

# Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka

## Annual Report 2024



A total of 52 skeletal remains, along with fragments of artillery and clothing that appears to be similar to LTTE uniforms, were unearthed during the excavation at the Kokkuthoduvai mass grave site.  
Photo courtesy: Tamil Guardian.

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Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka, Annual Report 2024..

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*INFORM was established in 1990 to monitor and document the 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 levels. INFORM also focused on working with other communities whose rights were frequently and systematically violated. Currently, INFORM focuses on election monitoring, freedom of 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

This annual report is based on the Repression of Dissent reports which were monthly published in the year 2024. This annual repression of dissent report primarily provides a general snapshot of significant incidents related to the repression of dissent and human rights challenges in Sri Lanka, mainly based on the information reported in mainstream. It also offers a broad overview of Sri Lanka's human rights landscape and recent developments.

## Methodology

Incidents of repression covered in this annual Repression of Dissent report includes arrests, threats, intimidation, investigations against human rights defenders (HRDs), journalists, minority groups, state officials and whistle-blowers. and potential threats such as new repressive laws, appointments, policy decisions etc., which may hurt freedom of expression, assembly, association and dissent in the future. In this report, 'dissent' is broadly defined to include acts of protest, resistance, defiance, challenges against questioning or attempt to record rights violations, social injustice at the hands of the state or non-state apparatus, including police, armed forces, religious groups, and politicians among others. 'Repression' is any attempt by the above state or non-state actors to suppress the acts of dissent. Any rhetoric decrying human rights has also been considered repression of dissent because of its potential to erode rights.

## Case Updates

In January The Supreme Court rendered a unanimous decision, for the first time in the history, invalidating former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's decision to pardon former MP Duminda Silva. In February Cabinet Minister of Environment Keheliya Rambukwella was arrested over his alleged complicity in the procurement of substandard medicine. In March the Colombo High Court sentenced Bodu Bala Sena General Secretary Galagodaatte Gnanasara Thero to 4 years of hard labour and a fine. Keheliya Rambukwella, the former minister of health, and five other individuals who were suspected of importing substandard immunoglobulin were also placed under extended remand until March 14. In April Apart from the Chief Justice, the President is not allowed to nominate judges to the Supreme Court by an interim order issued by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. In May A new three-member High Court bench was named by the Chief Justice to hear the case filed against 9 members of the Army Intelligence concerning the kidnapping and disappearance of journalist Prageeth Eknaligoda. The Gampaha High Court ordered the acquittal of four suspects in the case of the shooting death of three people and injuring approximately 50 others during a protest held by the people of Rathupaswala in Weliveriya town in 2013. The Supreme Court decided to finalise the fundamental rights petitions filed by parties and organisations including the Samagi Jana Balawegaya demanding that the provincial government elections, which have not been held in due time, be ordered to be held immediately, over four days in front of a full bench of judges. In delivering a landmark judgment regarding the extent of the executive president's pardon power, the SC declared that the decision of former President Sirisena to pardon a murder convict, was arbitrarily and legally invalid. The Writ Petition brought by former Navy Commander Admiral-of-the-Fleet Wasantha Karannagoda against the Colombo

High Court Trial-at-Bar on the alleged abduction and forced disappearance of 11 youths from Colombo in 2008 will be heard by a five-judge bench appointed by the Court of Appeal. In July The Supreme Court decided to hear nine fundamental rights petitions that were filed challenging the appointment of Deshbandu Tennakone as the Inspector General of Police and issued an interim restraining order preventing him from acting as Inspector General of Police till the hearing of those petitions. The Supreme Court's ruling regarding the Economic Transformation Bill presented in Parliament disclosed that the Supreme Court identified multiple provisions within the proposed legislation as being inconsistent with the Constitution. In August Emil Ranjan Lamahewa, the ex-Commissioner of Prisons, who had received a death sentence for the killings of inmates during the 2012 Welikada Prison riots, was acquitted by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court dismissed four fundamental rights applications filed by those who protested outside the private residence of former President Gotabhaya Rajapakse in 2022, while it granted Leave to Proceed for four similar petitions. The exhumation of the Kokkuththoduvai mass grave was completed and the case was presented at the Magistrate's Court in Mullaitivu. In September Sri Lanka's acting Inspector General of Police, Priyantha Weerasooriya, issued a circular instructing Police officers to withdraw from their duties in relation to the infamous anti-drug initiative, Yukthiya Meheyuma (Operation Justice). Excavations at the mass grave in Sri Lanka's main harbour in Colombo were postponed. A Bill was presented to the House to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In October 2024 The Supreme Court dismissed four petitions seeking a ruling that the fundamental human rights have been violated through the Government's decision to reduce the interest paid for the investments of Employees' Provident Fund in Treasury bills and bonds to 9%, under the domestic debt restructuring process. The Office on Missing Persons has successfully identified 16 individuals who have been reported missing since the year 2000, from a total of around 6,000 inquiries conducted since December 2022. The Attorney General's Department instructed the CID to close the 2020 Mahara prison riots case, claiming officers acted legally in self-defense. The Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission (SLHRC) has determined that several officials violated the rights of standup comedian Nathasha Edirisuriya. In November The Attorney General reported that the Office for Reparations received Rs. 311 million in compensation for victims of the Easter Sunday attacks. Minister Vijitha Herath stated that the government has not decided to modify the Muslim Marriage Act or other religious legislation, but discussions with religious leaders will lead to potential legal reforms. The Kurunegala Magistrate's Court acquitted Senior House Officer Dr Shafi Shihabdeen of charges related to his 2019 arrest, including unauthorized sterilisation surgeries, illicit wealth amassing, and terrorist links.

## **Legal Reforms**

The Sri Lankan Ministry of Finance withdrew the Microfinance and Credit Regulatory Authority Bill, as it failed to address the intended policy goals regarding micro-debt. Although the Supreme Court found the bill constitutionally valid, the Finance Ministry recognized the need to reassess whether it effectively solves microfinance issues. The Treasury has appointed a committee, including Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) officers, to reassess the bill and consult stakeholders to create a more comprehensive regulation. The Supreme Court reviewed the "Anti-Terrorism" Bill and determined that several clauses were unconstitutional or required special procedures, such as a Special Majority or a Referendum. However, the Court provided recommendations for amendments to resolve these issues. If these amendments are made, the Bill can be passed with a Simple Majority. The Supreme

Court ruled the Electricity Amendment Bill incompatible with the Constitution, requiring a special majority in Parliament for its passage. During the debate, NPP MP Vijitha Herath accused the government of attempting to hand over Sri Lanka's power sector to India's Adani group, creating a private monopoly. He argued that while privatizing power generation was acceptable, transmission and distribution should remain under government control. The Bill was later approved by Parliament on June 6 after amendments. The Supreme Court has ruled the Gender Equality Bill to be in conflict with the Constitution, requiring it to be passed with a two-thirds majority and through a referendum. Following this, the counsel for the intervening petitioner argued that the Supreme Court's determination regarding the Private Member Bill to repeal Article 365 was not properly assessed, as it received little reliance. Several petitions were filed in the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of The Economic Transformation Bill. The petitioners contended that the bill's provisions would adversely affect workers, particularly young people, and that the government had failed to consult those directly impacted, including workers, trade unions, and youth. The Supreme Court's ruling found multiple provisions of the bill to be inconsistent with the Constitution. In December, Minister Harshana Nanayakkara announced the government's plan to introduce three key bills in Parliament in the next quarter. The Proceeds of Crime Bill will focus on recovering stolen assets and combating money laundering and criminal activities. The Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Insolvency Bill will modernize insolvency laws and bolster creditor confidence, while the Audit Act amendments will promote financial transparency.

### **War-time Human Rights Violations, Accountability and Justice**

Families of the Tamil individuals who disappeared during the Sri Lankan civil war have been campaigning for years, demanding answers. The Tamil community claims that many of those who disappeared were victims of abduction by government-backed paramilitary groups or the security forces. These families continue to commemorate the anniversaries of their loved ones' disappearances, emphasizing the persistent nature of these human rights violations even years after the conflict's conclusion. International organizations such as the UN have also highlighted the scale of these disappearances, urging Sri Lanka to address them at the domestic level. Demonstrations at sites like the Kokkuthoduvai mass grave further emphasize concerns over the forced disappearances and the state's reluctance to fully investigate these crimes. The Tamil victims are calling for international investigation mechanisms, highlighting their distrust in domestic mechanisms, such as the Office of Missing Persons (OMP), which has been criticized for failing to deliver justice or uncover the truth. Beyond human rights violations directly related to disappearances and killings, the text also touches on land rights, a persistent issue in the post-conflict context. Tamil residents protest the continued occupation of their ancestral land by the military and other state authorities, arguing that the military's presence, particularly in the North and East, continues to contribute to the marginalization and displacement of local Tamil communities.





Mothers of family members who were forcibly disappeared marching in protest and calling for Justice. Photo Courtesy: kumanan93

The proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CTUR) faces significant opposition, particularly from Tamil victims and international human rights organizations. While the government argues that the CTUR aims to promote unity and reconciliation, the Commission lacks the authority to impose penalties on individuals, limiting its capacity to provide real accountability for the perpetrators of war crimes. The CTUR's focus on truth-telling without legal consequences for those responsible for violations of human rights has led to widespread skepticism about its ability to deliver justice.

International bodies, such as the OHCHR, continue to demand accountability for war crimes, including enforced disappearances. However, Sri Lanka has rejected the findings of international reports, such as the OHCHR's call for accountability for the disappearances, further complicating efforts to hold perpetrators accountable. The United Nations has repeatedly urged Sri Lanka to engage in genuine investigations and prosecutions, but the Sri Lankan government has remained resistant, citing sovereignty concerns and questions about the legitimacy of external pressure.

