minister's private residence on 09th July 2022.²³ The team of television journalists including Sarasi Pieris, Judin Sinthujan, camera operator Warun Sampath, and Janitha Mendis of Newsfirst Digital were initially assaulted around 7.20 pm in the evening inside the PM's private residence. Secondly another team of journalists including Kalimuttu Chandran, Imesh Sutherland, Chanuka Weerakoon and Banidu Lokuruge who attempted to rescue their colleagues were attacked with tear gas by security forces.²⁴ ²⁵ Lahiru Chamara reporting for Derana TV and Gayan Wickramasinghe reporting for Sky News were also assaulted by

²⁰ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/gotabaya-rajapaksa-flies-to-singapore-emails-resignation-letter/article65641213.ece>

²¹ <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/07/10/pm-house-fire-three-arrested-for-arson/>

²² <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/07/09/prime-minister-is-willing-to-resign-pm-office/>

²³ https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/sites/default/files/cbslweb_documents/press/pr/press_20220729_inflation_in_july_2022_ccpi_e.pdf

²⁴ <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Sri-Lanka-Rapid-Needs-Assessment.pdf/>

²⁵ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/07/13/ranil-wickremesinghe-appointed-acting-president-speaker/>

security forces, who were in front of the Prime Minister's residence. Wickramasinghe's camera and other equipment were damaged during the attack.²⁶

Other attacks: Another journalist Pradeep Sanjeewa Wickramasinghe reporting for Derana TV has experienced breathing difficulties and then hospitalised after facing 22 tear gas attacks while covering protests in Chatham Street where protestors took over and started occupying the President's official residence building.



A demonstrator throws a tear gas grenade back towards the police [Dinuka Liyanawatte/Reuters]

26 <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/07/15/ranil-sworn-in-as-acting-president/>

4. Repression of Freedom of Assembly



*A broken tent at the GotaGoGama protest site after the attack on peaceful protestors on 22nd July.
Photo by Thyagi Ruwanpathirana/Amnesty International via Sri Lanka Brief*

On 21st July, the protestors publicly announced that they are ready to hand over the Presidential Secretariat premises to the authorities taking “a strategic step back” giving a reasonable time to assess the government's performance and plans.²⁷ While everything was ready to hand over the building, the sleeping protestors occupying the Presidential Secretariat, and those who were in the huts set up on the road sides were brutally assaulted with batons by the military in the early morning of 22nd July 2022, without any prior warning. Disabled soldiers, and deaf and mute demonstrators were among those attacked and their huts were also vandalised by the military.²⁸ Journalists were also attacked as described in the previous section. Lawyer Nuwan Bopage and eight others who got arrested during the raid were granted bail later on the same day.²⁹



The protestors who were sleeping at the Presidential Secretariat, just before they were assaulted by the military in the early morning of 22nd July. Photo Courtesy: [@saiyafs](#)

According to Human Rights Watch during the military raid, more than 50 people were injured and at least 9 others were arrested. Nine people who got arrested including several journalists and a lawyer were produced before a magistrate and granted bail on the same day.³⁰

27 <https://www.themorning.lk/police-to-act-against-invaders-of-s-w-r-d-s-space/>

28 <https://www.themorning.lk/cid-submits-probe-on-deshabandu-to-ag/>

29 <https://ceylontoday.lk/2022/06/18/tisl-files-fr-petition-on-economic-crisis/>

30 <https://www.themorning.lk/president-released-from-economic-crisis-petition/>

Attorney Chamara Jayasinge was attacked by the Sri Lanka Navy:

Lawyer Chamara Jayasinghe, a member of the Negombo Bar Association was allegedly attacked by the Sri Lanka Air Force officers during the raid that occurred in the early hours at Galle Face on 22nd July 2022. He had been assaulted when he attempted to meet the protesters that had been encircled by the security forces, during the raid.³¹

Protestors occupying around the Bandaranaike Statue in the protest site removed



The blindfolded Bandaranaike statue in the protest site. Photo Courtesy: Colombo Telegraph

