

Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka

before and during curfew

1st February 2020 - 30th April 2020



18 media organizations in Sri Lanka urged the government of [#SriLanka](#) to [#FreeRamzyRazeek](#) the arrested social media writer. Sign the Online petition demanding to Free Ramzy Razeek <http://chnq.it/cxq8pVWbCs>

INFORM

Human Rights Documentation Centre

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Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka before and during curfew: February –April 2020.

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

Contents

Contents	ii
List of Acronyms /Key words.....	iii
1. Executive Summary.....	1
2. Methodology.....	3
3. Context.....	4
4. Major incidents and trends related to dissent.....	7
4.1 Repression of journalists:.....	7
4.2 Repression of freedom of assembly:	8
4.3 Arrests related to facebook posts, threats and risks online	9
4.4 Legal and policy changes, problematic appointments, and undue influences on the judiciary.....	10
4.5 Repression against government officers	11
4.6 Other incidents	12
5. Updates on previous legal cases related to dissent.....	14
6. Statistical Analysis.....	15
7. List of incidents: 1st February 2020 – 30 th April 2020	18
A. Repression of Journalists	18
B. Repression of Freedom of Assembly	21
C. Arrests related to facebook posts, threats and risks online	25
D. Legal, institutional changes, appointments and undue influences on judiciary	29
E. Repression against government officers.....	34
F. Other Incidents.....	38
End Notes.....	41

List of Acronyms /Key words

- AG: The Attorney General is the Chief Legal Advisor to the Government. In that capacity he advises the Government, Government Departments, Statutory Boards and Public Corporations in respect of all legal matters. He conducts prosecutions in criminal cases and appears on behalf of the Government, Government Departments, Statutory Boards and Public Corporations in any Court or Tribunal
- ASP: Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP)
- BBS: Bodu Bala Sena (literal translation “Buddhist power Force”) is a Sinhala Buddhist ultra-nationalist organisation based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. They are allegedly responsible for number of attacks against Muslims during several communal riots. They organized public campaigns to boycott Muslim owned business places, harassed, and threatened HRDs. After the appointment of current government BBS leader claimed that they will disband the organization after forthcoming general election in 2020ⁱ. Its leader Galabodaaththe Gnanasara was convicted on two different cases: one is for threatening a wife of disappeared journalist inside court premises, two for contempt of court. He was subsequently given Presidential pardon which is being contested in courts at the present.
- CID: The Criminal Investigation Department is the primary investigative arm of the Sri Lanka Police
- Covid19: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a coronavirus discovered in 2019 which led to a global pandemic.
- EPDP: Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) is a Sri Lankan political party based in the North and East of Sri Lanka. They have been accused of being a paramilitary group which had engaged in enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions. Its leader Douglas Devananda has survived several assassination attempts at the hands of LTTE. Between 2006-2014 and since 2019 November its leader held a ministerial position under presidencies of Mahinda Rajapakse and Gotabaya Rajapakse respectively. EPDP is a coalition partner of the present ruling party SLPP.
- GN: Grama Niladhari or the village officer is a Sri Lankan public official appointed by the central government to carry out administrative duties in a Grama Niladhari division: the smallest administrative area for the government.
- GoSL: Government of Sri Lanka
- HRD: Human Rights Defender is a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights.
- HRCSL: Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka is an independent statutory body to promote and monitor protection of fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and ensure compliance by the Sri Lankan State of international human rights standards. Its members are appointed by the constitutional council which consists of multiparty body with some representatives of civil society. The Commission has a broad mandate as well as powers to investigate into any complaints of fundamental rights violations or imminent violations and grant suitable redress, including compensation, and of unfettered access to inspect and monitor any place where a person is deprived of liberty.
- IGP: Inspector General of Police is the head of Sri Lanka Police.
- IUSF: Inter-University Student Federation - the largest student body in Sri Lanka at the present is a federation which consists number of student unions representing almost all the government universities in Sri Lanka. It campaigns against the privatization of education and other issues concerning students.

ⁱ <https://www.dailynews.lk/2019/11/20/local/203359/bodu-bala-sena-disband-after-gen-election-vengnanasara>

JVP: Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna is a leftist political party with strongholds in Sinhalese majority areas in Sri Lanka. They waged two armed rebellions against GoSL in 1971 and late 1980s. Since 1994, they have been active participants in electoral politics including local government, parliamentary and presidential elections.

LGBTIQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer persons

LTTE: Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam also known as Tamil Tigers is a Tamil militant, separatist organization also considered as a terrorist group for their attacks on Civilians. They fought a war with GoSL for around three decades and they were militarily defeated in 2009.

Mullivaikkal: Mullivaikkal is a small village which predominantly Tamil where the last battle of Sri Lankan civil war occurred; large number of civilians were also killed there. It is located in Mullaitivu District, Northern Province Sri Lanka. Tamils annually remember the deaths of their relatives and community members, while GoSL and Sri Lankan forces remember the war victory.

MP: Member of Parliament

NIC: National Identity Card

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OIC: Officer-in-Charge in a Police Station.

OMP: Office of Missing Persons (OMP) is a state institution which is mandated to trace fate and whereabouts of persons who have gone missing or disappeared in Sri Lanka. It also collects information on missing persons, receives complaints, and make recommendations to the relevant authorities regarding missing persons. OMP was operationalized in February 2018, based on a parliamentary act passed in August 2016.

PCol: A Presidential Commission of Inquiry can be established by the President of Sri Lanka under Presidential Inquiry Act No 17 of 1948. The President has powers to appoint members, add new members and to revoke the establishment of commission at any time. PCol's are rarely independent, often politically controlled bodies. They have been heavily criticized for not serving cause of justice and providing remedies for mass human rights violations.

PCR Test: Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) Test is a DNA testing method used in molecular biology. It is widely used for covid19 testing at the present.

PMD: Presidential Media Division is the media division of the Presidential Secretariat.

PTA: Prevention of Terrorism Act is a draconian law often used to arbitrarily arrest and detain persons of ethnic minorities, journalists and human rights defenders. It provides the police with broad powers to search, arrest, and detain suspects. PTA was first enacted in 1978.

Resolution 30/1 : UNHCR Resolution 30/1 on Sri Lanka, adopted by the Human Rights Council on 1st October 2015 promoting resolution, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka. It is expected to strengthen and safeguard the credibility of the processes of truth-seeking, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence in the post war situation of Sri Lanka. GoSL co-sponsored the resolution and at the time of adoption as well as follow up resolutions in 2017 and 2019. But new government announced its withdrawal in February 2020.

RTI: Right to Information was recognized as a fundamental right recognized by the Constitution of Sri Lanka in 2016. RTI Act adopted by Parliament in 2016 provides right to any Sri Lankan citizen to access information which is in the possession or control of a public authority, with very few exceptions provided for.

SLPP: Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (Sri Lanka People's Front) is the ruling political party in Sri Lanka led by the Rajapakses. It was established in year 2016.

TID: Terrorist Investigation Department is a section of Sri Lankan Police that conducts inquiries into terrorism of Sri Lanka. TID has been accused of torture and intimidation of HRDs.

TNA: Tamil National Alliance (TNA) is an alliance of major Tamil political parties based in Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. TNA and candidates supported by the TNA have won all recent elections held in Northern and Eastern Provinces.

UN: United Nations

UNHRC: United Nations Human Rights Council

UNP: United National Party (UNP) is a conservative right wing Sri Lankan political Party, favouring a more neo-liberal market-oriented economy. Founded in 1946, it is one of the oldest political parties in Sri Lanka currently in operation. They are perceived as being more liberal towards ethnic and religious minorities, but some of the worst massacres and attacks on ethnic and religious minorities have happened under the past UNP governments.

Vedda: The Vedda or Wanniyalaeto are groups of indigenous communities in Sri Lanka.

WHO: World Health Organization

1. Executive Summary

This report records 95 incidents that had been reported during the 90 days period. The average number of incidents per day reported prior to the covid-19 curfew is slightly higher than the number of incidents reported during the curfew. There were a high number of incidents related to legal, institutional and policy changes prior to the curfew. During the curfew, the number of physical attacks, arrests, verbal threats and hate speech related incidents were high. Before curfew many incidents were reported from Colombo in the Western Province. During the curfew period, more than 50% of incidents were reported from districts outside Western Province and Northern and Eastern provinces. In previous reports, the number of incidents were high in North and East. Most of the victims were government officials, journalists, civil society activists and protesters respectively. During both periods, most of alleged perpetrators were either police or military, followed by government officers and politicians and business persons. Majority of victims were men.

Journalists faced questioning at home, by phone and summoning to offices of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the police. There were also death threats against journalists by a son of a politician and a shop owner. A journalist and a source were also arrested, while another journalist was assaulted. A private TV station had expelled journalists who had exposed a special event organized by the institution violating curfew laws and for requesting protective equipment.

Two prisoners were shot dead in tensions that had arisen in context of covid19 related protests in a prison in Anuradhapura. In Colombo, protesters were assaulted and threatened with arrest by police and a temporary hut of protesters were taken down by police. Persons protesting on covid19 related issues were also arrested in Batticaloa and Kandy districts. A court order was issued to stop a student protest in Colombo and students in Jaffna University were stopped from entering the University to have a protest.