The reluctance of the Sri Lankan government to accept international involvement in addressing war crimes has led to clashes with Tamil activists who call for independent investigations. This tension is a central aspect of the ongoing struggle for justice, as the Sri Lankan government's refusal to open its domestic mechanisms to international scrutiny raises questions about the credibility of those mechanisms and whether they will be capable of addressing the grievances of the victims effectively.

Throughout the year, Tamil families have organized protests, holding photographs of their disappeared relatives, demanding justice. These protests highlight the persistent and unresolved nature of these human rights violations and demonstrate the victims' agency in seeking truth and justice. However, their demands for an international judicial investigation remain unmet as they argue that domestic mechanisms are inadequate, ineffective, or intentionally obstructed. Despite some positive actions by the government—such as the

endorsement of international conventions or the establishment of offices dedicated to addressing missing persons—the lack of tangible results and accountability for the violations committed during the conflict remains a key issue. Victims continue to highlight the government's failure to act meaningfully on its promises, which leads to continued distrust and frustration among the affected communities. The Tamil diaspora has played a significant role in pushing for justice, as they are often seen as key advocates for international pressure on the Sri Lankan government. The ongoing demonstrations and requests for international investigations suggest that the victims and their supporters do not believe the Sri Lankan government will take appropriate action on its own.

## **Accountability**

The government's response to the Easter Sunday bombings has been characterised by slow or delayed efforts to investigate the attacks, and there have been inconsistent or contradictory reports about the incident. This suggests that the government is not sufficiently addressing the situation in a transparent or consistent way, and is instead choosing how to respond or which aspects to focus on, rather than fully holding those responsible accountable.

The handling of the 2020 Mahara prison riots, in which 11 inmates were killed, demonstrates a lack of accountability within the law enforcement. The government's defense of police actions as self-defense, despite evidence of excessive force, illustrates how security forces continue to evade responsibility for abuses. Legal challenges to the closing of the case and calls for an investigation into the incidents emphasize the ongoing struggle for accountability. A petition has been filed in the Court of Appeal seeking to quash a letter issued by the Attorney General to the CID instructing to close the investigation into the deaths of 11 prisoners during a violent clash at Mahara Prison in November 2020.

## **LGBTQI+ Rights**

A wave of disparaging statements against the LGBTQI+ community surged around the time of the elections, and it underscored the strong political and religious opposition to LGBTQI+ rights in Sri Lanka. Figures like Sarath Weerasekare, Wimal Weerawansa, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, and certain Buddhist and some of the new age Christian denominations publicly expressed their hostility toward LGBTQI+ rights, including the decriminalisation of consensual same-sex relations among adults. The resistance to legal reforms that would decriminalize consensual same-sex relationships pointed to a persistent lack of institutional recognition for LGBTQI+ rights. Such legal protections are essential to ensure that LGBTQI+ people are not criminalized based on their sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and sex characteristics.

Religious institutions, particularly certain Buddhist clergy and Catholic church, exert significant influence on public opinion and policy in Sri Lanka. Their public condemnations of LGBTQI+ rights and their moral framing of same-sex relationships as “immoral” or “socially degrading” reflect the broader societal rejection of LGBTQI+ rights.

Transgender individuals, those working in Export Processing Zones (EPZs), are often paid lower wages, face discrimination in job interviews, and are denied basic facilities like gender-neutral washrooms and sickrooms. The lack of support for transgender workers seeking medical care, combined with the inflexible work practices often preventing them from attending transgender clinics, adds to their struggles and makes it difficult for them to prioritize their health needs. The Prisons Commission's acknowledgment of the lack of facilities for



transgender prisoners, along with plans to address this issue in the future, showed that there is an awareness of the need for more inclusive spaces. Transgender individuals, especially those incarcerated, face heightened risks of abuse, violence, and neglect in prison settings. The media's role in perpetuating queerphobic narratives, like the articles on 'Aruna' newspaper, further entrenches societal prejudice against LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly by stigmatizing LGBTQI+ people. The media's refusal to acknowledge the validity of same-sex relationships and the plight of LGBTQI+ individuals sends a harmful message that further marginalizes these communities.



### Media and journalists

Throughout 2024 many journalists were frequently summoned by the police, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), or Terrorist Investigation Department (TCID) without clear charges. Example, journalists such as Thiruchelvam Divakaran, Darshana Handungoda. Court summons were used to revive cases against journalists based on their past reporting. For example, Shanmugam Thavaseelan, who was called to court over a case dating back to 2019. YouTuber Sudaththa Thilakasiri was forced to leave the country due to persistent threats, while journalist Tissa Ravindra Perera was targeted for his reporting on national security and corruption.

Multiple journalists were assaulted or faced attempted abductions. In June, television journalist Dhanushka Seneviratne was attacked, while in November, journalist S. Satheeskumar was wounded with a sharp weapon while covering the parliamentary elections. Additionally, journalist Murugaiyah Thamilselvan in Kilinochchi, known for reporting on illegal drug trafficking, narrowly escaped an abduction attempt before being violently assaulted. Senior journalist Tambithurai Pratheepan's home was torched and his vehicles vandalized. Law enforcement failed to respond effectively in some cases. For example, journalist Dharmadasa Siriwardena faced death threats in September, and the police delayed taking any action for two days despite an emergency call.

Tamil journalists faced disproportionate harassment, legal summons, and threats, particularly those covering sensitive political topics or government corruption. Journalist Selvakumar Nilanthan, along with several other Tamil reporters, were targeted through legal

means, while Tamil journalists in Jaffna had their equipment confiscated and destroyed by security forces. Some Tamil journalists were barred from meeting the (then) President in August, while Sinhala journalists were allowed to present their demands to the President. Tamil journalists were also subject to heightened surveillance and intelligence monitoring, especially those reporting on government misconduct or dissent against the state. In September, at an election rally in Kekirawa, members of the Presidential Media Unit threatened journalists, seized their cameras, and deleted footage of an unexpected altercation during the event.

### **Freedom of Assembly**

Courts frequently issued preventive restraining orders against protests (e.g., Socialist Youth Association in January, Tamil Families of the Disappeared in September, and civil society protests in August). These orders were often sought preemptively by the police, citing potential public disturbances rather than actual violations of law. The police repeatedly used water cannons and tear gas to disperse protests (e.g., university students, unemployed graduates, economic crisis protests, and Tamil rights protests). The use of force appears disproportionate and routine, suggesting a deliberate policy of deterrence rather than crowd control. Notably, Tamil protests and memorial events faced both police and military interference, showing a heightened level of state suppression. Protests related to economic hardships, labor rights, and governance were suppressed but at varying degrees. Tamil political protests and war memorial events faced more aggressive restrictions, including arrests, interrogations, and military monitoring. The silencing of Tamil commemoration events (e.g., preventing Mullivaikkal genocide memorials, obstructing temple access, and removing Prabhakaran's image) signals a state policy of erasing certain historical narratives. By contrast, Sinhala nationalist activities, even when disruptive (e.g., the May nationalist flag incident), were largely allowed or managed with minimal force. Several activists and political figures were arrested, interrogated, and charged for organizing protests (e.g., Rajkumar Rajeevkanth, Selvarajah Kajendren). Journalists covering protests were also threatened (e.g., Tamil journalists in Jaffna threatened by the army in February). Intelligence officers and military personnel were reported to have monitored, intimidated, and photographed protesters, which acts as a tool for long-term surveillance and discouragement. Union activities were targeted, with employees suspended for participation (e.g., CEB secretarial staff). Legal and administrative interventions were used to dissuade railway strikes and university staff protests. The government's framing of trade union strikes as disruptive or politically motivated (e.g., Minister Vijitha Herath's statement) suggests an effort to delegitimize labor movements. The lack of protection for protestors from pro-government groups (e.g., Liberty roundabout attack in January) and the active suppression of anti-government demonstrations shows a double standard.

### **Repression of Activists and Whistleblowers**

The use of law enforcement agencies, particularly the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Terrorism Investigation Division (TID), suggests an attempt to intimidate activists through legal and extralegal means. The interrogation of figures such as P. Deepachelvan and Amalaraj Amalanayaki highlights how even literary and advocacy work is being scrutinized under counterterrorism frameworks. The direct threats received by Jeewaratnam Suresh, the brutal assault on H.M.R.W. Herath, and the shooting of Chelliah

Krishnarajah demonstrate a shift towards physical violence. This suggests that activists not only face state-backed repression but also attacks from unknown actors who may have impunity. Several of the targeted individuals, such as Jeewaratnam Suresh and P. Deepachelvan, are involved in Tamil rights activism. The interrogation of those commemorating Tamil Genocide Day further indicates that specific communities advocating for historical justice and minority rights are being disproportionately repressed. Attacks on environmental activists like H.M.R.W. Herath and Ajith Wijesinghe suggest that advocacy related to land and resource management is being met with hostility. Similarly, the shooting of labor rights advocate Chelliah Krishnarajah suggests repression extends beyond political and ethnic activism to economic justice movements.

### **Repressive legal and policy actions**

A recurring repressive trend throughout the year is the issuance of orders enabling the Armed Forces to intervene in civilian affairs. This began early in January with the President directing the military to maintain public order, and continued throughout the year with similar decrees issued in February, April, May, June, July, August, September, October and December. The declaration of electricity and petroleum as essential services, seen in several months of 2024, is a legal mechanism used to prevent labor actions, particularly strikes. By declaring services as essential, the government gains the authority to penalize workers for striking, essentially curbing the ability of trade unions to protest against labor conditions or government policies. This move is a strategic use of legal instruments to neutralize organized opposition, particularly in industries that are critical to the functioning of the state and the economy. The controversial Online Safety Bill, passed in January 2024, is another example of a repressive legal action. Despite widespread criticism from civil society and international actors, the bill passed with a majority vote, indicating a disregard for concerns about its potential impact on free speech and digital rights. The bill appears to be a tool for curbing online dissent potentially allowing the government to censor content or penalize individuals based on vague criteria related to "safety". The discussions around election amendments in March and the potential delays in elections reflect a strategic use of legal frameworks to extend the government's control over the political landscape. By proposing changes that could postpone elections the government ensured that its hold on power remains unchallenged for longer periods, undermining democratic processes. The amendment to the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Bill in May 2024 which suspends Parate Law to benefit large-scale businessmen, also highlights how legal changes are used to serve specific economic interests. This preferential treatment for a select group of businessmen undermines economic justice and creates a system where the wealthy elite are shielded from accountability while the broader public remains vulnerable to harsh legal measures. The case of Tamil political prisoners in October illustrates how repression extends beyond immediate political actions and into ongoing treatment of detainees. Even after these individuals were released they continued to face both direct and indirect forms of interrogation.