Based on a submission made by the Fort Police station about reports on impending damages to the SWRD Bandaranaike statue in the Galle Face protest site, Colombo Fort magistrate issued an order preventing protestors from gathering around 50 metres radius from the statue. On 22nd April, Tamil Guardian website published an article titled “[Why Sri Lanka’s protestors must topple the statue of Bandaranaike in Colombo](#),” a protestor blindfolded the statue around a week later.³² In early May, Sri Lanka Freedom Party requested the Inspector General of Police to probe into the incident of blindfolding the statue. SWRD Bandaranaike (1899-1956) was the 4th Prime Minister of Sri Lanka who was assassinated by a Buddhist monk in 1956. He is also the founder of Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and reviver of Sinhala nationalism in Sri Lankan politics. He is also blamed for introducing the “Sinhala Only Act” that led to strong divisions between Sinhala and Tamil ethnic groups. Sinhala nationalist mob attacks targeting minority Tamils in Sri Lanka were heightened in the 1980s, almost two decades after his death, leading to a three decades long civil war. On 20th July 2022, the Colombo Fort Magistrate Thilina Gamage issued an

31 <https://www.themorning.lk/wimals-income-ciaboc-case-to-september-for-pre-trial-conference/>

32 http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22B/Jul22_1658460505CH.php

order preventing anyone from reaching within 50 metre radius of the S W R D Bandaranaike statue which is located in the Galle Face Colombo, based on a submission made by the Fort Police station.^{33 34} Following the order, Police officers were deployed around the statue, and Police attempted to remove the protestors and their huts located within 50 metres radius distance from the statue.³⁵ However, later protestors agreed to withdraw themselves voluntarily, keeping 50 metres distance from the statue.³⁶

Police obtain court preventing a protest staged by religious leaders

On 7th July 2022, the Fort police obtained a court order against a protest demonstration by a group of religious leaders planned to be held Olcott Mawatha, in Colombo city demanding the resignation of the President Rajapakse. Based on a request made by the Fort Police station alleging that the protest would obstruct the public, causing traffic, Colombo magistrate court issued an order preventing leaders of the protest from participating and organizing it. The order was issued against Venerable Pahiengala Ananda Sagara Thero, Convener of Surakimu Sri Lanka National Movement, Ven. Ulapanane Sungala Thero, President of the Teacher- Principal Union Alliance, Ven. Kalubowila Paduma Thero, Founder of Bhumi Mathru Manusath Foundation, and other people participating in the said protest.³⁷

Former Parliamentarian Hirunika Premachandara was arrested for protesting:



Hirunika Premachandara and other protestors sitting at the entrance of President's house.

Photo Courtesy: Newscutter.lk

National Organizer of the Samaghi Vanitha Balawegaya (SVB), Former Parliamentarian Hirunika Premachandra and 11 others were arrested by the Police for staging a protest opposite the president's house in Colombo on 06th July 2022. The group of people accompanied by Hirunika Premachandra and former chairperson of the Weligama Urban Council Rehan jayawickrama staged the protest to show their displeasure over the hardships that are faced by the public due to the economic crisis and demanded the resignation of the president. When they have attempted to enter the President's house, the security officers have not allowed them. Then they sat at the entrance of the President's house, and started the protest. The security officers have

not allowed the journalists who tried to come there to report the event. Later, the group of protestors were arrested and granted bail on the same day.^{38 39}

33 <https://cpj.org/2022/07/sri-lankan-security-forces-detain-assault-journalists-covering-political-unrest/>

34 <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/sri-lanka-security-forces-attack-journalists-and-unarmed-protestors.html>

35 <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/sri-lanka-journalists-attacked-during-protest-coverage.html>

36 <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/07/09/news-1st-journalist-attacked-by-stf-police/>

37 <https://www.themorning.lk/11-journos-attacked-on-9-july/>

38 <https://www.themorning.lk/protestors-to-vacate-presidential-secretariat-in-strategic-step-back/>

39 <https://srilankabrief.org/sri-lanka-shameful-brutal-assault-on-peaceful-protestors-must-immediately-stop-ai/>