On 1st April police announced that those criticizing and pointing shortcomings of government officials will be arrested. At least 17 persons had been arrested by 19th April for fake news and the Human Rights Commission had expressed concerns about legal basis for some of the arrests. Amongst those arrested was Ramzy Razeek, a commentator who regularly posts on his Facebook profile on topics related to ethnic harmony, minority rights, gender etc. At least two persons were arrested for publishing online content criticizing the government's covid19 response. A student activist's house was visited by the police after he had posted a Facebook comment questioning the government. A former MP of an opposition political party and LGBTIQ community, including one activist were subjected to online hate speech campaigns. Two potential Tamil female candidates, for upcoming parliamentary elections faced vicious personal attacks online. Such attacks, as well as a number of fake news and hate speech content, mostly against minorities, published or broadcasted by mainstream media with large outreach, didn't seem to result in legal actions.

In other incidents, a leader of an indigenous community (Vedda) was attacked after he spoke to the media criticizing sand mining in the local area and its damages to the environment. A businessman was assaulted and CCTV camera equipment at his house were damaged by Police after he questioned about Police violence against two other persons in his neighborhood. A lawyer who had appeared in

significant cases related to rights and democracy and vocal on minority rights, was arrested on suspicion of terrorism and he has not been provided proper access to lawyers nor been produced before a Magistrate. Visits by intelligence agencies to offices of NGOs, houses of NGO staff and phone calls continued. A female activist vocal in demanding investigations into a child abuse case was threatened that her nude photographs will be made public. Police also held an inquiry against an information technology activist after he pointed security loopholes in an ATM machine of a private bank.

A number of legal and policy changes, including appointments, looked ominous for dissent. The Government declared it was withdrawing from the co-sponsorship of the UN Human Rights Council resolutions on reconciliation and accountability. The President's office and Parliament Committee on National Security indicated restrictions on civil society and NGOs. A senior district level government official issued a letter asking NGOs to de-prioritize human rights, women's empowerment and land rights. Activists who defied the decision to sing the national anthem only in Sinhalese at the official Independence Day function faced online threats and vilification. An Army officer being prosecuted for killings of protesters in 2013 was promoted. The police chief requested to temporarily suspend some ongoing legal cases and an investigation officer who handled a key corruption case for several years was suddenly replaced with a new officer. And President Gotabaya said that the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which had reduced presidential powers and strengthened independent oversight bodies, are a hindrance in fulfilling the aspirations of the people, at a meeting with heads of media.

Government officials trying to do their duties, including police officers, public health officials, village officers (Grama Niladharis) excise officers, forest conservation officers, coastal conservation officer, and a school principal faced reprisals. These included verbal attacks with obscene language, physical assaults, and threats including a death threat at gun point. Politicians, a Buddhist Monk and agitated villagers were amongst those responsible. Many of these incidents were related to environmental issues and covid19.

Especially during the curfew period, restrictions and limited court work made it difficult for victims to seek protection, legal remedies. It was also difficult to seek and offer support from other defenders, lawyers, journalists diplomats etc. Detainees faced more challenges.

2. Methodology

This report provides some general trends and details of some significant incidents related to the repression of dissent in Sri Lanka before and during Covid19 lock down curfew in Sri Lanka. Due to the impact of covid19, a nationwide curfew was imposed on 20th March 2020. This report compares the situation concerning dissent in Sri Lanka before the curfew 48 days from 1st February to 19th March and during curfew period: 42 days from 20th March to 30th April, covering a total 90 days period.

This report was prepared mainly based on the information reported in mainstream and social media, however in few cases information was gathered from direct interviews, or discussions INFORM staff had with activists, witnesses and survivors. Incidents of repression mentioned in this report include arrests, threats, intimidation, investigations against human rights defenders (HRDs) etc. and potential threats such as new repressive laws, appointments, policy decisions etc., which may have a negative impact on freedom of expression, assembly, association and dissent in the future.

In this report, “dissent” is broadly defined to include acts of protest, resistance, defiance, challenge against, question or attempt to record rights violations, social injustice at the hands of state or non-state apparatus, including police, armed forces, religious groups, and politicians among others. “Repression” is defined as 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 as repression of dissent because of its potential to erode rights. We have also included government officials who had faced reprisals when trying to do their duties.

3. Context

On 25th February, the new government which completed 100 days of their rule, issued a statement on their progress, but it failed to show any considerable achievements or growth, rather presented another set of promises¹. There were emerging economic concerns such as high inflation and debt repayment.

The Sri Lankan government declared that it will withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council's landmark resolution 30/1, which the previous government had co-sponsored, to promote reconciliation, accountability and human rights².

The first Sri Lankan confirmed Covid19 case was reported on 11th of March. By 20th March when curfew was declared, there were 66 confirmed covid19 cases reported in Sri Lanka. All international airports were closed by 19th March and an island wide curfew was imposed since 20th March.

On 2nd of March President issued the gazette dissolving parliament six months ahead of schedule.³ The gazette also announced that parliamentary election will be held on 25th of April. The constitution of Sri Lanka says that "the date for new parliament to meet shall be not later than 3 months from the date of dissolution of parliament"⁴ and it has also provided the powers to the President to reconvene the former parliament in an emergency situation⁵. Despite of Election Commission's request to President to seek the advice of the Supreme Court, Cabinet Ministers⁶ and the President Rajapakse have made announcements refusing to reconvene previous parliament, and also stated that advice from the Supreme Court will not be sought⁷ leading to an impending constitutional crisis⁸. Later, after the Election Commission announced 20th June a date beyond 3 months period as the next date for the election⁹, several parties filed Fundamental Rights petitions against the Commission.¹⁰ Election monitoring organization ANFREL has published a more detailed timeline on the events occurred¹¹.



Navy personnel in the traffic control duties in Colombo. February 2020. Photo courtesy: Navy.lk

Increased militarization was seen throughout the country. Persons with former and present military backgrounds were appointed to key decision-making positions related to civil duties throughout the period. On 14th February, Major General Darshana Hettiarachchi assumed duties as Rehabilitation

Commissioner General¹². On 17th February, Retired Major General Prasad Samarasinghe assumed duty as the new head of management to the Lotus tower. Retired Major General Vijitha Ravipriya was appointed as the Director-General of Customs on 19th February¹³. Around 17th March, the Army Commander Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva was appointed as the head of National Operation Center for Prevention of COVID- 19 Outbreak¹⁴. Retired Major General Sumedha Perera was appointed as the Co-Chairman of the Task Force for Poverty Eradication and Livelihood Development on 24th of March¹⁵ and there were 7 military or ex-military personnel including him amongst the task force members¹⁶. On 24th March, Former Air Force Commander, Marshal of the Air Force Roshan Goonetilleke was appointed as the Governor of the Western Province¹⁷.

Situation prior to the curfew: There were number of protests on various issues around the country, but mainly in Colombo^{18 19 20}. Considerable number of these protests were related to socio-economic issues such as employment, salary and pension anomalies, microfinance loans, bankruptcy of an investment company that had accepted deposits from the public. Additionally, a number of protests against national Independence Day were held in the North and East. The president in his National Independence Day speech promised that he is committed to defend fundamental rights ensured in the constitution, but also said that he does not “envisage public officials, lawmakers or the judiciary to impede him from implementing his commitment to fulfilling the needs of the people.” This seemed as an attempt to justify possible influences and to undermine powers of judiciary, legislature and public officials. Meanwhile Human Rights Watch released a report saying that families of disappeared were threatened in 6 locations in the North and East²¹ but the Sri Lankan government rejected these claims²². The Office on Missing Persons (OMP) in Sri Lanka started to seek help of families of disappeared and missing in making a comprehensive list of missing and disappeared and also started to issue interim reports to families of disappeared and missing²³. Immediately after the Presidential elections in mid-November 2019, the number of incidents reported against journalists increased, this further increased this year.

In January 2020, the President had appointed a Presidential Commission to look into alleged political victimization of public officers during the last government²⁴ which mainly looked into legal cases in which the military were named as suspects. Tensions had also arisen between this Commission and judicial processes related to past crimes and rights violations. The Commission had obtained documents related to some significant incidents of rights violations, including in cases that are now before courts.²⁵ The Attorney General (AG) had insisted that the Commission has no authority to question his functions in judicial processes²⁶. Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) filed a fundamental rights petition regarding broad powers granted to the Presidential commission that could be used “to prevent, impede and/or otherwise prejudice inquiries, investigations and legal proceedings.”²⁷ Another notable trend was the extension of increasing militarization in civil affairs to the Southern part of the country.^{28 29}

Situation during the curfew:

41,700 persons have been arrested, 10,700 vehicles having been seized for violating curfew regulations as reported on 29th April.^{30 31} In context of overcrowded prisons with about 26,000 inmates in places with capacity for about 10,000, there were wide spread calls for release of prisoners based on an identified criteria and available legal provisions. 2961 were reported to have been released between 17th March to 4th April, but there is no information available about releases after that³². Since the first confirmed covid19 case of a Sri Lankan national reported on 11th March, some TV stations and social media published false

information about the patients, suspected patients, and even the dead violating their privacy, often in the presence of police and military. After about six weeks, the Secretary to the Ministry of defense appealed to stop this after hundreds of military personnel were infected. On 17th April, police lined up over 300 homeless persons in Colombo and compelled them to have a bath in the open air without any privacy, or physical distancing. Media was allowed to film and take photographs, resulting in this being a splash on national TV stations, newspapers and social media. Hate speech and false news against Muslims and Christians were published in mainstream and social media. For example, a mainstream national newspaper called "Satan" in a news headline referring to a Christian religious leader who was tested positive for covid19³³ while other mainstream media also referred "pastor" in reporting this news. Social media and mainstream television channels published fake news that Muslims were gathered at mosques³⁴ and organized religious events³⁵, and resisted health officials while violating curfew laws. Muslims were further targets of hate speech after the Muslim leaders appealed to the government to review its decision on compulsory cremation of covid19 and covid19 suspected deaths as the WHO guidelines and other countries allowed the burial of covid19 patients. Meanwhile refugees and asylum seekers living in Sri Lanka temporarily were not included in assistance schemes by the government and various UN agencies³⁶.