### **Repression of State Officials**

In 2024, several incidents in Sri Lanka highlighted significant challenges faced by public officials. Roshan Kumara Withanage, a 51-year-old Public Health Inspector, was shot dead at his residence in Elpitiya, underscoring the dangers public servants may encounter.

Puttalam Divisional Secretary Sampath Weerasekera reported intimidation from MP Ali Sabri Raheem while investigating illegal land occupation. An administrative officer from the customs department was assaulted by police while participating in an environmental conservation activity at Kalutara beach. Additionally, the Chairman of the Road Development Authority resigned due to undue pressure from the Secretary of the Ministry of Highways.

## **Elections**

The Sri Lankan presidential election was held on September 21, with 39 candidates contesting, none of them were female. The pre-election period was marked by concerns over the abuse of state power and resources, challenges faced by marginalized populations, and violations of election laws on social media. The election was largely peaceful, as noted by both local and international observers. Voter turnout stood at 79.46%, slightly lower than in the previous presidential election. Since no candidate secured over 50% of the votes, preferential votes were counted for the first time in Sri Lankan presidential election history. Despite restrictions during the silent period, some candidates continued their campaigns using social media and paid promotions. The post-election period saw issues related to inadequate accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly, as well as the spread of homophobic, ethnonationalist, and racist social media content targeting ethnic and queer minorities.

The Executive Director of CaFFE stated that the Elpitiya Pradeshiya Sabha election was conducted peacefully but lacked significant enthusiasm.

Chanu Nimesha, who serves as the Secretary of Women's Affairs for the Sri Lanka Socialist Party, made history as the first transgender person to run for an election in Sri Lanka. The National People's Power secured a two-thirds parliamentary majority in Sri Lanka, the first party to do so under the proportional representation system, winning 159 seats, including 21 female MPs. Samagi Jana Balawegaya became the main opposition. The campaign was subdued due to exhaustion and resource constraints, with voter turnout between 60-65%. Over 100 high-level government appointments violated election regulations, raising concerns about undue influence and bribery. Female candidates faced significant hostility, even the Prime Minister was subjected to online harassment. The election period was dominated by majoritarian discourse, sidelining marginalized voices, while media coverage of women remained at just 7%. The election was largely peaceful.

## **Other**

A truck driver was killed in accidental police shooting during a vehicle inspection. The Terrorism Investigation Department summoned former LTTE cadre Selvanayagam Aravinthan for questioning regarding a Facebook account. Rajapakse Pathirage Dimantha Lakmal, an Air Force corporal and rugby player, was killed by police, suspected of involvement in a double homicide. A former Kandy Municipal Council member was arrested for assaulting a municipal worker, causing serious ear injuries. A court prohibited a YouTube channel from posting defamatory content about Army Commander Lt. Gen. Vikum Liyanage. Threats and controversies emerged involving a lawyer, a state minister, and election postponements, with accusations of corruption and irregularities in the Cricket Board. Dr. Harsha De Silva reported threats over a visa issuing procedure. Minister Jeevan Thondaman allegedly held plantation officials hostage and threatened their business over worker disputes. A priest from a Vavuniya temple and a Muslim youth filming a presidential advisor's

convoy were summoned or arrested by authorities. Activists and students faced intimidation related to protests and cultural expressions. Allegations emerged of threats against a rape victim and interference in government land allocations. A government agent in Nuwara Eliya reported threats from a businessman linked to a politician. A young man was arrested for filming an accident involving an SUV tied to a former minister. The Theatermates drama group reported harassment and intimidation but received no action from authorities.



## 2. Case Updates

### January 2024

“Black January” commemorations were held in Jaffna and Colombo urging former President Wickremesinghe to bring justice to previous crimes committed against journalists. This year’s theme, particularly focussed on the adverse effects of the Online Safety Bill, while also shedding light on the enforced disappearance of Journalist Prageeth Ekneligoda and the assassination of journalist Lasantha Wickrematunga.

UN experts voiced concern over Sri Lanka’s highly controversial drug response enabled by police. They demanded that the government immediately halt and reassess ‘Yukthiya Meheyuma’ (Operation Justice).

Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) filed a petition with the Supreme Court on January 22, contesting the "Microfinance and Credit Regulatory Authority Bill", arguing that it does not adequately provide a workable plan to allow for the regulation.

The Supreme Court rendered a unanimous decision, for the first time in the history, invalidating former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa’s decision to pardon former MP Duminda Silva.

SJB Deputy General Secretary Mujibur Rahman petitioned the Supreme Court on behalf of fundamental rights, seeking an injunction against President Ranil Wickremesinghe's appointment of Deshabandu Tennekoon as Inspector General of Police.

The case regarding the MiG deal was called before the court through a motion and it was revealed that the agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and Ukraine supposedly signed during the MiG deal has gone missing.

Fort Magistrate Thilina Gamage has ordered the reopening of the investigation in the case against Namal Rajapaksa MP since there was an irregularity of 70 million rupees in the construction of a building belonging to Krish Group in Fort Colombo.

### February 2024

The Vavuniya High Court judge ruled the Sri Lanka Army and several other former officials must be accountable for the disappearance of a Tamil youth upon arriving at the Omanthai checkpoint. At the time, the Sri Lankan Army was commanded by a former Presidential candidate who later became an opposition MP, Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka, while Major General W.U.B. Edirisinghe served as the Vanni Commander.

The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka has ruled that the Fundamental Rights (FR) Petition, which Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MP M. A. Sumanthiran filed in opposition to the Speaker's signing of the Online Safety Bill into law, and was dismissed.

Challenging the FR petition filed by Archbishop Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith requesting an order to prevent the appointment of Acting IGP Deshabandu Tennakoon to the post of Inspector General Police, seven Buddhist monks submitted a motion to the Supreme Court. Former Cabinet of Ministers approved bringing reforms to the controversial Online Safety Act. According to the former Cabinet Spokesman Minister Bandula Guanwardena, proposals have been received from relevant experts in the field regarding the Online Safety Act.

A petition under the Fundamental Rights Act has been filed in the Supreme Court, requesting an order instructing the Constitutional Council to approve the President's suggestion to name

Nissanka Bandula Karunaratne, the current President of the Court of Appeal, as a justice of the Supreme Court.

Former Cabinet Minister of Environment Keheliya Rambukwella was arrested over his alleged complicity in the procurement of substandard medicine.

Galagodaatte Gnanasara Thero on February 15, at Colombo High Court expressed his regret and apologised to the Muslim community for any inconvenience caused by the statement he made regarding the Kuragala temple in a public press conference.

## **March 2024**

The IMF team reached a staff-level agreement with the Sri Lankan authorities on the second review under the economic reform program supported by a 4-year Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement.

The Colombo High Court sentenced Bodu Bala Sena General Secretary Galagodaatte Gnanasara Thero to 4 years of hard labour and a fine. High Court Judge Aditya Patabandige delivered this judgement in the case of harming the ethnic and religious harmony by a controversial statement made regarding the Kooragala temple in 2016.

Ajith Nivard Cabraal, who previously served as the Governor of the Central Bank, is among five individuals facing legal proceedings related to the Treasury Bond acquisitions conducted by the Greek government in 2012.

Since the Police had failed to provide evidence to prove the charges, the Kaduwela Magistrate's Court acquitted the 13 individuals who were arrested in connection with a protest near the Parliamentary entrance in 2022.

In connection with the 2005 death of a suspect while under police custody, two former police officers received death sentences. When the matter was brought up for hearing on March 4, the Colombo High Court handed down the death penalty.

Keheliya Rambukwella, the former minister of health, and five other individuals who were suspected of importing substandard immunoglobulin were also placed under extended remand until March 14.

The Cabinet decision permitting former President Maithripala Sirisena to remain in the government house in Colombo after his term ended has been overturned by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka.

The Young Journalists Association of Sri Lanka has submitted a petition advocating for fundamental rights, seeking the revocation of Deshabandu Thennakoon's appointment as Inspector General of Police (IGP). The Association claimed that the appointment is unlawful, arbitrary, irrational, and against and in breach of the articles of the Constitution in its petition. The recommendations and conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry to Investigate Allegations of Political Victimization have been quashed by the Court of Appeals in a writ order directed at a number of people, including former President Ranil Wickremesinghe and National People's Power (NPP) leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

## **April 2024**

MP Wimal Weerawansa, the leader of the National Freedom Front (NFF), was acquitted and set free from the legal proceedings concerning the utilisation of an inappropriate passport.

The Colombo High Court rejected a request made by lawyers to release Galagodaatte Gnanasara Thero, who was sentenced to 4 years in prison after being convicted of making a statement that violated the harmony between religions. Central Provincial High Court Judge

W. Darshika Wimalasiri ordered to hear the case pending before the Kandy High Court on July 26 against four defendants, including the former Minister of Health, Keheliya Rambukwella, concerning the incident of murdering a person and seriously injuring five persons, including former Minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage, while engaged in election campaigning in 1999. The widow of the carpenter who was killed in the Narammala police shooting during the "Yukthiya Operation" was allowed to continue with her Fundamental Rights case by the Supreme Court. While Sub Inspector Gunawardena was on duty in civilian clothes, he shot and killed the deceased Roshan Kumarasiri as he was making his way home from work.