A student Activist of University of Kelaniya abducted and interrogated

On 31st July 2022 a student activist and an undergraduate student of the University of Kelaniya, Management Faculty was abducted by unidentified people. He has been left on a roadside after being interrogated about other student activists. He is a team leader of the student union of University's Management faculty. The president of the Student Union, Kelum Madanayake stated that the team leader was abducted and interrogated for three hours and questioned about the Inter University Student Federation convenor, Wasantha Mudilige and other student activists. ⁴⁰

Court rejects the request to prevent student protest

On 8th of July, the Inter University Student Federation (IUSF) organised a protest demanding the resignation of the ruling government. This was organised to extend the support to the mass protest that was organised the next day by all protesters in GotaGoGama, occupy protest site. IUSF student activists marched from University Kelaniya premises to the GotaGoGama protest site on 8th of July and stayed overnight there and joined protests the next day. In this context, the Police went to the court seeking a restraining order against the student protest, which the court rejected.



IUSF protesters carried large banners saying "Expel the government! Change the system!", "Chase away the Gota-Ranil conspiracy government." Photo Courtesy: Newscutter.lk

On 7th July, the Colombo Chief Magistrate rejected the request made by the Cinnamon Gardens Police station to issue a restraining order against protests organized by the Inter-University Student's Federation (IUSF), to prevent protesters from entering several roads in Colombo during the protests.⁴¹ However, the Police used tear gas and water cannons attempting to disperse the protest march at the entrance to Bank of Ceylon Mawatha, Colombo.

40 <https://www.themorning.lk/travel-ban-on-mahinda-and-basil-further-extended/>

41 <https://www.dailynews.lk/2022/07/05/law-order/282378/two-fr-petitions-fixed-july-6>



IUSF protesters being attacked by water cannons by the Police. Photo Courtesy: REUTERS/Dinuka Liyanawatte.

Police imposes curfew ahead of the mass protest

On 8th July, with effect from 9pm in the night, Police imposed curfew in multiple areas of Colombo including Negombo, Kelaniya, Nugegoda, Mount Lavinia, Colombo North, South and Central Divisions.⁴² Police advised the public to stay at home, and informed that travelling between Police divisions is strictly prohibited.⁴³ Sri Lanka Bar Association stated in a letter and said that the Inspector General has no power to impose such a curfew on oppression of the fundamental rights of the people.⁴⁴ It seemed that Police imposed the curfew in an attempt to prevent the protests happening on the next day.

Travel ban issued against six leaders of the anti-government protests

Colombo Magistrate Thilana Gamage issued a travel ban against six prominent activists who have been involved in the Galle Face protest site on 25th July 2022. The order was issued against (1) Inter-University Student Federation Convenor, Wasantha Mudalige, (2) the National Organizer of Youth Change, Lahiru Weerasekara, (3) Ceylon Teachers Union Leader Joseph Stalin, (4) National Organizer of the Socialist Youth Union (SYU), Eranga Gunasekara, (5) Rev. Fr. Jeevantha Peries and (6) another activist named Rangana Lakmal,⁴⁵ for their alleged involvement in an unlawful assembly opposite to the police

42 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/07/22/sri-lanka-security-forces-assault-peaceful-protesters>

43 <https://www.alamy.com/colombo-sri-lanka-29th-apr-2022-the-statue-of-former-sri-lanka-prime-minister-swr-d-bandaranaike-is-seen-with-its-eyes-being-blindfolded-with-a-black-scarf-by-the-anti-government-protesters-near-the-galle-face-promenade-in-colombo-on-29-april-2022-photo-by-saman-abesiriwardanapacific-press-credit-pacific-press-media-production-corp/alamy-live-news-image468584966.html>

44 https://www.dailymirror.lk/front_page/Court-prevents-protesters-reaching-Bandaranaike-statue/238-241491

45 https://www.dailymirror.lk/front_page/Court-prevents-protesters-reaching-Bandaranaike-statue/238-241491

headquarters on 11th July 2022, based on a request made by the Colombo Crime Division of Police to the Magistrate court, claiming that investigations are underway against them.⁴⁶