Three women in Jaffna claimed that they were brutally assaulted by Police who arrived there initially accusing them of involving illegal sand transportation and then accusing them of possession of illegal drugs. Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian. More details <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/sri-lankan-police-leave-three-tamil-women-hospitalised-brutal-assault>

Several incidents of police and military assaults on civilians were reported from the North and East during the curfew period. As reported by Tamil Guardian, Human Rights Commission has launched investigations into an incident of drunken Police officer having beaten up a youth unconscious in Jaffna.³⁷ Right to Life Human Rights Centre had had reported several attacks on civilians by Police and military.³⁸ A resident of Vatukovil in Jaffna has been assaulted by Police when he went to the Sittakeesi Guna Devi Temple for fetching water on 25th April. The Navy has attacked four persons who were trying to collect sea cucumbers at the Sillarman Thuda beach in Poonakadi in the Kilinochchi district on 7th April. On the same day, Indrallal and his brother, who were engaged in fishing in the area, were assaulted by 10 naval personnel.³⁹ Tamil Guardian reported another incident where three women in Vadamarachchi East, Kudathanai in Jaffna district have been assaulted by Police for allegedly possessing drugs. They were hospitalized after the attack⁴⁰.

4. Major incidents and trends related to dissent

4.1 Repression of journalists:

Before curfew: In February, a pro-government journalist trade union complained to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) about 10 journalists for having alleged connections with a victim of a controversial abduction case of Swiss embassy staffer⁴¹ and with the legal case challenging the citizenship of Gotabaya Rajapakse. One of the journalists, Anurangi Singh has been subsequently questioned by the CID. The Colombo Magistrate's Court was informed that Singh was questioned over former *Sunday Observer* Editor Dharisha Bastians and possible links to the incident involving the Swiss Embassy staffer⁴². Also, a son of a politician threatened a journalist on duty. Another news website claimed that several journalists attached to them received phone calls threatening them with death after they published an article critical of misogynistic views expressed by a Buddhist monk. A house of a Batticaloa based journalist was visited by persons who claimed to be from the CID of the police. A Mullaitivu based journalist was questioned over the phone by intelligence agencies about a twitter post he has published. On 2nd of March, a director of a Vavuniya based newspaper, his wife and another editor were summoned to TID.



Nadarasalingam Thusanth a Kilinochchi based journalist was physically attacked and his office was vandalized during the curfew. Photo courtesy Tamil Guardian.

During curfew: A journalist was threatened with death over phone calls for reporting on opening shops violating curfew by the shop owner. A web journalist and a medical doctor who provided information to him were arrested and detained under the charges of fake news for reporting about suspected covid19 case in social media. A Tamil web journalist in Kilinochchi was attacked with swords. A journalist and two makeup artists working in a leading private media institution were terminated from their employment after they exposed a special event organized by the institution violating curfew laws related to covid19. Another makeup artist working in the same private media institution was terminated for requesting protective equipment. However, the letters of termination claimed that their work was discontinued due to poor performance. Few Batticaloa journalists were personally targeted on Facebook with hate posts and comments after they reported in mainstream media about an injustice regarding the distribution of rations in the area.

4.2 Repression of freedom of assembly:



The designated protest area in Colombo in February 2020 . Photo Courtesy :Ishara Dhanasekara

Before curfew: The relative tolerance of protests seen in previous months ended since the beginning of the month of February. The students of the University of Jaffna were refused entry to the university after they protested raising black flags against Independence Day. In Colombo, near to the Presidential Secretariat an “agitation site”, later called “demonstration site” was established as a designated venue for the protests. On 24th February, Police assaulted protesting former employees of the National Housing Authority who blocked Galle Road near to the Presidential Secretariat. On 27th February, Police threatened peaceful protesters against microfinance loan schemes, that they will be arrested unless they move into the designated agitation site. A group of disabled soldiers who are continuing months long protest moved to the designated protest area and built a temporary hut for the protestors to stay and protest. The hut was forcefully removed by the Police. A group of student activists who were protesting in front of the ministry of higher education premises were issued a court order preventing them from protesting and they were later arrested. On 8th March, during an alms giving ritual at the Mullivaikkal beach held for the LTTE cadres who died in the war, the military had taken down the vehicle numbers and NIC numbers of the people who participated in this ritual. On 13th March 6 persons were arrested in Batticaloa for protesting against the transfer of a covid19 patient to the Batticaloa hospital. However no arrests were made in similar protests conducted in the South with the support of the pro-government politicians⁴³.

During curfew: On 21st of March, two prisoners were shot dead as they started a protest demanding to release them due to covid19 risks in the prison⁴⁴. On 9th April, hundreds of people in Doluwa, in the Kandy district, came to the road demanding food and relief in the context of the three-week-long indefinite curfew, seeming a spontaneous protest by people desperate for food and other essentials to sustain their lives. The next day, police had arrested one person who had participated in the protest and he has been remanded till 16th April 2020.

4.3 Arrests related to facebook posts, threats and risks online

Before curfew: Two female Tamil human rights defenders who were considered potential candidates for parliamentary elections, Nalini Ratnarajah and Ambika Satkunanathan were subjected to vicious hate speech campaigns online. A facebook page ‘Stop child cruelty’ belonging to a child rights activist was blocked for a few weeks and then strangely reclaimed by another unknown person and all the posts in which the President and the Prime Minister tagged in the page were deleted. Another child rights activist’s facebook account was blocked after she released a youtube video requesting to the Police to investigate on a child abuse video. A few days before the curfew was announced, the Police said that they have launched investigations to arrest 40 suspects for spreading misinformation via social media regarding covid19.

During curfew:

By 17th of April, at least 17 persons were arrested under charges of publishing fake news related to covid19⁴⁵. The Human Rights Commission has expressed concern that some of these arrests may not have been carried out in non-discriminatory manner and respecting due process and rule of law⁴⁶. A number of fake news which have larger reach, published or broadcasted by mainstream media which have a clear negative impact on communal harmony, spreading hate speech against minorities were ignored by the authorities without any action taken against. However, for the scope of this report, only the incidents which have a clear impact on dissent were selected.

On 26th March, the police visited a member of Inter University Student Federation (IUSF) Shihan Hansaka’s house in Maharagama to question him about a Facebook post he wrote questioning the government. A person in Trincomalee was arrested by Uppuveli Police for allegedly criticizing the Government Agent in the area on facebook.

A woman political activist was arrested for allegedly publishing fake facebook posts claiming that there are no essential food items at Sathosa government grocery and weaknesses in the supply of essential drugs and conducting PCR tests for covid19 patients and suspected cases.

On 1st April, acting IGP of Police C.D. Wickramarathna instructed CID and all the Police OICs to take legal action against those who publish posts on social media criticizing government officials and pointing out their shortcomings. Later the Human Rights Commission wrote to the Police and told this instruction was in violation of the constitution⁴⁷. Former MP of an opposition political party was subjected to fake news and hate speech campaigns multiple times. Despite his complaint to the CID, it did not seem that the Police had taken any actions. Further there were hate speech campaigns online targeting LGBTIQ community and at least one LGBTIQ activist and several individual LGBTIQ persons.

“...one B report does not specify the legal basis of the arrest at all. If misinformation which has a negative impact on public order and public health is to be curbed, there must be a sound legal basis for action taken by law enforcement authorities . Also, a careful differentiation must be made between genuine mistakes, statements made in good faith or the public interest (such as by whistle blowers) and those statements that are intentionally calculated to cause mischief.”

Letter dated 25th April, written by HRCSL to the Acting IGP of Police. Full letter <http://www.hrsl.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Letter-to-IGP-Freedom-of-Expression.pdf>

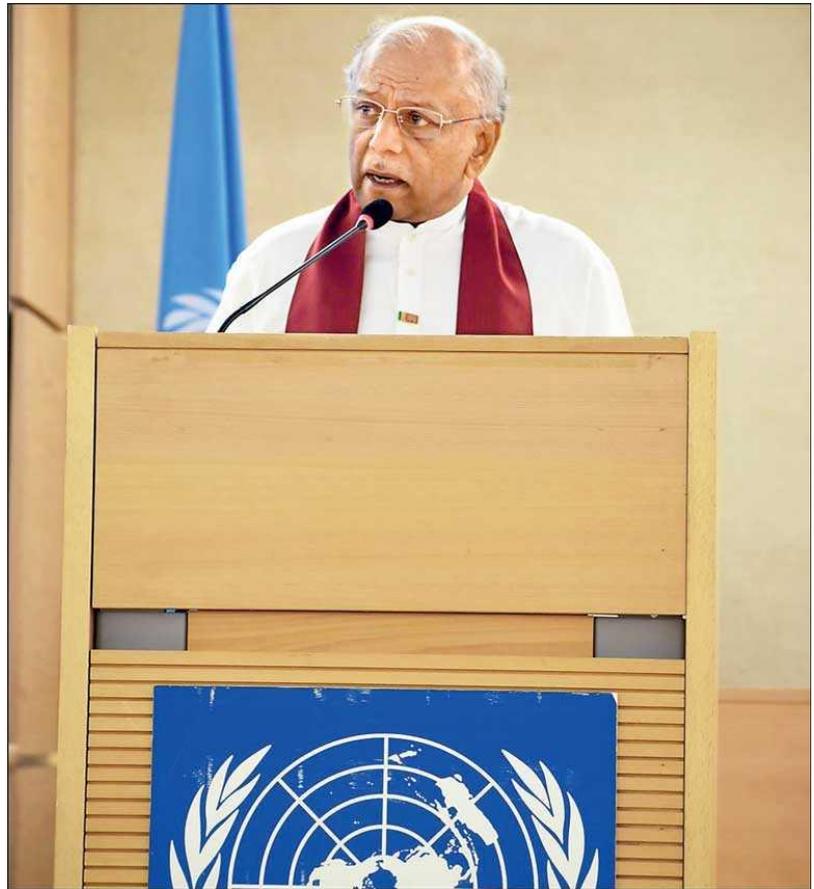
4.4 Legal and policy changes, problematic appointments, and undue influences on the judiciary