On April 30, the Colombo High Court ordered to acquit former minister Mahindananda Aluthgama who was accused of having committed an offence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act by spending over 27 million rupees of illegally earned money to purchase a luxury house on Kinsey Road, Colombo while working as a minister.

Hirunika Premachandra, a former member of parliament, was served with a notice to appear before the Court of Appeal over allegations of contempt of court. The complainant, Hisham Jamaldeen, claimed that former MP Hirunika spoke to the media about the magistrate's decision to give him bail while there was an ongoing proceeding before the Magistrate's Court of Mount Lavinia. It was alleged that the conduct of the respondent was tantamount to interference with ongoing judicial proceedings and an attempt to create suspicions in the minds of the public towards the administration of justice.

The Gampaha High Court Trial-at-Bar has postponed rendering a decision in the prosecution of a Brigadier and three Army soldiers for fatally shooting three people and seriously wounding multiple others at a protest by Rathupaswala, Gampaha, villagers demanding clean drinking water.

Apart from the Chief Justice, the President was not allowed to nominate judges to the Supreme Court by an interim order issued by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka.

Five police officials were given the death penalty by the Anuradhapura High Court after it was determined that they had killed eight Tamil people in the Bharathipuram village in Kantale 26 years prior.

Colombo Additional Magistrate Keminda Perera ordered the Criminal Investigation Department to complete the investigation into the case of the X-Press Pearl ship and report the facts to the court immediately.

## **May 2024**

A new three-member High Court bench was named by the Chief Justice to hear the case filed against 9 members of the Army Intelligence concerning the kidnapping and disappearance of journalist Prageeth Ekmaligoda, which was delayed due to occasional vacancies in the three-member High Court bench. Considering the writ application filed by the former Minister of Health, Keheliya Rambukwella, the Court of Appeal scheduled a fresh hearing to reverse the Maligakanda Magistrate's decision to remand him over the case of importation of subpar immunoglobulin vials.

The Treasury Secretary was ordered by Maligakanda Magistrate to issue a statement to the CID with regard to why an extra 50 million USD was allocated with the approval of the cabinet to purchase medication from the private sector when 200 million USD had already been allocated under the Indian loan scheme for the purchase of medicines.

Colombo Additional Magistrate ordered the CID to complete the investigation regarding the

X-Press Pearl ship which caught fire off the coast of Colombo in 2021 and report the facts to the court immediately.

The Gampaha High Court ordered the acquittal of four suspects, including former army Major General Aruna Deshapriya Gunawardena, in the high-profile case of the shooting death of three people and injuring approximately 50 others during a protest held by the people of Rathupaswala in Weliveriya town in 2013.

The Supreme Court decided to finalize the fundamental rights petitions filed by parties and organisations including the Samagi Jana Balawegaya demanding that the provincial government elections, which was not held in due time, be ordered to be held immediately, over four days in front of a full bench of judges.

The newly-elected NPP government appointed the same Director General appointed by Gotabhaya Rajapaksa in 2020 to the same position of the Bribery or Corruption Investigation Commission. It was believed that under this person, the bribery and corruption fraud cases of many associated with the Rajapaksa regime were withdrawn for various reasons. Families of Disappeared in Sri Lanka alleged a bid to withdraw charges against ex-navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda in a court case over the disappearance of 11 males from Colombo during the war.

Colombo Additional Magistrate ordered the release of former minister Marvin Silva on bail, accused of threatening and scolding a former News Director of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini (Television) Corporation.

The Attorney General's Department informed the court that the Attorney General's Department would not appear on behalf of the respondent Nilantha Jayawardena in the writ petition filed against him requesting to proceed under criminal law.

## **June 2024**

A High Court in Colombo ordered the temporary lifting of the foreign travel ban of Jeffrey Aloysius, the father of the former Central Bank (CBSL) chairperson, who is also the 6th accused in the CBSL bond scam.

Opposition political parties and civil society organizations filed special determination petitions in the SC contesting the constitutionality of the Economic Transformation Bill, highlighting its negative impact on worker rights, especially the rights of young people. They also claimed that the government failed to consult workers, trade unions, and young people, whom this bill would directly impact.

Delivering a landmark judgment regarding the extent of the Executive President's pardon power, the SC declared that the decision of former President Sirisena to pardon a murder convict, was arbitrarily and legally invalid.

The Fort Magistrate ordered four members of the Socialist Youth Union to appear before the Government Analyst in connection with the incident of trespassing and damaging the Temple Trees during the democratic people's struggle.

Former Ratnapura District Secretary Malani Lokupothagama and the former OIC of the Ratnapura Police apologised to a journalist in the SC for an incident in which the journalist was attacked for allegedly wearing a hat into the District Secretary's office. Colombo Chief Magistrate dismissed the charges brought by the Cinnamon Garden Police against the President of the Medical and Civil Rights Professional Association of Doctors (MCPA), and any other leaders of civil organisations for placing a floral wreath in front of the residence of Rambukwella.

## **July 2024**

Excavation efforts at the Kokkuthoduvai mass grave resumed for the third time after a hiatus of over seven months, and reportedly 52 skeletal remains, fragments of artillery, and clothing resembling LTTE uniforms were found.

Events commemorating the 41st anniversary of the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom, commonly referred to as Black July were held in the North, East, and Colombo.

Speaking in Parliament, Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena refused to comply with the court order, contending that the order lacks validity due to practical constraints associated with appointing a new Inspector General of Police following the declaration of an election. The Election Commission subsequently challenged this claim. The concerns were raised on how independently the Police would act during this election period.

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka denounced the actions taken by the government to undermine the judicial process concerning the IGP.

The Supreme Court dismissed a petition filed seeking an order to prevent the presidential elections from being held since the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was not passed by Parliament.

The Supreme Court decided to hear nine fundamental rights petitions that were filed challenging the appointment of Deshbandu Tennakone as the Inspector General of Police and issued an interim restraining order preventing him from acting as Inspector General of Police till the hearing of those petitions. The Supreme Court ordered President Ranil Wickremesinghe to name a suitable person for the post of IGP during the period the interim order was in effect. Several months before his appointment as the IGP, the SC ruled that he was guilty of torturing a detainee and he was also named an accused in several other ongoing human rights violation cases, including the Easter Sunday Attacks.

A fundamental rights petition was filed claiming that the President and the Constituent Assembly had infringed fundamental rights by not appointing judges to the appellate court slots that are now unfilled.

The Supreme Court's ruling regarding the Economic Transformation Bill presented in Parliament disclosed that the Supreme Court identified multiple provisions within the proposed legislation as being inconsistent with the Constitution.

The Supreme Court gave an interim injunction prohibiting the execution of Community Advisory Committees, which were supposedly designated to carry out government development programs aimed at rural areas.

Nuwara Eliya police was ordered by Nuwara Eliya Acting Magistrate to arrest the Secretary General of the Ceylon Labor Congress and (then) Minister of Estates Infrastructure and Water Transport Jeevan Thondaman and several other individuals and present them to court for forcibly entering into the Nuwara Eliya Pedro Tea Factory.

## **August 2024**

The Supreme Court scheduled a review of the petition submitted by Shani Abeysekera, the former Director of the CID, who had requested sufficient protection due to threats to his life. The proceedings regarding the Kokkuthoduvai mass grave site took place at the Mullaitivu District Court and the court ordered that this request undergoes a review.

Emil Ranjan Lamahewa, the ex-Commissioner of Prisons, who had received a death sentence for the killings of inmates during the 2012 Welikada Prison riots, was acquitted by the Supreme Court.



Compensation payments to victims of the Easter attacks were completed by all perpetrators except Former Director of State Intelligence Service.

The Supreme Court scheduled October 14 for the hearing of petitions concerning the Adani wind power project in Mannar, which is supported by India.

The Supreme Court issued an order nullifying the implementation of the recommendations made by the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Political Victimization (PCol), appointed by former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

The Supreme Court dismissed four fundamental rights applications filed by those who protested outside the private residence of former President Gotabhaya Rajapakse in 2022, while it Granted Leave to Proceed for four similar petitions. Loved ones of the victims marked eighteen years since the Air Force bombed the Sencholai school in Mullaitivu. Another remembrance event was organized to pay tribute to the victims of the Thiraikerny massacre in Ampara district in August 1990.

An event was held at the Jaffna Press Club to commemorate the 17th death anniversary of the journalist Sahadevan Nilakshan.

The exhumation of the Kokkuththoduvai mass grave was completed and the case was presented at the Magistrate's Court in Mullaitivu. The magistrate gave the reporters a rundown of the next steps.

A Fundamental Rights petition was submitted to the Supreme Court, requesting an order for the President to appoint an Acting Inspector General of Police.

Regarding interrogations by TID<sup>1</sup> over his literary work, writer Theepachelvam Piratheepan handed over a letter to Amnesty International, UNESCO and MP Shriharan Sivagnanam. Retired Senior DIG Ravi Senaviratne and retired SSP Shani Abeysekera filed a Fundamental Rights petition in the Supreme Court against the false allegations levelled against them.

Families of the disappeared organized a demonstration at the Kokkuthoduvai mass grave site, calling for an international judicial investigation into the mass grave.

The Supreme Court determined that the Elections Commission was accountable for its "insufficient planning and management of the electoral process, as well as its failure to exercise its authority to provide necessary directives" to hold local authority elections. Two judges of the Supreme Court withdrew from considering three petitions submitted by former Criminal Investigation Department Director Shani Abeysekera and two additional individuals.