Travel ban issued against 21 protesters of GotaGoGama

On 28th July, Colombo magistrate court issued an order imposing a travel ban on 21 protesters involved with GotaGoGama protests. Police claimed that there is an ongoing investigation against them for allegedly causing public nuisance after blocking the main entrances to the Presidential Secretariat. Fort Police station also informed the court that they have received information from intelligence forces that these suspects may leave the country. 21 protesters were (1) Ven. Wigoda Watte Kashyapa Thera, (2) M.G. Thisara Anuradha, (3) L.N.D. Perera, (4) P.B.M. Ramesh Indika, (5) R.A. Rajapaksa, (6) A.A. Cyril Manatunga, (7) W.P. Isuru Warnakula, (8) Roshan Ali, (9) Danish Ali, (10) T.C. Chandimal Gamage, (11) D.R.S. Bentara Arachchi, (12) N.M. Thaufiq, M. Casim, (13) Nilantha Samith Fernando, (14) Koralage Bandula Prabhath, (15) H.M.T.G. Menika, (16) Sameera Madhushanka Siriwardena, (17) Sudath Lakshman, (18) M.R. Charuka, (19) D.P. Chaturika Sarojani, (20) J. Nilantha and (21) M. Nishanthi.⁴⁷

Social media activist Pathum Kerner arrested, and a travel ban imposed against him

Pathum Kerner, a social media activist who claimed to have introduced #GotaGoHome hashtag was arrested on 28th July 2022 by the Colombo Crimes Division (CCD). The Colombo Crimes division arrested him accusing him of using social media to gather people to Polduwa junction near parliament, and leading people to break the barricades near parliament causing clashes between protesters and security forces during a protest held on 13th July 2022.⁴⁸ An army soldier and a Police officer have been assaulted by the protesters, and a firearm has been stolen according to the Sri Lankan army. The firearm said to be stolen was later found in the nearby Diyawannawa lake by navy divers.^{49 50} 42 protesters were injured on the day.⁵¹ Following an arrest order issued by the Colombo Additional Magistrate Harshana Kekunawela, Pathum Kerner surrendered to the Colombo Crime Division of Police.⁵² Kerner has worked as a lieutenant at the Sri Lankan Army medical corps from 2007 to 2010.⁵³

Police raids a church, in an attempt to arrest Rev. Fr. Jeevantha Peiris

On 27th July 2022 a special police team raided a church in Ratnapura searching for Fr. Amila Jeevantha Peiris, who was a prominent figure in the anti-government protest site GotaGoGama in Colombo. The police team who have searched for him have told the people at the church that they have received an order to arrest him on sight. However, when contacted by the journalists, Ratnapura Police denied that they had conducted such a raid.⁵⁴

46 <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/07/26/watch-tense-situation-as-police-arrest-protesters-near-bandaranaike-statue/>

47 <https://www.themorning.lk/hirunika-arrested-at-presidents-house-gate/>

48 <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-opposition-politicians-hirunika-premachandra-rehan-jayawickreme-arrested-at-protest-97023/>

49 <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/07/08/breaking-police-curfew-for-multiple-areas-in-colombo/>

50 <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/07/08/court-rejects-request-against-iusf-protests/>

51 <https://ceylontoday.lk/2022/07/09/police-curfew-imposed-in-wp/>

52 <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/07/25/travel-ban-against-six-activists-including-rev-fr-jeewantha-iusf-chief/>

53 http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22B/Jul25_1658752376CH.php

54 <https://www.dailynews.lk/2022/07/29/law-order/284022/activist-pathum-kerner-arrested>

Two days before, on 25th July, Colombo Magistrate Court issued a travel ban against the priest and five other activists who took part in protests.⁵⁵



Fr. Jeewantha Peiris along with a Buddhist monk and others at the Mullivaikkal remembrance event held in Colombo protest site to remember the victims of War. Photo Courtesy: Photo Credit: ISHARA S. KODIKARA via the Hindu