Before curfew: The Government of Sri Lanka declared its decision to withdraw from the co-sponsorship of the UN Human Rights Council resolutions on reconciliation and accountability. The President's 100 days progress statement said that, "steps have been taken to regulate over a thousand NGOs operating against the country." Parliament Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Security released a report with recommendations that would severely restrict freedom association of NGOs and Civil Society⁴⁸. A senior government official, the additional District Secretary in Mullaitivu issued a letter to the NGOs in the area advising which work should be prioritized.

According to the letter, Human rights, women empowerment and land rights are not a priority. On Independence Day,

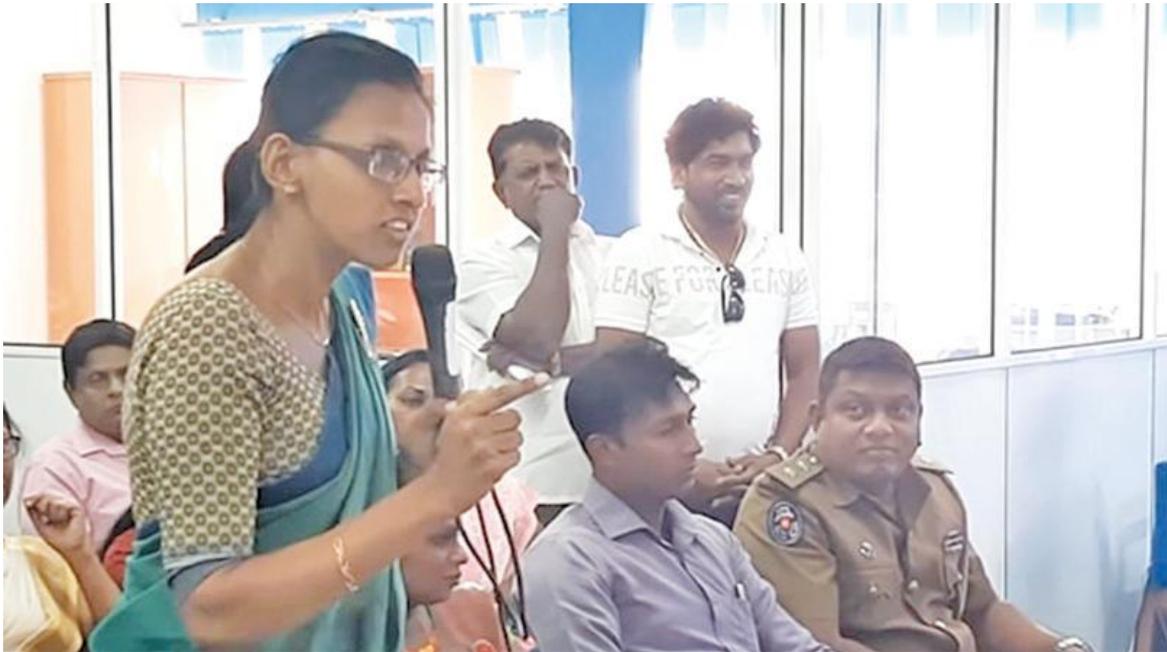
the national anthem was only sung only in Sinhalese. Some activists who sang the anthem in Tamil in a public place, faced online threats and vilification. One of the key accused (an Army officer) in the killings of protestors during a protest demanding clean drinking water was promoted. Certain actions seemed as attempts of undue influences on judiciary with regards to key human rights cases which are ongoing. Around 3rd March, Sri Lanka made a statement rejecting the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief claiming that it contained "inaccurate assertions and inadequate assessments." On 5th March during a meeting with heads of media, the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that the 19th Amendment to the Constitution is a hindrance in fulfilling the aspirations of the people.

During the curfew: Sunil Ratnayake who was found guilty and sentenced to death for killing 8 civilians including children was released under the Presidential pardon. The case was infamously known as the Mirusuvil Massacre. A number of local and international human rights organizations condemned this pardoning.



Sri Lankan Foreign Minister informing government decision to withdraw from UNHRC resolutions co-sponsored by Sri Lanka. Photo Courtesy: FT.lk

4.5 Repression against government officers



Gampaha Division Forest Officer Devani Jayathilaka unmoved by political pressure.

Photo Courtesy: Sunday Observer

Before curfew: A coastal conservation officer was allegedly attacked when he went to observe an incident of illegal land filling by a hotel owner who has allegedly support from the government. Two forest officers were also attacked during a raid. The attackers have allegedly told that they have 'an approval from a minister for their activities'. An Opposition MP also threatened a government officer on duty to remove an illegal business place of which license has not been extended. Two viral videos were shared online: (1) several politicians intimidating a school principal to admit a child violating the procedures, (2) a government officer refusing pressure and a request of a minister and community members to release environmentally sensitive mangrove forest land to build a playground at a community gathering.

During curfew: Majority of the incidents in this category during this period was related to covid19 situation. A 16-year old teenager attacked a Public Health Officer on covid19 prevention duty. The media reported the case without due sensitivity to protect the rights of a juvenile suspect. In several cases, Samurdhi officers and GN officers were assaulted, and threatened by villagers over disputes on alleged irregularities of distributing government allowance of 5000 LKR. They were also threatened by the local politicians when they resisted the influences by politicians and politicization of aid distribution. A female GN officer was threatened and blamed in obscene language by two local council members of Amabalangoda Pradeshiya Sabha stating that she should distribute the 5000 rupees according to their wishes, as their government is in power. The government banned the sale of alcohol during the curfew period, resulting in an increase of the use of illegal liquor and demand in the black market. On 20th April, a Buddhist monk and illegal liquor business persons threatened and assaulted a Police officer in the Wariyapola Police station area for arresting an illegal liquor businessperson. On 22nd April, excise officers were threatened with death pointing a gun at them by a former MP and a group of thugs in Kandy. Two Police officers who went to investigate a dispute between two groups in Kokilai, Mullaitivu were assaulted by a group of persons.

4.6 Other incidents

Before curfew: A female human rights activist who was vocal in demanding investigations into a case of a child abuse received threatening phone calls claiming that her nude photographs will be made public. Another civil society activist in Batticaloa received calls from intelligence officers asking questions about their activities and warning them to be careful as the political situation has changed. Police held an inquiry against an information technology activist after he pointed security loopholes in an ATM machine of a private bank. A leader of an indigenous community (Vedda) was attacked after he spoke to the media criticizing sand mining in the local area and its damages to the environment.



Lawyer and advocate of minority rights, Hejaz Hisbullah was arrested by the CID allegedly in connection with the Easter bombings in April 2019.

During curfew: Social workers distributing food were stopped and questioned by men in civil who claimed to be Army in Maruthankerny in Jaffna district. Former Kandy district MP and Velukumar claimed in a video that he was not allowed to carry out relief work in the Panwila area in Kandy district due to the influence of another politician. On 24th April, Local council member S. Karupan of Walapane Pradeshiya Sabha in Nuwara Eliya district has been allegedly threatened with death by the chairperson of the Pradeshiya Sabha after he had exposed irregularities in distribution of government assistance of 5000 rupees in the area. Ariyakutti Nirmalarogan: a local council member representing Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) of Chavakachcheri Pradeshiya Sabha in Jaffna district and another person have been assaulted after they have spoken against illegal liquor business in the area.

An Intelligence agent visited the house of an activist and office of an NGO in Vavuniya district during the first week of April. A prominent lawyer and advocate of minority rights, Hejaz Hizbullah was arrested by the CID allegedly in connection with the Easter bombings in April 2019 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). A habeas corpus petition brought on his behalf said the authorities searched Hizbullah's legal office, opened files, and "perused his briefs and professional work-related files". The President of the Bar Association said that according to the information they have received, "the reasons for his arrest have not been made known at the time." and they were informed that "the arrest was based on certain functions attended by Mr. Hizbullah in his professional capacity, as a member of the Bar " Hizbullah has been legal counsel in a number of high-profile cases, including the challenge to the dissolution of parliament in 2018 and fundamental rights cases. His arrest without due process was widely condemned by human rights groups locally and internationally.

Meanwhile a presenter of a mainstream Television channel in the presence of several leading politicians made several racist slurs at Muslims during a break in the political talkshow, which was subsequently aired.

On 20th April in Galle district, a businessman was assaulted and CCTV camera equipment at his house were damaged by Police after he questioned about Police violence against two other persons in his neighbourhood.