A.H.M. Fowzie, a former minister, received a sentence of two years of rigorous imprisonment, was suspended for a period of ten years, due to accusations of misusing a state vehicle.

## **September 2024**

The Supreme Court decided to hear a human rights petition filed by human rights lawyer Senaka Perera against the placement of barricades equipped with deadly iron spikes against a march organized by the Inter-University Students' Union during people's protests in 2022. Sri Lanka's acting Inspector General of Police, Priyantha Weerasooriya, issued a circular instructing Police officers to withdraw from their duties in relation to the infamous anti-drug initiative, Yukthiya Meheyuma (Operation Justice), while relevant Police stations were instructed to continue investigations into organised crime and drug trafficking and to take necessary measures.

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<sup>1</sup> Terrorist Investigation Division.

Details of skeletons exhumed last year in Kokkuthoduvai mass grave to be finally made public with the intention of eliciting information about the deceased from the public. Excavations at the mass grave in Sri Lanka's main harbour in Colombo were postponed. New President assured a fresh probe into Easter Sunday attacks.

The family of assassinated journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge made a formal appeal to the newly elected President, urging the reopening of an investigation into the assassination. Air Vice Marshal Sampath Thuyacontha, who was previously denied his retirement privileges for participating at political meetings of the NPP last year, assumed duty as the new Defence Secretary.

A draft bill was presented to the House to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Eelam Tamils have consistently opposed the bill, contending that none of the mechanisms suggested by the Sri Lankan government would ensure a just investigation into war crimes. They have persistently called for an independent international mechanism to achieve justice for the atrocities that have occurred during and after the war.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka, Marc-Andre Franche, emphasised the urgent necessity to uncover the truth and deliver justice to those affected by enforced disappearances.

## **October 2024**

Sri Lanka opposed the draft Resolution at the UN Human Rights Council and rejected any related mandate. But asserted it is committed to addressing human rights concerns domestically.

Indictments were handed over before the Colombo High Court against five defendants, including former Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka Ajith Nivard Cabraal, for allegedly causing the government to lose Rs. 184 million by investing in Greek bonds. The Supreme Court dismissed four petitions seeking a ruling that the fundamental rights were violated through the Government's decision to reduce the interest paid for the investments of Employees' Provident Fund in treasury bills and bonds to 9%, under the domestic debt restructuring process.

The government dismissed the report from an investigative committee regarding the Easter Sunday attacks, which was presented by former Member of Parliament Udaya Gammanpila. Minister Vijitha Herath indicated that the government will initiate a fresh investigation into the case. Gammanpila was heavily criticised by many parties, including Minister Herath implying that the timing of the report, shortly before the general election, reflected personal motives rather than a genuine effort for accountability.

The Office on Missing Persons successfully identified 16 individuals who were reported missing since the year 2000, from a total of around 6,000 inquiries conducted since December 2022. Also stated that they were not allowed to disclose the identities of these individuals without their consent.

The U.S. Embassy in Colombo issued a security alert, saying it received credible information warning of an attack targeting popular tourist destinations in the Arugam Bay. As a result, U.S. citizens were strongly advised to avoid Arugam Bay until further notice. The British High Commission and Russian Embassy, too updated their travel advisory altering their citizens visiting Sri Lanka.

The Supreme Court granted the petitioners permission to include former President Ranil Wickremesinghe as a respondent in a Fundamental Rights petition that contests the appointment of Deshabandu Tennakoon as the Inspector General of Police.

It was claimed that the government would investigate the 2021 X-Press Pearl disaster causing environmental harm. It was reported that the ship's owner would pay for beach cleaning, but claims for civil liability costs continued to remain unfilled.

The Ministry of Mass Media proposed a chartered professional journalists' institute to improve the quality of journalism.

In Vavuniya, the families of the forcibly disappeared called for US Presidential candidate Kamala Harris and the US government to address their grievances and investigate the disappearances of their loved ones.

It was reported that former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa would testify in the habeas corpus inquiry regarding the 2011 disappearance of activists Lalith Weeraratne and Koogan Muruganandan, but only before a court other than the Jaffna Magistrate's Court.

The Supreme Court allowed former President Ranil Wickremesinghe to be named as a respondent in the fundamental rights petitions filed against the Police for their violent crackdown on a 2022 protest.

P. Ariyanenthiran, who contested as the Tamil 'common candidate' in Sri Lanka's recent presidential elections, was summoned by the Terrorism Investigation Division for questioning, along with his campaign supporters.

Demonstrations took place outside the Tissa Vihara, a Buddhist temple that was reportedly built in contravention of legal regulations and infringed upon the properties owned by local inhabitants in Thaiyiddu.

In November 2020, prisoners at Mahara Prison protested for COVID-19 testing and better medical care. The unrest led to 11 inmates' deaths from gunfire by prison guards. In 2023, a court deemed the deaths a crime, but the Attorney General's Department instructed the CID to close the case, claiming officers acted legally in self-defense.

Three directors of W. M. Mendis and Company Ltd. received six months in prison for not paying Rs. 3.5 billion in VAT. The court denied their appeal to move the case to the High Court and pay in installments.

The Attorney General informed the Supreme Court that the new government plans to review the wind power project in Mannar, involving India's Adani Group.

A petition claimed former Director of the State Intelligence Service Nilantha Jayawardena did not do his part to stop the Easter Sunday attack.

Excavation activities at the Mannar mass grave recommenced, notwithstanding the restrictions against photography or video documentation of the ongoing excavations. Public Security Minister Vijitha Herath said that the government will urgently investigate the misplacement of files from the Criminal Investigation Department related to the investigation into the controversial MiG fighter jet deal during the Mahinda Rajapaksa administration. The Minister, Vijitha Herath, announced that the government initiated an inquiry regarding the purported occurrence of missing pages from the Special Presidential Commission's report on the Easter Sunday attacks.

Fr. Fernando voiced his concern regarding the disappearance of the Presidential Commission's report on the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings, which had been submitted to President Ranil Wickremesinghe and subsequently forwarded to the Attorney General's Department.

The Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission (SLHRC) determined that several officials violated the rights of standup comedian Nathasha Edirisuriya.

In an inquiry conducted by the Sri Lanka's Police Headquarters, it was revealed that Yukthiya Meheeyuma (Operation Justice) has failed to meet its objectives and it was heavily criticized as nothing but a media spectacle rather than a genuine effort to combat drug

trafficking.

## **November 2024**

Former Central Bank of Sri Lanka Governor Arjuna Mahendran was summoned by the Colombo Magistrate's Court over a 2015 bond issue involving over Rs. 10 billion in losses, allegedly due to insider leaks.

The Maligakanda Magistrate's Court ordered the recording of statements from 18 former Cabinet Ministers regarding the alleged importation of substandard human immunoglobulin vials, including former President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena, and former Ministers.

Sri Lanka's Criminal Investigation Department started investigating a Channel 4 documentary on Easter Bombings, focusing on controversial information and possible conspiracies filed with the Ministry of Public Security.

The Colombo High Court judge ordered Dr Roshan Liyanarachchi to appear in court and present evidence regarding a medical certificate for former MP Wimal Weerawansa. The court criticized Weerawansa's repeated absences, and to which he citing illness as an excuse. The judge ordered Liyanarachchi to submit detailed medical documents, but Liyanarachchi failed to do so.

The Attorney General reported that the Office for Reparations received Rs. 311 million in compensation for victims of the Easter Sunday attacks. The Supreme Court ordered the Additional Solicitor General to submit a report on the disbursement. Tamil families of the disappeared held a rally in Trincomalee for parliamentary elections, seeking answers about their missing relatives. Despite years of demonstrations, over 280 people died in pursuit of justice, calling on President Anura Dissanayake for genuine measures.

Police had withdrawn a case against Tamil protesters in Mannar against an Australian sand mining project which had reportedly been supported by the state institutions since 2015, despite environmental and displacement concerns.

Former MPs, councillors, and government officers were given a deadline to return firearms issued for personal protection by December 30, 2024.

The Sri Lankan Supreme Court granted President Anura Kumara Dissanayake the opportunity to present his stance on the appointment of Deshabandu Tennakoon as Inspector General of Police.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake pledged to investigate and bring justice for Wasim Thajudeen, Lasantha Wickramatunga, and Pradeep Ekneligoda's murders, emphasizing the value of individual life and creating a safer environment.

Kuliyapitiya Chief Police Inspector Vajira Indrajith was ordered to be remanded by the Kuliyapitiya Additional District Judge due to allegations of misconduct during an investigation.

The Chief Magistrate criticized the CID for failing to follow legal procedures in Arjun Aloysius' case, including not submitting a B report, providing additional documentation, and making a proper oral presentation. The Magistrate emphasized the need for more responsible handling of such cases.

Three Tamil suspects arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for possessing six claymore bombs were acquitted and released by the Vavuniya High Court, citing improper Attorney General's Department pursuit.

Minister Vijitha Herath stated that the government decided to amend the Muslim Marriage Act or other religious legislation, but discussions with religious leaders would lead to

potential legal reforms. 18 Muslim civil society organisations and 135 citizens sent an open letter to the President and Prime Minister, stating the Act violates Article 12 of the Constitution and requires government intervention.

The Supreme Court ordered the High Court to summon former Police Inspector General Pujith Jayasundara and Defense Secretary Hemasiri Fernando after their acquittal in the 2019 Easter Sunday attack case.

Former Minister Johnston Fernando withdrew a writ petition related to an unregistered BMW car found at a Colombo hotel, stating he had already been granted bail. The Appellate Court accepted the withdrawal and dismissed the case. Former Minister Johnston Fernando was recalled from an arrest warrant due to his failure to attend a corruption case hearing. The court granted him bail with a cash sum of Rs. 25,000 and a surety of one million rupees. The Kurunegala Magistrate's Court acquitted Senior House Officer Dr Shafi Shihabdeen of charges related to his 2019 arrest, including unauthorized sterilization surgeries, illicit wealth amassing, and terrorist links. Dr Shafi Sihabdeen, a Kurunegala Teaching Hospital doctor, filed a complaint against the Ministry of Public Security for false accusations of political conspiracy, seeking accountability and preventing future injustices.