Arrest warrants issued against protest leaders Lahiru Weersekara and Venerable Tempitiye Sugathananda Thero

Colombo Magistrate court issued arrest warrants against two prominent anti-government protest leaders Lahiru Weerasekara and Tempitiye Sugathananda Thero who were at the forefront of GotaGoGama protests. The Colombo Chief Magistrate issued this order when pertaining to an unlawful public assembly case called on 28th July 2022. The police have made the request to the Magistrate to issue the order.⁵⁶ Lahiru Weerasekara now acts as the National Organiser of Youth for Change movement, while he is much known as a former convener of the Inter University Student Federation (IUSF). Sugathananda Thero is the General Secretary of the Joint Health Workers Union. He was the former Convener of the Inter-University Bhikku Action Committee.

Military used Batons to disperse the protesters:

Protesters who were attempting to march towards the Galle Face through the lotus road were blocked by the Sri Lanka Navy and video footage showed that the navy soldiers were attempting to attack the protesters with batons on the evening of 22nd July 2022. The protest was organised to show the displeasure on the same day early morning brutal attack on the peaceful protesters who were occupied in the presidential Secretariat and surrounding area.

⁵⁷

55 http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22B/Jul14_1657772701CH.php

56 <https://www.themorning.lk/allegedly-stolen-t-56-found-in-diyawanna-oya/>

57 <https://lankanewsweb.net/archives/16067/protesters-taken-away-t56-and-60-ammo-police-spokesman/>



*Military using batons to disperse protesters. Video: Prasad Welikumbura
<https://twitter.com/Welikumbura/status/1550440093701525504>*

Protester arrested under alleged charges of unlawful assembly

On 28th July, Ismat Maulavi, a resident of the small town of Beruwala on south-west coast of Sri Lanka was arrested in Maligawatta by Colombo Crime Division on under the charge of “unlawful assembly” for taking part in a protest held in front of Police Headquarters in Colombo on 9th of June, demanding justice for the 9th May brutal attack on the anti-government protesters by the Podujana Peramuna supporters.⁵⁸



Arrested Protester, Ismat Maulavi at the protest. Photo Courtesy: JDS Lanka

58 <https://www.themorning.lk/prominent-aragalayites-intimidated-and-surveilled/>

Mobs attacks Embilipitiya GoGotaGama protest site:

Thugs have attacked and destroyed the anti-government protest site located in the Embilipitiya on 21st July 2022. This attack took place hours after newly appointed president Ranil Wickramasinghe was sworn in.^{59 60}

police arrest the people who handed over the money found in the president's house:

The police arrested four people who counted and handed over the money to the authorities that was found in the presidential residence after protesters stormed into the Presidential residence on 9th July 2022. They were accused of trespassing into the Presidential house. More than Rs. 17.8 million in cash was handed over to the Police by the protesters. INFORM believes that the arrests were a reprisal against the protesters for taking part at the protests.⁶¹

Former Port Union Leader arrested by the police:

Police arrested Udeni Kalutanthri, former port union vice president of Samaghi Sevaka Sangamaya on 29th July for allegedly stealing the president's flag on 09th July 2022. He was arrested after he surrendered to the Dam Street Police.⁶² Police stated that they have arrested him under the allegation of unlawful entering the president office and for desecration of the president flag.⁶³

Social Media activist arrested and brutally assaulted by Sri Lanka Air Force soldiers

Sahan Ranjaka Weerawardana a young social media activist had been forcefully dragged by the Sri Lanka Air force troopers near Crescat Boulevard shopping mall in Colombo when a raid occurred against peaceful protest on 22nd July 2022. Two others were also arrested with him.⁶⁴ After a few hours they were released after being assaulted. Two others were admitted to the hospital with head and leg injuries.⁶⁵



Military dragging away the social media activist. There was no information for a few hours. Photo Courtesy: JDS Lanka.