5. Updates on previous legal cases related to dissent

On 17th February, Court of Appeal decided to consider a petition against Galabodaththe Gnanasara Thero and others for contempt of court for forcefully carrying out the funeral rituals of a Buddhist monk at the controversial Neeraviyadi Hindu temple premises in Mullaitivu despite of a court order issued preventing them from doing so. Galabodaaththe Gnansara Thero is the Buddhist monk who leads the extremist group Bodu Bala Sena (BBS). The petition will be taken for hearing on 13th May⁴⁹.

On 1st March, the Supreme Court granted three weeks for former President Maithripala Sirisena to file limited objections (if necessary) against two Fundamental Rights petitions, including by Sandhya Ekneligoda, the wife of missing journalist Prageeth Ekneligoda challenging the President's decision to grant pardon to the same monk.

On 7th of February, the case on killings of protesters related to demand for clean drinking water in Rathupaswala in 2013 was taken up before a panel of 3 judges at the High Court in Gampaha. Brigadier Aruna Deshapriya Gunawardane who was recently promoted as a Major General, Staff Sergeant Dingiri Arunage Sirisena, Sergeant Lalith Grey and Corporal Jayasundara Mudiyanseelage Tillakaratna appeared before the court as accused. It was pointed out medical reports of five wounded persons have not been received to the court, while 23 medical reports have been already received. The court issued summons to the medical doctors who treated these five wounded protesters to appear at the court on 13th March 2020. The case has now been postponed until 17th July 2020⁵⁰.

The case of the disappearance of the journalist Prageeth Ekneligoda was taken before the panel of three judges at Permanent High Court at Bar in Colombo on 13th and 20th February. On 13th the defense counsels stated that they were looking to get a court order to access records/information held by a few mobile service providers. This is with regards to the suspects' or Prageeth's phone records around the time of enforced disappearance. The court agreed to provide the access as requested. Dates were fixed in March for further hearings, but these could not be held due to COVID19.

All the court cases from 16th March to 6th May have been rescheduled due to the impact of covid19.⁵¹

6. Statistical Analysis

In total 95 incidents during the 90 days period covered in this report from 1st February-30th April 2020, reporting approximately one incident per a day. When the number of incidents in two periods is compared, the number of incidents reported prior to the covid-19 curfew is slightly higher than the number of incidents reported during the curfew. The incidents could be under-reported during the curfew period than previously.

Period	Number of days	Number of incidents	Incidents per day
Before Curfew	48 days	54	1.13
During Curfew	42 days	41	0.98
Total	90 days	95	1.06

Table 1: Number of incidents before and during curfew

Below statistics were generated taking number of incidents into consideration. In many incidents, the number of victims is more than one, so the number of victims is much higher.

When types of violations were looked at, there were a higher number of incidents related to repressive, legal, institutional and policy changes prior to the curfew. During the curfew, the number of physical attacks, arrests, verbal threats and hate speech related incidents have increased.

Type of violation	Before Curfew		During Curfew		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Killings	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%
Physical attacks	5	9%	13	32%	18	19%
Arrests	2	4%	7	17%	9	9%
Verbal threats	5	9%	5	12%	10	11%
Death threats	2	4%	1	2%	3	3%
Hate speech	2	4%	4	10%	6	6%
Intimidation	3	6%	0	0%	3	3%
Hacking and blocking of social media profiles and pages	2	4%	1	2%	3	3%
Questioning by military or police	4	7%	1	2%	5	5%
Visits, inspection and questioning at residence/NGOs	1	2%	3	7%	4	4%
Repressive legal, institutional and policy changes	19	35%	2	5%	21	22%
Questionable appointments	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
Others	8	15%	3	7%	11	12%
	54	100%	41	100%	95	100%

Table 2: Types of violations

* Two persons were killed during the Anuradhapura prison shooting incident. However, it was considered as a single incident.

When geographical areas of the incidents are considered, there is a significant difference between before the curfew and during the curfew. Before curfew many incidents were reported from Colombo district in the Western Province and Northern and Eastern Provinces. In addition, there were many incidents which were policy/legal or institutional actions applicable throughout the country, which come under the 'not applicable' category.

During the curfew period, 49% of incidents were reported from districts outside Western Province and Northern, and Eastern provinces. There is no significant difference between incidents reported before curfew and during curfew in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. 22% incidents were reported before, 20% incidents reported during the curfew. However, this is a significant difference, when we compare this trend with January 2020, and year 2019. Usually 32%-52% (38% of incidents in average) were reported from the North and East provinces since January 2019 until January 2020.

Location	Before Curfew		During Curfew		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Colombo	19	35%	6	15%	25	26%
Gampaha and Kalutara	2	4%	1	2%	3	3%
North and East	12	22%	8	20%	20	21%
Other areas	6	11%	20	49%	26	27%
Not Applicable	10	19%	2	5%	12	13%
Not mentioned	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
Online	4	7%	4	10%	8	8%
Total	54	100%	41	100%	95	100%

Table 3: Geographical location

When looked at the types of victims, 23% of the total incidents were about repression of government officers. While in the pre curfew situation, this largely included influences and threats by politicians and others, in the curfew situation this was largely related to alleged irregularities of government allowance provided to vulnerable persons. Repression of journalists (17%) seemed to be the second major pattern, this was a pattern which continued for several months. When looking at other categories, 11% was about civil society activists, while 8% were about protesters. There were 31% of other incidents.

Category of Victims	Before Curfew		During Curfew		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Journalists	10	19%	6	15%	16	17%
Civil Society Activists	6	11%	4	10%	10	11%
Protesters	6	11%	2	5%	8	8%
Student Activists	3	6%	1	2%	4	4%
Government officers	8	15%	14	34%	22	23%
Lawyers	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%
Politicians	0	0%	4	10%	4	4%
Others	20	37%	9	22%	29	31%
Not applicable	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
	54	100%	41	100%	95	100%

Table 4: Type of victims

When the gender of the victims was considered, 15% of total incidents were related to women. There was no significant difference before the curfew and during curfew. However when it comes to men, 28% of incidents before the curfew and 63% of incidents during the curfew, were related to men. There is a significant increase in the number of men as victims. It is to be noted that more incidents before the curfew were legal, policy and institutional actions and therefore 50% incidents were categorized as gender was inapplicable. The number of such incidents have dramatically reduced during the curfew period.

Gender of the victims	Before Curfew		During Curfew		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Male	15	28%	26	63%	41	43%
Female	9	17%	5	12%	14	15%
Not Applicable	27	50%	6	15%	33	35%
Not mentioned	3	6%	4	10%	7	7%
	54	100%	41	100%	95	100%

Table 5: Gender of the victim

In 29% of the total incidents, alleged perpetrators were either Police or military. In 20% of incidents before the curfew and 5% during the curfew, alleged perpetrators were other government officers. This could be due to the fact that the majority of the regular government and other offices were closed down during the curfew period. In 15% of the total incidents, alleged perpetrators were politicians. Also in 15% of incidents during the curfew (6% of total incidents), alleged perpetrators were villagers. These were mainly incidents in which government officers were assaulted by villagers over irregularities occurred in the distribution of 5000 LKR government allowance during covid19. In 8% of the total incidents alleged perpetrators were business persons.

Alleged perpetrator/ responsible persons	Before Curfew		During Curfew		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Military and Police	14	26%	14	34%	28	29%
Government and officers	11	20%	2	5%	13	14%
Politicians	9	17%	5	12%	14	15%
Business persons	4	7%	4	10%	8	8%
Courts	3	6%	0	0%	3	3%
Villagers	0	0%	6	15%	6	6%
Not mentioned	3	6%	2	5%	5	5%
Others	10	19%	8	20%	18	19%
	54	100%	41	100%	95	100%

Table 6: Alleged Perpetrator or the responsible party to the incident

7. List of incidents: 1st February 2020 – 30th April 2020

	Date	District	Description	Source
A. Repression of Journalists				
Before curfew				
1	3-Feb-2020	Colombo	A pro-government trade union, <i>Progressive Workers Union Commercial and Industrial Services</i> at Lake house government media company complained to the CID of the police, asking to launch an investigation into at least 10 journalists regarding their alleged connection with Swiss embassy employee who was reported to have been abducted and legal case filed by two activists questioning present President's presidential candidacy based on his citizenship. In the complaint, names of five journalists and media workers were mentioned : (1) former Chief Executive Officer of Lakehouse : Krishantha Cooray, (2) former Editor of Sunday Observer: Dharisha Bastians (3) Co-editor of Sunday Observer: Anurangi Singh (4) former editor of Resa newspaper: Ranjith Samarakoon and (5) New media head of Lakehouse Maduka Thaksala Fernando. The letter also requested confiscation of laptop used by Darisha Bastians currently used by Anuranghi Singh.	(1) නන්දරාගන් මාධ්‍යවේදීන් දඩයම් කරන්න : ලේක් හවුස් ෂීෂිලොක්ලා ආණ්ඩුවෙන් ඉල්ලයි News Tube. https://newstube.lk/news/9435-2020-02-04-15-00-58 published 4 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May. (2)Gota's Goons Ramp Up Crackdown On "Disloyal" Journalists And Their Sources https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/gotas-goons-ramp-up-crackdown-on-disloyal-journalists-and-their-sources/ published 11 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May.
2	10-Feb-2020	Colombo	The CID has recorded a statement from Sunday Observer Journalist Anurangi Priyamvada Singh over the Swiss Embassy staffer incident - a journalist whose name was also mentioned in the previous incident. The Colombo Magistrate's Court was told that Singh was questioned over former <i>Sunday Observer</i> Editor Dharisha Bastians and possible links to the incident involving the Swiss Embassy staffer	<i>CID records statement from Sunday Observer journalist.</i> The morning. http://www.themorning.lk/cid-records-statement-from-sunday-observer-journalist/ published on 11 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. <i>CID grills journalist over former Sunday Observer Editor.</i> Colombo Gazette. https://colombogazette.com/2020/02/11/cid-grills-journalist-over-former-sunday-observer-editor/ published 11 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
3	4-Feb-2020	Trincomalee	A son of a politician based in Trincomalee who is also a bus owner has allegedly threatened a journalist. The journalist: W.G. Roshan Kumara has been carrying out his duties to report a road accident involving a passenger bus in Kanthale around 6 am in the morning.	<i>Sri Lanka: Political thugs harass one more journalist on duty.</i> Sri Lanka Brief. https://srilankabrief.org/2020/02/sri-lanka-political-thugs-harass-one-more-journalist-on-duty/ published 5 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