## **December 2024**

Arjuna Aloysius, owner of Mendis Company and son-in-law of former Central Bank Governor Arjuna Mahendran, was presented before the Colombo Chief Magistrate's Court to address deficiencies in the 2015 Central Bank Treasury Bonds case file, including irregularities in his bail signing.

The government plans to reopen the investigation into rugby player Wasim Thajudeen's murder, but has not yet contacted his family or their lawyer.

Concerns have been raised over Dr. Hans Wijesuriya's appointment as Chief Advisor to the President, who was accused of suppressing evidence.

A petition has been filed in the Court of Appeal to reopen legal action over the deaths of 11 inmates during the 2020 Mahara Prison riots. The petition challenges the Attorney General's Department's decision to close the case, citing gunshot wounds as evidence of excessive force and a previous order from the Welisara Magistrate's Court.

The Colombo High Court accepted Kalib Sameer's confession as government evidence in the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks, despite his lawyers arguing it was not voluntary, and plans to appeal.

Sri Lanka's government mandates NGOs to register with the National Secretariat, despite existing legal compliance, requiring scrutiny from multiple ministries. Temporary certificates will be issued.

The Supreme Court ruled that former Governor Azath Salley's 2021 arrest under the Prevention of Terrorism Act was illegal and ordered his compensation of Rs. 75,000. The Committee for Protecting Prisoners (CPRP) protested against the Attorney General's interference in the 2020 Mahara prison massacre and plans to file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka.

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Investigations into high-profile journalist killings, including editor Lasantha Wickrematunge, are stalled due to missing documents, initial investigators' retirement, or threats causing them to flee overseas. Investigations into high-profile journalist killings, including editor



Lasantha Wickrematunge, are stalled due to missing documents, initial investigators' retirement, or threats causing them to flee overseas.

The Kokkuthoduvai mass grave case, involving LTTE fighter remains, has been adjourned until February 27, 2025, due to setbacks and legal challenges. The case began in June 2023 and has faced delays, funding issues, and evidence mishandling concerns.

Renuka Perera, Administrative Secretary of SLPP, was arrested by CID for spreading false information about Northern 'Mahaviru' commemorations on social media.

## 3. Repression of Media and Journalists

### January 2024

Journalists Punniyamoorthy Sasikaran and Valasingham Krishnakumar were summoned before the Eravur Magistrate Court for further questioning, over their coverage of a protest held in Batticaloa in October.

### February 2024

A group of journalists staged a protest in front of the district secretariat after they were denied access to cover the Batticaloa District Coordination Committee meeting. When attempted to cover a group of civilians visiting a temple situated within the 'High-Security Zone' in Palali Vasavilan, Jaffna, three Tamil journalists - Prabhakaran Dilaksan, Sundarampillai Rajeskar, and Chinnaiya Yogeswaran - were threatened by the Sri Lankan army.

### March 2024

Thiruchelvam Divakaran, a freelance journalist and media officer in the Government Information Department, was summoned to the Terrorist Investigation Department office. Shanmugam Thavaseelan, a Tamil journalist and the chairman of the Mullaitivu Press Club, was called to court earlier in March about a complaint that a Sri Lankan naval commander filed in 2019 after he covered a rally on disappearances in Mullaitivu. G.P. Nissanka, the owner and editor of the news website Ravana Lanka News, was arrested by officers of the Criminal Investigation Department of the police at his residence in Pallebedda area. According to a statement from the Media Organizations Collective, police detained freelance journalist Bimal Ruhunage at his residence in Kurunegala.

### June 2024

TV journalist Dhanushka Seneviratne was attacked by a group of unknown people at his accommodation in Kelaniya.

### July 2024

Jaffna-based senior journalist Tambithurai Pratheepan suffered an arson attack as his residence was torched.

### August 2024

Journalist Shanmugam Thavaseelan was summoned again by Mankulam police for interrogation. There was an ongoing legal case against Thavaseelan based on a complaint made by a Naval intelligence officer and was subjected to various intimidations for the last several years.

The journalists were invited from North and East to Colombo for a meeting with the (then) President were barred from speaking and handing a letter to the president demanding justice for journalists who had either been disappeared or assassinated.

Participants of a silent demonstration in front of the court demanding justice regarding a case of gang rape of a female school student in Thanamalwila and a journalist covering that protest were threatened by a person claiming to be a father of a suspect.

### **September 2024**

Reportedly, several members of the Presidential Media Unit threatened and forcefully deleted a few footages that local journalists recorded when a brawl occurred between groups in an election rally held in Kekirawa, in the Anuradhapura district.

Foreign journalists covering the presidential election experienced difficulties in obtaining visas, including visa delays and outright refusals. A group of people threatened with death and arson attacks on the residence of a local journalist based in Galle.

### **October 2024**

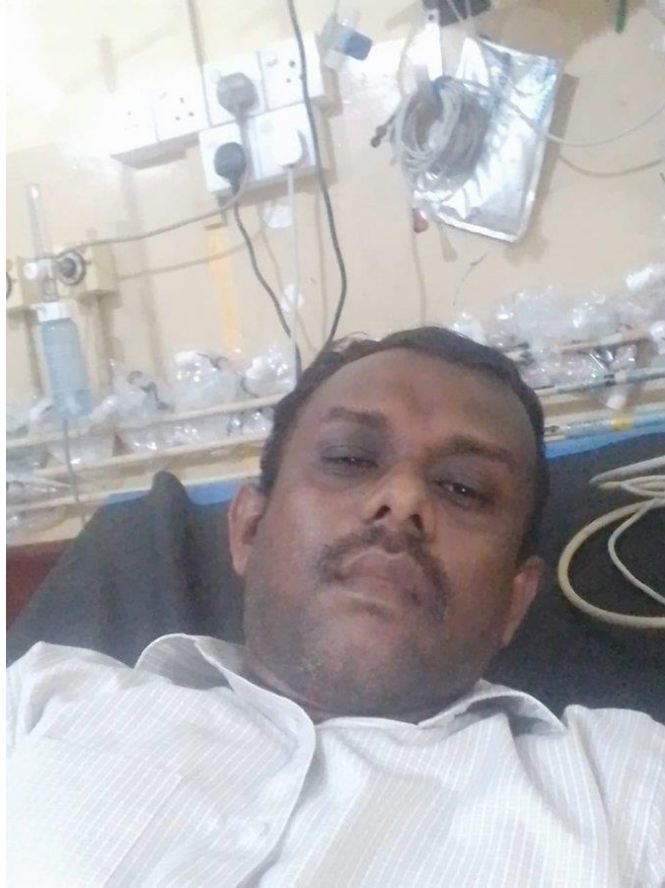
Induka Silva, head of the police Criminal Investigation Department's homicide unit, sought legal action against Tharindu Jayawardhana, editor-in-chief of MediaLK, over a video in which Tharindu Jayawardhana commented on allegations of misconduct against Silva. Colombo Additional Magistrate ordered the Cinnamon Gardens Police to investigate death threats received by Tissa Ravindra Perera, Deputy News Editor of the 'Aruna' newspaper. Tamil Guardian journalist Selvakumar Nilanthan, was apprehended due to his coverage of protests related to purported corrupt practices by a local government official in 2020. In a media release issued by Mullaitivu Media Association to commemorate the 24th death anniversary of journalist Mylvaganam Nimalarajan stated that Tamil-speaking journalists continue to face harassment, intimidation and surveillance by state security apparatuses, including intelligence and the military.

### **November 2024**

Tamil journalist S. Satheeskumar was attacked during the 2024 parliamentary elections in Bogawantalawa, suffering head injuries. Allegations suggest the intoxicated attacker was a United Democratic Voice candidate.

### **December 2024**

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Sri Lanka Police has obtained a statement from journalist S. Aslam. The statement, obtained by the Computer Crimes Investigation Division, was made subsequent to a complaint filed by the Ministry of Public Security (The Morning, 2024).



Journalist and author Murugaiyah Thamilselvan seeking emergency treatment at Kilinochchi Hospital. Photo Courtesy: The Leader.

Journalist A Tamil journalist and author, Murugaiyah Thamilselvan known for his in-depth coverage of illegal drug trafficking, has faced an assault in the town of Kilinochchi. A report indicates that a group arrived in a van and attempted to abduct the journalist in the aforementioned town. The attempt was unsuccessful, leading them to attack him before escaping the location (Ceylon News, 2024; Sheshadhi, 2024; The Leader, 2024).

## 4. Freedom of assembly and association

### January 2024

As per a request made by the Welikada police station Officer-in-Charge, the Colombo magistrate court issued an order restraining a protest organized by the national organiser of the Socialist Youth Association, Eranga Gunasekara and a group of other protestors.

A silent protest held at the Liberty roundabout against the enactment of the Online Safety Bill was disrupted by allegedly pro-government goons.

The police arrested the president of the Vavuniya Association of Relatives of the Enforced Disappeared (ARED) Sivananthan Jenita and Meera Jasmine Charlestine in Vavuniya when they protested during President Ranil Wickremesinghe's visit.

The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) suspended 15 of its secretarial employees for taking part in labour union activities.

A group of masked men disrupts a silent protest held at the Liberty roundabout.

### February 2024

A group of journalists staged a protest in front of the District Secretariat after they were denied access to cover the Batticaloa District Coordination Committee meeting.

When attempted to cover a group of civilians visiting a temple situated within the 'High-Security Zone' in Palali Vasavilan, Jaffna, three Tamil journalists – Prabhakaran Dilaksan, Sundarampillai Rajeskar, and Chinnaiya Yogeswaran – were threatened by the Sri Lankan army.