59 <https://www.themorning.lk/catholic-priests-concerned-about-attempts-to-arrest-fr-jeevantha-peiris/>

60 https://www.dailymirror.lk/latest_news/Court-imposes-travel-ban-on-21-Galle-Face-protesters/342-241973

61 <https://twitter.com/JDSLanka/status/1550258562756124673/photo/1>

62 <https://twitter.com/emdees11/status/1549821205917712385>

63 <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/07/22/sri-lanka-activists-arrested-during-president-s-office-raid-granted-bail/>

64 <https://www.themorning.lk/police-ordered-to-hand-over-presidents-house-millions/>

65 <https://twitter.com/JDSLanka/status/1552266577906647042>

Journalist and Student activist was arrested by the CID:

Journalist and student activist of the Inter-University Student Federation Veranga Pushpika was abducted by the police while he was returning on a bus after taking part in a demonstration held in Colombo. Police did not disclose his whereabouts to lawyers or the Human Right commission for several hours, later Sri Lanka Human Right Commission has stated that he was taken by the Colombo South Crime Detective Bureau (DCDB). He was arrested under charges of damaging public property during the protest held on 9th June near the Police Headquarters and 10th June protest held in front of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.⁶⁶ Officer in Charge of the Colombo South Division stated that there was no truth in the accusation that he was abducted. Further he stated that the police had taken him to custody and produced before the Fort Magistrate. Veranga Pushpika is also the Former President of the Student Union at University of Ruhuna.^{67 68 69}

Police conduct searches at Frontline Socialist Party office in Colombo

Police carried out searches at the office of the Frontline Socialist Party on 29th July. “A group of people in civilian clothes walked into our office and searched all over our premises. They didn’t have a search warrant and only one of them was wearing a police uniform,” said Duminda Nagamuva, the party spokesman. Frontline socialist party is a small leftist political party made by dissidents of Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the main leftist party. They were much active in the recent anti-government protests.

Teacher suspended from duty over a social media post supporting people’s protests

A teacher named A. M. Kumara Addarege working at the School Galauda Maha vidyalaya in Badulla district in Uva province was suspended from duty by the Uva Province Secretary of Education on 04th July 2022 over a facebook post he had published supporting people’s protests against the government. According to a statement issued by the Ceylon Teachers’ Union (CTU), Addarage has been an activist who was actively involved in anti-government protests. CTU further alleged that this action was taken after a complaint made by the current Member of Parliament, and former chief minister of Uva Province Chamara Samapth Dassanayake, as a reprisal for being engaged with protests. On 17th May, he was arrested by the Haliela Police station in Badulla district over the comments he had made in social media, and presented before a magistrate. Despite the Police request to remand him further, the court has granted him bail. Then his duty was suspended in July, 2022, alleging that he had violated the Section 31:1:10 of Chapter II of the Code of Disciplinary conduct for the state employees in Uva Province⁷⁰, which says that “employees shall not act in a manner that causes indignity to the Uva Provincial Council or government service.”⁷¹

66 <https://www.colomboguardian.com/police-arrest-iusf-activist-veranga-pushpika/29046/>

67 <https://sinhala.srilankabrief.org/?p=42230>

68 [Disciplinary Code of Conduct for state employees of Uva Province \[sinhala\]](#)

69 http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2022/7/2286-30_E.pdf

70 http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2022/7/2288-30_E.pdf

71 http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2022/7/2289-07_E.pdf



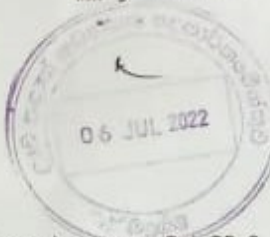
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AMBULUVAHARANA SANGAJI
Uva Provincial Council



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වැඩ නතර කිරීම

මම වියළිව අධ්‍යාපන කලාපයට අයත් බ/භලලඬ මහා විද්‍යාලයේ සේවය කරමින් සිටියදී 2022.05.17 දින බදුල්ල මහේස්ත්‍රාත් උසාවියේ නඩු අංක 50416 යටතේ ඉදිරිපත් කරනු ලැබූ රු. 500,000/- බැගින් වූ මරණ දඬුවම් මත මුදා හැර ඇත.