4	18-Feb-2020	n/a	Janayugaya.lk claimed that several journalists attached their website have received phone calls threatening them with death after publishing an article criticizing a Buddhist monk who preached misogynistic preaching about women. The monk claimed that “women who allow their husbands to make tea for them will suffer in hell” and also claimed that women are less meritorious than men.	ජනායුගයට නාමික බෞද්ධ පාතලයන්ගෙන් මරණ තර්ජන. Janayugaya. https://janayugaya.lk/2020/02/18/threats-from-buddhists/ published on 18 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
5	23-Feb-2020 and earlier	Colombo	According to Anidda newspaper, journalists who are members of UNP backed trade union "Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya" at Lake House have been selectively discriminated against for salary increments.	Anidda newspaper published on 23rd February, page 1
6	24-Feb-2020	Batticaloa	A Batticaloa based journalist's house was visited by people who claimed to be from the CID of the police.	“Is CID threatening Tamil journalist and his Family?” (Tamil) Tamil Win. https://www.tamilwin.com/community/01/239435?ref=archive-feed published 24 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
7	1- Feb-2020	Mullaitivu	A Mullaitivu based journalist questioned on the phone about a twitter post, about a protesting family member of disappeared and his whereabouts.	Direct information given to INFORM
8	2- March 2020	Vavuniya	The director of Vavuniya-based Thinappuyal newspaper, Sakthivelpillai Prakash and his wife alongside another editor, were summoned by Sri Lanka's Terrorism Investigation Department	Vavuniya newspaper director summoned by Sri Lanka's TID after covering UN Human Rights Council. Tamil Guardian. https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/vavuniya-newspaper-director-summoned-sri-lankas-tid-after-covering-un-human-rights-council published 3 rd March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. வவுனியாவை சேர்ந்த ஊடகவியலாளரும் அவருடைய மனைவியும் தற்போது விசாரணைக்கு அழைக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறார்கள். சிவசக்தி ஆனந்தன். Thinappuyal News. http://www.thinappuyalnews.com/archives/224101 published 2 nd March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020
9	8 th March 2020	Mullaitivu	Mullaitivu regional journalist was stopped and questioned by the Sri Lankan Military while he was going to cover the ritual at the Mullivaikkal beach held for the LTTE cadres who died in the war.	Direct information given to INFORM
During Curfew				
10	28 th March 2020	Badulla	A journalist was threatened with death over phone calls for reporting about keeping shops open violating covid19 curfew laws. The suspect was arrested on 28 th March after the journalist's complaint.	Lankadeepa. මාධ්‍යවේදියෙකුට මරණ තර්ජන එල්ල කළ පුද්ගලයෙකු අත්අඩංගුවට. Click here for the link . Published 28th March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.

11	29 th March 2020	Kurunegala	<p>Web journalist Nuwan Nirodha Alwis was arrested for allegedly publishing unverified news about a suspected Covid19 patient in a private hospital. When he revealed the source of his information – a medical doctor in the private hospital, the source was also arrested. Each of them were detained for two weeks at the remand prison after presenting before the magistrate.</p> <p>According to information mentioned in various websites, Nuwan Nirodha had been a close ally of Rajapakse family in the past. However, for the last several years he has been a hard critique of them. Lankaviews website reported that this arrest may be linked to his recent criticisms against Rajapakses.</p>	<p>"නුවන් නිරෝධ අත්අඩංගුවට ගැනීම රාජපක්ෂලාභී දේශපාලන ප්ලීගැනීමක්!" Lankaviews. Click here for the link. Published 30th March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>බොරු තොරතුරු දුන් වෛද්‍යවරයකු පිළිබඳව. Lankadeepa. Click here for the link. Published 30th March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
12	31 st March 2020	Kilinochchi	<p>Nadarasalingam Thusanth (a Tamil journalist) in Kilinochchi was attacked with swords by an unknown group of persons at his office.</p>	<p>Tamil journalist attacked in Kilinochchi, despite military enforced curfew. Tamil Guardian. https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/tamil-journalist-attacked-kilinochchi-despite-military-enforced-curfew%C2%A0 published 31st March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
13	6 th April 2020	Colombo	<p>A journalist and two makeup artists working in a leading private media institution claimed they were terminated from their employment after they exposed a special event organized by the institution violating curfew laws related to covid19. However, the letters of termination claimed that their work was discontinued due to poor performance.</p>	<p>Direct information given to INFORM</p>
14	10 th April 2020	Colombo	<p>Another makeup artist working in the same private media institution claimed being terminated for requesting protective equipment. However, the letter of termination claimed that their work was discontinued due to poor performance.</p>	<p>Direct information given to INFORM</p>

15	April	Batticaloa	Few Batticaloa journalists were personally targeted on Facebook with hate posts and comments. This was because they reported about an injustice regarding the distribution on rations in the Batticaloa area to the mainstream media (Shakthi TV). According to the targeted journalists and a trusted source in Batticaloa the government representatives who conducted the distribution had gone to the houses who had given interviews to the mainstream media. They have threatened them saying that they will cancel their Samurdhi benefits if they give interviews of this sort again. They also managed to get video clips of those people who gave interviews to talk against the journalists. They had made them say that the journalists had forced them to say that they received expired rice by the government to the media. The government officials are now circulating their video to discredit these journalists in an attempt to prove the information is wrong. The Batticaloa District Tamil Journalists Association has written an open letter to the President of Sri Lanka condemning the actions of local government officials and representatives.	Direct information given to INFORM
B. Repression of Freedom of Assembly				
<u>Before Curfew</u>				
16	24-Feb-2020	Colombo	Police assaulted protesters, who were former employees of National Housing Authority, and who had blocked the Galle Road near to Presidential Secretariat. 3 female protesters were hospitalized.	Police assault women protesters in Colombo ; Activists & media silent – (Video). Newshub. http://newshub.lk/en/2020/02/26/police-assault-women-protesters-in-colombo-activists-media-silent-video/ published 26th February 2020. last accessed 29 th May 2020.
17	25-Feb-2020 or before	Colombo	Hut of protesting disabled soldiers made at government designated “demonstration site” was forcibly removed by the police	ආබාධිත රණවිරුවෝ නන්දසේනගේ ආණ්ඩුවට දෙස් නියයි..! අවටාලය ගැලවීමත් සමග රණවිරු උපවාසය උණුසුම් වෙයි..! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJnzUr3IxRI published by duishen adaviya on 25 th February 2020. last accessed 29 th May 2020.

18	4-Feb-2020	Jaffna	Students of University of Jaffna were refused entry to the University premises after they expressed support for protests as Sri Lanka marked its Independence Day. The students had planned to raise black flags and banners in line with other protests. Once they were refused entry, they hoisted the flags on the gates that line the university. However, shortly after security guards at the campus removed all the flags and banners.	Students refused entry to Jaffna University after support for Independence Day protests. Tamil Guardian. https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/students-refused-entry-jaffna-university-after-support-independence-day-protests published on 4 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
19	5-Feb-2020	Colombo	An "Agitation site", later called "Demonstration site" was established near to Galle face ground for holding protests. However, activists and trade unions expressed concerns that this will be used to restrict the freedom of assembly, and protesters may not be allowed to protest in sites other than this site. Cabinet Spokesperson Bandula Gunawardane said that "necessary actions will be taken if protests were conducted causing inconvenience to public and causing hindrance to day today activities"	Separate Agitation Site Allotted for Protests. Ada Derana. http://www.adaderana.lk/news/60628/separate-agitation-site-alloted-for-protests Published 5 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. Reasons to introduce 'Agitation Site' revealed. Ceylon Today. https://ceylontoday.lk/news-more/11559 Published 6 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. Anidda newspaper on 9th February Anidda page 2
20	27-Feb-2020	Colombo	Police have allegedly threatened peaceful protestors that they will be arrested unless they move into the designated agitation site. The protestors were mainly women who have taken microfinance loans and caught in a debt trap and human rights activists. Microfinance loans have pushed rural women into debt traps, with high interest rates charged. The protestors marched from Pettah railway station towards the Presidential Secretariat.	"ඒ ඉස්සර, මෙකඩ අරෙස්ට් කරනවා". Vikalpa. https://www.facebook.com/Vikalpasrilanka/videos/487797898562366/ published 27 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. "අපි උද්ඝෝෂණ ස්ථානය පිළිගන්නේ නෑ. මේ මිනිසුන්ගේ ඇත්ත ජරණය යට ගහන්න නිල ඇඳුමේ බලය පාවිච්චි කරන නින්දිත ක්‍රියාවලිය අපි තරයේ හෙළා දැක්කවා" Vikalpa Live Video. https://www.facebook.com/Vikalpasrilanka/videos/2782779415282563/ published 27 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