Claiming Independence Day a black day, a protest was held by Jaffna University students and Tamil political leaders at Kilinochchi Manamaduru on Independence Day, which was dispersed by the Police using tear gas and water cannons.

Seven of the twenty-one temples in the high-security zone in Jaffna were given restricted access by the Sri Lankan army; where visitors were required to use army vehicles and provide their residential addresses to enter the temples.

### March 2024

A tense situation emerged at the Vavuniya old bus station when the Santhan's (who was one of the seven convicts freed in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case) remains were brought there for the public to pay respects.

It was reported that a protest staged by Jana Aragala Vyaparaya in Colombo Fort in resistance to worsening economic conditions was controlled by the police using water cannons and tear gas.

While participating in festival ceremonies, eight Tamil Hindu devotees were captured by police and allegedly mistreated during their more than ten-day incarceration.

To disperse a protest organized by the Inter-University Students Federation (IUSF) in Colombo, the police used water cannons. The protesters demanded a number of things, one of which was opposed to the purported privatization of education.





Police obstruct the Jana Aragala Vyaparaya protest. Photo courtesy: Ceylon Today.

## **April 2024**

Colombo Chief Magistrate Thilina Gamage rejected the Kurunduwatta Police's request to issue a restraining order to prevent a protest rally organized by the University of Colombo, Faculty of Medicine Students' Union in opposition against the government at Lipton Roundabout.

Colombo Additional Magistrate Prasan Amarasena ordered that three persons, including the convener of the Teacher-Principal Trade Union Collective, Ulapane Sumangala Thero, be remanded until the 26th.

The five suspects were accused of obstructing the execution of court orders to demolish seven illegal shanty houses in Dabare Mawatha, Narahenpita.

Two student protests were broken up by police using water cannons and tear gas.

## **May 2024**

The police officers obtained a court order from the Muthur Magistrate's Court, prohibiting any ceremony planned for the distribution of Mullivaikkakal Kanji in memory of the people who died in the last phase of the war for the coming 14 days.

Protests being carried out against the government's purported decision to grant automobile permits to legislators were reportedly approached by several police officers, creating a tense scene close to the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo.

The event organized by students of Eastern University in Batticaloa to commemorate the Mullivaikkal genocide was abruptly interrupted by officers from the Eravur police station.

In Colombo, police stopped a group of Sinhala nationalists carrying lion flags to cause disturbances at a memorial ceremony honouring those who lost their lives in the war.

The Police Media Division said that on May 13, they used water cannons to disperse a group

of university non-academic employees who were protesting.

### **June 2024**

The Police fired water cannons to disperse a protest organised by unemployed graduates near the parliament.

A protest organised by school teachers and principals was also attacked by the police with water cannons and tear gas.

### **July 2024**

The pamphlet distribution program by a group attached to the anti-government protest movement was obstructed by the Moratuwa police.

### **August 2024**

An Intelligence officer threatened a group of protestors who held a demonstration at Mullaitivu bus stand demanding justice and accountability on enforced disappearances during civil war.

Maligakanda magistrate court issued three restraining orders against three protest marches organised by civil society activists, politicians, trade unions, and student activists in Colombo, preventing them from entering certain areas of the city, claiming that the protest marches would disturb the public.

Police obstructed campaigns by Tamil political groups that urged Tamil people to refrain from participating in an election that would prioritise the interests of the majority within a unitary state.

Association of the Tamil Families of the Disappeared alleged that representatives from Sri Lanka's Office of Missing Persons had threatened the families of the missing individuals, insisting that they would cease their protests.

Trincomalee Magistrate's Court issued an injunction order against a protest organised by the families of the forcibly disappeared. Police arrested an activist, Rajkumar Rajeevkanth for participating in protests organised by the Tamil Families of the Disappeared to mark the International Day of the Disappeared.

### **September 2024**

On the international day of the victims of the enforced disappearances, the Magistrate Court in Vavuniya issued an order preventing Tamil families of the disappeared from organising a protest in Vavuniya on the 1st of September.

Police obstructed a campaign, arrested, interrogated and filed a legal case against the former MP, the General Secretary of Tamil National People's Front (TNPf) Selvarajah Kajendren for organising a campaign urging people to boycott the election as all major candidates from the South ignore the demands of Tamil people. The Police claimed the campaign was 'illegal'.

Jaffna Police requested a court order to prevent commemorative events and memorials in remembrance of Lt Col Thileepan, a Tamil rebel leader who died during a hunger strike during the early days of Sri Lanka's civil war.

It was reported that army personnel intimidated people who were involved in the installation of a new plaque on the old memorial commemorating the Saththurukondan massacre in Batticaloa by taking photographs of them and the residents in the neighbourhood. Army was accused of killing more than 180 victims during the Saththurukondan massacre in 1990.

### **October 2024**

The Tamil People's Alliance (TPA) alleged police misconduct after an attack on their supporters in Jaffna. Their initial complaint was ignored but later accepted. The TPA claimed police handcuffed victims in the hospital under superiors' orders.

Lakshman Nipunarachchi's statement at a rally in Kesbewa criticized the frequent disruptions caused by strikes in sectors like education, healthcare, and transportation, and expressed a vision for a future where such issues no longer exist.

### **November 2024**

Cabinet Minister Vijitha Herath ruled out trade union actions causing public inconvenience for political reasons, regarding a planned strike by railway station masters, ensuring solutions post-parliamentary elections.

Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs, Ananda Wijepala, clarified that honouring the LTTE organization is not allowed due to its classification as a prohibited organization.

Despite police harassment, some families of the LTTE continued these commemorations. Police removed Velupillai Prabhakaran's photograph from a 70th birthday celebration banner in Valvettithurai, Tamils continued the celebration despite challenges and police interrogations.

### **December 2024**

A few of the Maaveerar Naal Celebrations were obstructed by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for allegedly promoting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the name of commemorating war dead. The senior police officer clarified that the government prohibits promoting banned organizations like the LTTE or glorifying acts of terrorism, stating that while commemorating war dead is permitted, promoting the LTTE remains illegal. Suspects were arrested under Penal Code Section 120 and PTA No. 48 of 1978 and were accused of inciting violence and spreading misleading content promoting a proscribed organization's activities. Senior DIG in charge of the Northern Province, Tilak Dhanapala, said that seven individuals who organized illegal celebrations promoting the LTTE organization, centered around the Northern Province were arrested and investigations had been initiated to strictly enforce the law against them. Investigations revealed that four of the seven celebrations promoting the LTTE were held in the Point Pedro area. Two celebrations were held in the Kilinochchi area and one celebration was held in the Jaffna area.

Minister of Public Security Ananda Wijepala claimed that photos from past LTTE 'Maaveerar Naal' celebrations were circulated on social media to create the impression of similar events in the Northern Province. The speaker cautioned against actions that could lead to division and conflict between the North and South of the country, underlining the manipulative nature of the false narratives. Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs, Ananda

Wijepala, informed the Parliament that out of 244 Maaveerar Naal commemoration events held in the Northern Province, LTTE-related symbols were displayed at 10 of them and the police had taken necessary action. In relation to some of the commemoration events in the Northern Province, social media activists were arrested. In response, a group of activists participated in a protest near the Polduwa junction on the parliamentary road.

Four individuals were arrested during a protest in front of the Education Ministry in Battaramulla. The protest, organised by around 500 members of the Joint School Development Officers' Union, demanded permanent teaching positions for school development officers. The suspects were charged with unlawful assembly, obstructing traffic, and injuring police officers. Three police officers sustained injuries during the clashes, with one admitted to the ICU of Colombo National Hospital and the others treated at the Colombo East Base Hospital. The protest escalated after blocking the Kottawa-Borella road, causing significant traffic disruption. A recent discussion at the Education Ministry addressed the integration of school development officers into teaching positions. The Ministry emphasized that recruitment must follow Public Service Commission recommendations and adhere to a Supreme Court directive. Some media reports claimed that the Thalangama Police informed the Kaduwela Magistrate about the involvement of an Army Intelligence officer, but the police denied any evidence supporting this.

## 5. Repressive Legal and Policy Action

### January 2024

Despite the opposition's harsh criticism and concerns raised by civil society and the international community, the controversial Online Safety Bill was passed in parliament with majority votes.

### February 2024

On 03rd February, the President issued a gazette notification declaring all services connected to the supply of electricity and petroleum as essential services.

### March 2024

According to Minister of Justice, Prison Affairs, and Constitutional Reforms Dr Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe, election postponement was not expected as a result of the election amendment proposals, thus it was believed that electoral reforms that were being discussed would cause elections to be delayed.

### April 2024

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena informed the Parliament that the President has issued a special order to call the armed forces for the security of the country.

### May 2024

The Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) (Amendment) bill which was amended to facilitate legal provisions for the suspension of Parate Law till 15 December 2024, passed in parliament without amendments. The Bill endeavours to amend the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No 4 of 1990. It was believed the suspension of the Parate law would result in the benefit of a few large-scale businessmen who had not paid their debts.

### July 2024

An amendment to the Online Safety Bill was gazetted. The supply of electricity and petroleum was declared as essential services and it has been a common practice by preceding governments to prevent and discourage trade union actions. Same as in previous months, the President also issued a special order calling the armed forces for the security of the country, indicating the continuing militarization in the country.

### August 2024

Dilith Jayaweera, a presidential candidate and a business tycoon, promised to abolish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act, which his Sarvajana Balaya party claimed was

“aimed at handing over Sri Lanka security force officers to international jurisdiction”.

**October 2024**

Coordinator of the Voice of the Voiceless Organization, stated that although the Tamil political prisoners who were arrested and detained under the Anti-Terrorism Act had been released, they were still being subjected to both direct and indirect forms of interrogation.