02. මේ සම්බන්ධව භාලිඥාල පොලීස් ස්ථානාධිපති වසන්ත 2022.06.04 දින ලබා දී ඇති පොලීස් පැමිණිලිය හා උව පළාත් අධ්‍යාපන අධ්‍යක්ෂවරයාගේ අංක උප/අධ්‍යා/විමර්ශන/03/22/වි.බ/ව.වි. හා 2022.06.21 දිනැති ලිපියට අනුව උව පළාත් සභා රාජ්‍ය සේවයේ විනය කාර්ය සංග්‍රහයේ II පරිච්ඡේදයේ 31:1:10 උප වගන්තිය යටතේ විනාම ක්‍රියාත්මක වන පරිදි ඔබගේ රාජකාරි වැඩ නතර කිරීම. ඔබ භාරයේ ඇති රජයේ බඩු බාහිරවීම බ/භලලඬ මහා විද්‍යාල විදුලාල්පති වසන්ත නම් කරනු ලබන නිලධාරියෙකුට විධිමත් පරිදි බාර දීමට කටයුතු කළ යුතුය.

03. රාජකාරි වැඩ නතර කිරීම කර සිටින කාලය තුළ ඔබට කිසිදු වැටුපක් ගෙවීමට කටයුතු කරනු නොලැබේ. රාජකාරි වැඩ නතර කිරීම කර සිටින කාලය තුළ ඔබගේ පෞද්ගලික ලිපිනය මා වෙත දන්වා එවීමට කටයුතු කළ යුතු අතර, දිවයිනෙන් බැහැරව යාම නොකළ යුතු බවට මෙයින් උපදෙස් දෙමි.

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Letter issued suspending the duty of the teacher. Photo Courtesy: Sri Lanka Brief

5. Legal and Policy actions

Declaration of Essential services

On 3rd of July, a gazette notification was issued declaring all services connected to the supply of electricity, the supply and distribution of fuel, and hospitals as essential services. Declaration of Essential services is historically used to prevent trade union actions. ⁷²

Emergency Law Passed with majority votes:

The proclamation of the state of emergency, announced by the President Ranil Wickmarasinghe on 17th July⁷³ followed by the gazette on 18th July 2022⁷⁴ was debated and passed in Parliament with 120 majority votes on 27th July 2022⁷⁵. In the parliament 145 seats are held by the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party and they have the majority of the parliament. The president has the power to proclaim the emergency regulation under the public security ordinance in the constitution, to preserve public security and public order. Emergency law allows any person to be arrested even by the military, and to be detained for up to 72 hours. More than 600 anti-government protesters were arrested by the Sri Lanka security officials. ⁷⁶

Imposing Curfew:

Curfew was imposed in the commercial capital of Colombo from 12 pm on 13th July up to 5 am on 14th July⁷⁷ and from 12 pm on 14th July up to 5 am on 15th July.⁷⁸ Gazette notification stated that “no person shall be on any public road, railway, public park, recreation park or other public ground or seashore in such areas...except under the authority of a written permit granted by the Secretary, Ministry of Defence or Secretary, Ministry of Public Security or Inspector General of Police or any other officer authorized by them.”⁷⁹

Gazette issued calling out for armed forces

Same as the previous months, under emergency laws (Public security ordinance), the Sri Lankan President issued a gazette calling out for armed forces for the maintenance of public order from 22nd July 2022.⁸⁰

72 http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2022/7/2290-37_E.pdf

73 <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-imposes-curfew-in-colombo-district-from-july-14-15-97416/>

74 http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2022/7/2288-21_E.pdf

75 http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2022/7/2288-22_E.pdf

76 http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2022/7/2289-40_E.pdf

77 <https://www.themorning.lk/ruptavahini-protester-nabbed-in-plane-remanded/>

78 https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/Three-arrested-with-stolen-goods-from-the-Presidents-House/108-241697

79 <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/83717/suspect-arrested-with-50-tear-gas-canisters-stolen-during-protest>

80 <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/07/28/several-more-arrests-cluding-individual-who-took-presidents-iron/>