21	24 th February 2020	Gampaha	<p>On 24th of February, the students of Kelaniya University protested against CCTV cameras installation in the university premises as they believed it violates their privacy and used to suppress student activism. In a statement issued by the students, they claimed that CCTV cameras were previously used to identify student activists who participated in a protest, and they also accused that in another instance authorities used manipulated and edited images originally taken from CCTV cameras.</p> <p>Despite their protests, the university administration continued installation of CCTV cameras. Then a group of student activists had removed some CCTV cameras and handed them over to university authorities on 25th February. Two days later, 16 university students were arrested for damaging CCTV cameras. Another 25 students were suspended from their studentship for 2 years by the University Administration after convening the disciplinary committee on the next day. In addition all students were barred from entering Dalugama premises of the university and asked to leave their hostels by 29th of February. It seemed that actions taken against students were disproportionate.</p>	<p>Statement by students Council of University of Kelaniya. Language: Sinhala. 25th February. Click here for the link. Last accessed 29th of May.</p> <p>Students of Kelaniya University Suspended for removing CCTV Cameras. Daily Mirror. http://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/25-students-of-Kelaniya-uni-suspended-for-removing-cctv-cameras/108-183997 published 28th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
22	27-Feb-2020	Colombo	<p>On 27th of February university student activists started a protest in front of the Ministry of Higher Education building in Ward place, Colombo. The students launched a continuous protest against the long-time closure of the University of Ruhuna. Colombo court had issued a court order to remove the protest hut made by the students, and to prevent students from protesting either on the road or on the pavement of the road. They were also prevented them from entering the government office premises. This literally meant according to the order they could no longer continue the protest. The students were told that they will be arrested and charged for contempt of court unless they obeyed. The order was issued against Inter University Student Federation (IUSF) convener Rathkarawwe Jinarathana Thero, Convener of General Students Association of Ruhuna University Weranga Pushpika, Convener of General Students Association of Rajarata University Wasantha Mudalige, Co-conveners of General Students Association of Peradeniya University Mangala Maddumage, and Gihan Weerasekara and other protesters who participated in the protest with them.</p>	<p>විශාස වෛද්‍ය නගමින් උම්මන්තක උපකුලපති සුච්චි අමරසේන විසින් ආණ්ඩුවේ නියාය පනරය අනුව සිදුකරන" IUSF.</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/iusf Sri Lanka/videos/184986842834772/ Published 27th February 2020. last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>

23	1 st March 2020	Colombo	Rathkarawwe Jinaratana Thero, convener of IUSF was been arrested with 21 university students by Police. The arrest was made as the group has engaged in a protest in front of the University Grants Commission 'hindering public'. They were presented before the magistrate on 2nd March and remanded until 16th of March 2020. The bail application filed by them was rejected by the court on 6th of March, despite the lawyer informing the court that some students have to sit for an exam.	<p>IUSF Convener arrested with 21 university students. Lankanewsweb. https://www.lankanewsweb.net/67-general-news/57317-IUSF-Convener-arrested-with-21-university-students Published 1st March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>22 university students remanded for violating court orders. NewsFirst. https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/03/02/22-university-students-remanded-for-violating-court-orders/ Published 2nd March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>Court rejects bail application filed by 22 uni students. Ceylon Today. https://ceylontoday.lk/news-more/12587 Published 6th March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
24	8 th March 2020	Mullaitivu	Military Interfered an almsgiving ritual held at Mullivaikkal beach for remembering the LTTE cadres who died in the war. The military had taken down the vehicle numbers and NIC numbers of the people who participated in this ritual.	Sri Lankan army disrupts ceremony to commemorate Tamil war dead. Tamil Guardian. https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/sri-lankan-army-disrupts-ceremony-commemorate-tamil-war-dead Published 12 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
25	13 th March 2020	Batticaloa	At least six people have been arrested by Sri Lanka's Special Task Force after locals protested against the transfer of a patient suspected of having Covid19 to the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital. However, no protesters were arrested in similar protests in south	<p>Arrests in Batticaloa after protest over coronavirus patient transfer. Tamil Guardian. https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/arrests-batticaloa-after-protest-over-coronavirus-patient%C2%A0transfer Published 13th March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>Covid-19: Protesters arrested in Batticaloa. Ceylon Today. https://ceylontoday.lk/news-more/12834 published 14th March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>Residents protest against converting Hendala Leprosy Hospital. Ceylon Today. https://ceylontoday.lk/news-more/12564 published 5th March 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
During curfew				
26	22 nd March 2020	Anuradhapura	2 prisoners were killed and 6 were injured in the Anuradhapura prison. The incident happened when prisoners were protesting demanding their release after one inmate was identified of COVID-19.	Update: Shooting at Anuradhapura prison; 2 dead, 6 hospitalized. Newsfirst. https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/03/22/update-shooting-at-anuradhapura-prison-2-dead-6-hospitalized/ published 22 nd March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

27	9 th April 2020	Kandy	On 9th April, hundreds of people in Doluwa, in the Kandy district, came to the road demanding food and relief in the context of the three-week-long indefinite curfew. Media coverage showed one woman saying she had only had boiled jackfruit for four meals, another man asking what he could give to his four children to eat and several complaining that they were helpless as they could not engage in daily work that was their livelihood. One woman said there were many poor families, but they had observed assistance being delivered on a political level, another man accused officials of distributing (assistance) to their own families and another man said people won't gather like this if distribution (of assistance) was done equally to all. Close examination of the TV news broadcast with a video of the protest indicates this was a spontaneous protest by people desperate for food and other essentials to sustain their lives. There were no visible leaders or placards that are common in most organized protests. However, the next day, police had arrested one person who had participated in the protest and he was remanded till 16th April 2020.	Newsfirst, Primetime Sinhala news, at 7pm news, 9th April 2020, available at https://www.newsfirst.lk/programs/news-sinhala/ (37.43-40.32), Last accessed 29 th May 2020. Free Expression, Hunger and Racism in the context of covid19. Groundviews. Ruki Fernando and Damith Chandimal. https://groundviews.org/2020/04/14/free-expression-hunger-and-racism-in-context-of-covid19/ published 14 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
C. Arrests related to facebook posts, threats and risks online				
Before curfew				
28	9 th March 2020		Human Rights Defender and TNA nominee Nalini Ratnarajah was targeted with hate speech comments and memes in social media.	Video. Tamilcnn East. https://www.facebook.com/100037806703721/videos/198203994783156/ Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
29	9 th March 2020	Online	Women Nominees to be candidates of upcoming election: former Human rights commissioner Ambika Satkunarajah and women's rights activist Nalini Ratnarajah were subjected to derogatory remarks and defamatory reporting by Tamil news website athirvunews. Ratnarajah was mainly targeted for her activism on reproductive rights and women's rights.	யாழ்ப்பாணத்து பனங்கட்டியை விட கொழும்பு சீனி இனிக்கித்தம்.!! Athirvunews. Click here for link. published 9 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. தமிழ் மண்ணில் இப்படி ஒரு ஆணுறை நளினி எதற்கு? Athirvunews. Click here for link. Published 10 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. நான்கு பொலிஸ்கடன் சேர்ந்து செய்தேன்! சாராய வெறியில் உளறிக்கொட்டிய நளினியின் பரபரப்பு விடியோ. Athirvunews. Click here for link. Published 10 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

30	11 th March 2020	Online	Chairperson of 'Stop child cruelty' Thushara Wickramanayaka posted that the official 'Stop child cruelty' facebook page was blocked for few weeks and when it was released someone called 'Freelance Work' owned the page. All the posts where the President and the Prime Minister tagged were deleted. And Facebook was refusing to remove the new owner even though the Thushara Wickramanayaka has proven that she is the authentic owner!	Facebook status published by Tushara Wickramanayaka on 11 th March 2020. https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157129698027149&set=a.10153328051522149&type=3&theater Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
31	12 th March	Online	Child protection activist Ruvini Wells's facebook account was blocked after she released a youtube video requesting to the CID of Sri Lanka to investigate on a child abuse video.	Youtube Video. "A request to the CID of Sri Lanka regarding the child abuse video" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIn2iD_4tyw&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR2F04kAXZZRiVxGBFP4E-GvWLVb4vDI5HvSqz7eM1uT2cvDGZf2cl6oHlo published on 11 th March 2020. "This account that was disabled this morning has been restored a little while ago. But lots of posts have been removed." facebook status Ruvini Wells. https://www.facebook.com/ruvini.wells.92/posts/1121646264843141 Published 12 th of March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
32	17 th March 2020	N/A	Police stated that they have launched investigations to arrest 40 suspects for spreading misinformation via social media about the coronavirus.	Investigations underway to arrest 40 suspects for spreading fake news on social media. News first https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/03/17/investigations-underway-to-arrest-40-suspects-for-spreading-fake-news-on-social-media/ Published 17 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
33	26 th March 2020	Colombo	The police visited a member of Inter University Student Federation (IUSF) Shihan Hansaka's house in Maharagama to question him about a Facebook post he wrote questioning the government. However since Shihan was not at home at the time, the Police had attempted to arrest his elder brother instead. IUSF in a statement mentioned that this attempt was made after he had criticized the government's decision to appoint Basil Rajapakse as the head of Presidential Task Force handling Covid-19 situation.	Shihan Hansaka's statement on the incident https://www.facebook.com/100003656977281/posts/1957665364365344/ published 26 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. Statement of IUSF regarding attempted arrest of Shihan and arrest of another student handed over to HRCSL. https://www.facebook.com/iusf Sri Lanka/posts/2546634732108411?_tn=-R published 7 th April 2020. last accessed 29 th May 2020.