## 6. Election

### September 2024

The presidential election was held on the 21st of September. Among the 39 candidates who contested the election, there were no female candidates.

The abuse of state power and resources, concerns regarding marginalized populations, and social media-related election law violations were some of the major trends observed during the pre-election period.

The election was considered relatively peaceful by both local and international election observers. The voter turnout of 79.46% was slightly less than in the previous presidential elections. As the leading candidate could not secure more than 50% of the votes, preferential votes were counted for the first time in the history of Presidential elections in Sri Lanka.

Even though campaigning was illegal during the silent period, some candidates continued their campaigns during this period using social media including paid promotions. Issues relating to inadequate accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly, homophobic and ethnonationalist, and racist social media posts disparaging and ridiculing ethnic and queer minorities were observed during the post-election period.



Honourable Anura Kumara Dissanayake was sworn in as the 9th Executive President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Photo courtesy: President's Media Division of Sri Lanka.

### October 2024

The Executive Director of the Campaign for Free and Fair Elections (CaFFE), stated that the election for the Elpitiya Pradeshiya Sabha was conducted peacefully; however, it did not exhibit a significant level of enthusiasm.



Sasikala Raviraj, who contested from the Jaffna district filed a complaint with the Chavakachcheri Police alleging that a group of people attacked her house. Chanu Nimesha, serving as the Secretary of Women's Affairs for the Sri Lanka Socialist Party, made history by being the first transgender person to run for an election in Sri Lanka. A prison guard and his brother who assaulted the Kalkuda organizer of the National People's Power party were arrested by officers of the Sandiveli Police.

## **November 2024**

The National People's Power won a two-thirds parliamentary majority, becoming the first party to achieve this through the proportional representation system. They won 159 seats, including 141 district and 18 National List seats, and elected 21 female MPs, while Samagi Jana Balawegaya became the main opposition party.

The election campaign was uneventful due to exhaustion and resource limitations, with voter turnout being lower than in previous elections, ranging between 60-65%.

Over 100 high-level government appointments violated election regulations, raising concerns about undue influence and bribery, prompting calls for clearer guidelines from the Election Commission.

There was a lot of physical and online animosity directed at female candidates. Sasikala Raviraj, one of the candidates, was a target of harassment and attacks. Additionally, the Prime Minister was subjected to ongoing harassment on social media based on her gender, which brought attention to the larger problem of delegitimization of women in politics.

During the election period, political discourse was dominated by majoritarianism, disregarding marginalized voices and resulting in media coverage of women at just 7%.

## 7. Repression of State Officials

### February 2024

The 51-year-old Public Health Inspector, Roshan Kumara Withanage, was shot dead at his residence in Elpitiya.



Treasurer and Karandeniya PHI Roshan Kumara. Source: The Island

### May 2024

Puttalam Divisional Secretary Sampath Weerasekera complained to his superiors after facing intimidation from MP Ali Sabri Raheem while he attempted to investigate an incident involving the unlawful occupation of government-owned land on the Old Mannar Road in Puttalam.

### July 2024

An administrative officer attached to the customs department was assaulted by the police while participating in an environmental conservation activity at the Kalutara beach and hospitalized.

The Chairman of the Road Development Authority resigned from that post due to arbitrary pressure exerted on him by the Secretary of the Ministry of Highways.

## 8. Repression of Activists and Whistleblowers

### January 2024

Police said that Piyath Nikeshala, a well-known social media activist, was taken into custody by the Criminal Investigation Department.

It was reported that human rights advocate for the rights of the Malayaga Tamil community Jeewaratnam Suresh received a threatening phone call from an unidentified number warning him to stop his advocacy or face dire consequences.

Civil society leader Kurusumuthu V. Lavakumar was interrogation by Sri Lanka's Terrorism Investigation Department (TID) for five hours for participating in a Tamil Genocide Day memorial in 2021.

### February 2024

Environmental activist and President of the Organisation to Protect Sapugaskanda, H.M.R.W. Herath was brutally assaulted by three individuals in Wadakada, Polgahawela.



H.M.R.W. Herath is receiving medical treatment at the hospital. Source- Ceylon Today

### March 2024

A group of mobs trespassed into the private residence of the President of Puttalam Teachers' Association and activist by the name of Ajith Wijesinghe. The mobs vandalized and set on fire the house and vehicle of the said environmental activist.

## **June 2024**

P. Deepachelvan, the President of the Tamil Literary Forum, underwent a 3-hour interrogation for the second occasion within a span of 2 months by the Counter Terrorism Investigation Division in Paranthan, Kilinochchi district, regarding a fictional character in his second book titled "Terrorist."

## **July 2024**

Amalaraj Amalanayaki, the Coordinator of the Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappeared in Batticaloa District, was called in for questioning by the Terrorism Investigation Division.

The secretary of the Kammakkara organization, which works for the rights of agricultural labourers, Chelliah Krishnarajah was injured in a shooting.

## 9. Other

### January 2024

A truck driver lost his life when a police officer in civvies 'accidentally' discharged his firearm during a vehicle inspection. Roshan Kumarathilake, age 41, was identified as the individual in question and he was a carpenter by profession.

### March 2024

The Terrorism Investigation Department (TID) of Sri Lanka called activist and former LTTE cadre Selvanayagam Aravinthan for questioning over a Facebook account.

### April 2024

Rajapakse Pathirage Dimantha Lakmal, who was an Air Force corporal and a rugby player, was killed in police firing at Padukka, Angamuwa. Police Media Spokesman, DIG, Advocate Nihal Talduwa told the media that the deceased was suspected to be the shooter involved in the double homicide that took place in the Talgahavila area of Horana. The police spokesperson told the media that the investigating officers reported to him that the person who was assassinated was the main suspect in the murder.

The Kandy Police Headquarters arrested a former SLFP party member of the Kandy Municipal Council who allegedly assaulted a worker in the Solid Waste Management Department of the Kandy Municipal Council. According to the hospital sources, the municipal worker suffered serious injuries in the ear area due to that attack and three stitches were applied to his ear area due to those injuries.

### May 2024

Under the Online Safety Act, Colombo Chief Magistrate issued a conditional order prohibiting a YouTube channel from disseminating and publishing any derogatory content about Lieutenant General Vikum Liyanage, the commander of the Army.

Lawyer Sadaru Kumarasinghe was summoned to the airport police for expressing his views against the assignment of issuing visas and charging money by the Indian Global VFS company at the Bandaranaike International Airport.

Then State Finance Minister Shehan Semasinghe received a threat of being killed and set on fire, and subsequently, Fort police opened an investigation into the threat.

UNP General Secretary Palitha Range Bandara said that it was an essential matter to pass a resolution in Parliament postponing the election for another two years.

Election monitoring body PAFFREL wrote a letter to the Election Commission questioning the decision taken by the Ranil Wickremesinghe government to distribute nearly 15 billion rupees through informal and political mechanisms for rapid development activities.

The accused Chairman of the Cricket Board, who illegally suspended a complainant's service, had illegally and arbitrarily initiated a disciplinary inquiry against the complainant, who revealed in a press conference that there is corruption and irregularities in the Cricket Board.

## **June 2024**

The chairman of the Committee on Public Finance SJB Parliamentarian, Dr. Harsha De Silva, said before parliament that he was receiving unwarranted threats in relation to a visa issuing procedure worth millions of dollars.

It was reported that Water Supply and Plantation Infrastructure Minister Jeevan Thondaman and his mobs kept Kelani Valley Plantations CEO Anura Weerakoon and other official's hostage and threatened them to reinstate two plantation workers who had been suspended, while demanding the company administration to increase the wages of plantation workers. The police allegedly did not take the necessary actions following the Minister's involvement. The minister had also threatened that the products of Kelani Valley Plantation Company would not be allowed to be presented at the Colombo Tea Auction.

## **July 2024**

The Terrorism Investigation Division summoned Mathimuharasa, the priest of Vedukkunaari Aathi Lingeswarar temple in Vavuniya for interrogation. Reportedly, he was questioned about temple-related issues.

The Kollupitiya police arrested a Muslim youth who took a video from his mobile phone of the convoy in which the President's Senior Advisor and Chief of Staff were travelling.

## **August 2024**

Activists advocating for the accountability on enforced disappearances were intimidated by the state intelligence officers and questioned them at the Mullaitivu court premises when they attended court hearings related to enforced disappearances.

Randimal Gamage, a member of Ruhunu People's Front, filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, claiming that he was unjustly arrested when he attempted to file objections against the nominations of two presidential candidates.

The Judicial Medical Officer of the Hambantota General Hospital allegedly threatened and attempted to assault an underage, rape victim causing her to severe distress.

Extensive probes had been conducted by the police summoning and interrogating the school's principal, teachers, and students of the Konavil Tamil College in Kilinochchi regarding an art installation done at an inter-house sportsmeet event held six months ago. Reportedly the structure of the art installation had highlighted the traditional habitats of Tamils in Sri Lanka adorning the entrance to one of the sports houses.

A person claiming to be the husband of a former Governor of Central Province had made a threatening phone call to a Regional Secretary in Nuwara Eliya demanding to provide government land or to face reprisals following the election.

## **October 2024**

A young man was arrested for allegedly obstructing police while filming an SUV accident near Wariyapola. The SUV reportedly belongs to former minister Lohan Ratwatte. A video shows a police officer, identifying himself as the OIC of the Wariyapola Traffic Division, threatening the young man recording the incident.

**November 2024**

The Theatermates drama group of the Malayaga Tamil community reported harassment and intimidation from individuals falsely claiming to be linked to the Army and Criminal Investigation Department. They filed complaints with Bogawantalawa Police and HRCL, but no action had been taken.

**December 2024**

The HRCSL Commissioner, Nimal G. Punchihewa, emphasized that under Sri Lankan law, women could not be arrested at spas, and only authorized agencies could act.