34	1 st April 2020	N/A	Acting Inspector General of Police, (IGP) C.D. Wickramarathna instructed Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and all the Officers in Charge of Police stations to take legal action against those who publish posts on social media criticizing government officials and obstructing their duties. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka in a letter addressed to the Acting Inspector General of Police said the arrests made over criticizing public sector officials and policies across social media is in violation of the constitution.	<p>Sri Lanka Uses Pandemic to Curtail Free Expression :Police Ordered to Arrest Critics in Military-Led COVID-19 Response. Human Rights Watch https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/03/sri-lanka-uses-pandemic-curtail-free-expression Published 3rd April 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>Strict action against those criticise state officials on social media. Daily Mirror http://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking-news/Strict-action-against-those-criticise-state-officials-on-social-media/108-186028 Published 1st April 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>Sri Lanka Human Rights commission: police violate constitution by arresting social media critics. Newsfirst. https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/04/30/sri-lanka-human-rights-commission-police-violate-constitution-by-arresting-social-media-critics/ Published 30th April 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
35	2 nd April 2020	Online	Bimal Rathnayake- former MP representing JVP was subjected to fake news and hate speech campaigns at multiple times. On 2nd of April, he complained to the CID about two persons who have published such fake statements attributing to him. Even after this complaint, further fake news attributing him continued to publish. No updates have been publicized of any action taken by Police following his complaint.	Facebook Status by Bimal Rathnayake on 2 nd April about the complaint he made. https://www.facebook.com/bimaljvpsrilanka/photos/a.2305574589737718/2305574619737715/ Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
36	4 th April 2020	Trincomalee	A resident of Sumedhagama, in Trincomalee was arrested by Uppuveli Police for allegedly criticizing the Government Agent on facebook. He was released on Police bail with the order to appear before magistrate on 20th May. The complaint against him had been made by the District Secretary (Government Agent) of Trincomalee district. The arrested person is also a person linked to a political party of a current Cabinet Minister.	“ලංකාදීප” ඊ-පුවත්පත අප්‍රේල් 4 වැනිදා 2020 (සිංහල), පිටුව 4 "කොරෝනා මර්දනයේ දී අසාධාරණකම් කළැයි තර්මලේ දිසාපති විවේචනය කරලා" http://www.epaper.lk/Epaper_Digital/Read/27/28/247 Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
37	9 th April 2020	Kandy	Ramzy Razeek was arrested at his residence in Kandy for publishing a social media post criticizing racism targeted at Muslims in Sri Lanka and mentioning about the need of "an ideological jihad using pen and keyboard". A day later after publishing the said post, Ramzy announced that he would begin self-censoring due to death threats he had received. His arrest was just after he had made a complaint to the Police about those threats.	Details about Free Ramzy Razeek Campaign and all the details of his arrest and a list of articles are available at the blog https://freeramzy.wordpress.com

38	24 th April 2020	Online	A hate speech campaign targeted at LGBTIQ community was started by Youtuber, and at least two whatsapp groups with hundreds of members sharing hate speech content against LGBTIQ community in Sri Lanka continued for several weeks as an organized homophobic campaign. A complaint has been lodged on the matter.	Direct information given to INFORM
39	26 th April 2020	Online	An academic and activist was subjected to hate speech campaign after he published a facebook post criticizing "President's action to take advice from Buddhist monks instead of Supreme Court." A website named Colombo Today published an article that he has insulted the Buddhist monks, and also linked his LGBTIQ rights activism with the incident in a homophobic manner. Following that, there were many hate speech comments below his post indirectly threatening him with death, insulting comments targeting his ethnicity, and LGBTIQ rights and human rights activism.	Direct information given to INFORM
40	15 th April 2020	Gampaha	Bomiriyage Swarna Malkanthi- a woman of 50 years of age was arrested for publishing "fake news". she was released on Rs. 500,000 personal bail. According to Lankadeepa newspaper, Malkanthi has published facebook posts claiming that there are no essential food items and essential drugs for covid19 patients, and covid19 tests have been discontinued [1,2] . MP Ajith P Perera stated that she had published a facebook post claiming that there are no essential food items in Sathosa government owned grocery network and quoted a statement made by Dr. Padeniya[3]. There was also a facebook post in Malkanthi's facebook profile showing a screenshot of a website quoting Dr. Padeniya [The said article is no longer available at the website]. It says that corona testing has stopped after the Health minister has not given approval.	<p>[1] කොරෝනා ගැන අසත්‍ය ජරවාර කළ කත ලක්ෂ 5 ගවිර ඇපයක් මත මුදා හරියි. Lankadeepa. Click here for the link. Published 17th April. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>[2] කොරෝනා ගැන සමාජ මාධ්‍ය ඔස්සේ අසත්‍ය ජරවාර ගෙන ගිය කාන්තාවක් අත්අඩංගුවට Lankadeepa. Click here for the link. Published 17th April. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>[3] Statement by MP Ajith Perera. Video. සමාජ මාධ්‍යය ක්‍රියාකාරී නීති , ස්වර්ණා මල්කාන්ති ඇප පිට කිරීමේ මෙහෙයුම ඇය වෙනුවෙන් නීතිඥ ගුණරත්න... https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=534042250879625 published 17th April 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>(4) one of the seemingly posts led to the arrest https://www.facebook.com/swarna.malkanthi.56/posts/1203976403329003 Published 15th April 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>(5) Above post seemingly refers to Dr. Padeniya's statement 13:15- 15:00 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZrcyZV6AUg Hiru TV news telecasted on 6.55pm news on 12th April 2020 on health ministry's refusal do rapid testing for covid19.</p>
41	16 th April	Batticaloa	8 people who criticized government officials on Facebook with fake IDs were arrested by the Kattankuddy police.	அரச அதிகாரிகளை "பேக்" ஐடியில் விமர்சித்த 8 பேர் கைது! New Uthayan. Click here for the link. Published 16 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

D. Legal, institutional changes, appointments and undue influences on judiciary				
Before Curfew				
42	26-Feb-2020	Geneva	<p>The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) declared its decision to withdraw from co-sponsorship of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution 40/1 and the preceding resolutions 30/1 and 34/1 on 26th February. Earlier in the month, the Prime Minister also declared their intention to withdraw from the resolutions. Last year before the elections, then Presidential candidate Gotabaya Rajapaksa stated that he will not honor UN commitments of the previous governments. Survivors of violations, victim's families and human rights defenders have supported these resolutions and it is anticipated they may face reprisals if they continue to support these resolutions.</p>	<p>UNHRC resolutions: Dinesh announces withdrawal from cosponsorship in Geneva. Economy Next. https://economynext.com/unhrc-resolutions-dinesh-announces-withdrawal-from-cosponsorship-in-geneva-53767/ published 26th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>Sri Lanka withdraw rights resolution. Aljazeera. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/sri-lanka-withdraw-rights-resolution-200220054223108.html published 20th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
43	25-Feb-2020	N/A	<p>"Steps have been taken to regulate over a thousand NGOs operating against the country" a statement issued by the President said. February 25th, 2020 marked the completion of the first 100 days of assumption of office by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Above note about regulation of NGOs was included in the summary of decisions and actions taken, as published in the Presidential website.</p>	<p>Progress of first 100 days. President GoSL official website. https://www.president.gov.lk/progress-of-first-100-days/ published 25th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
44	19-Feb-2020	N/A	<p>Parliamentary Sectoral committee on National Security released a report with recommendations that would severely restrict freedom of association of NGOs, and civil society.</p> <p>The recommendations included to declare NGOs which are not registered under NGO secretariat as illegal and punishments to be imposed. It further proposed to take legal action against voluntary service organizations that are registered under Company Act as not for profit and limited by guarantee companies. It also proposed mandatory registration for all NGOs, and to have NGO secretariat either under social services ministry or defense ministry as a state policy, giving more powers and legal recognition to problematic NGO secretariat.</p> <p>The report further claimed that civil society leaders who were against legal amendments of the Voluntary Social Service Organizations (VSSO) Act were against the protections provided against money laundering and terrorist financing.</p>	<p>Report of the Proposals for Formulation and Implementation of relevant laws required to ensure National security that will eliminate New Terrorism and extremism by strengthening friendship among Races and Religions. Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Security.</p> <p>https://www.parliament.lk/uploads/comreports/1582610584075624.pdf published 19th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>

45	22-Feb2020	N/A	<p>Gazette calling armed forces to maintain public order was reissued. This provided additional powers to the military to intervene in civilian affairs. Human rights defenders, victim families and survivors of violations, fear this may lead to more surveillance, restrictions and intimidation on them and activities that maybe perceived as dissent.</p> <p>Note: <i>The similar gazettes calling armed forces to maintain public order was reissued during the curfew period. However they were not considered as incidents violating dissent in this report, as it could be contentious whether calling for armed forces is in requirement of responding to the covid19 situation.</i></p>	<p>President Gotabaya Rajapaksa re-issued the Gazette calling on armed forces to maintain public order. Business News.lk https://www.businessnews.lk/2020/02/22/president-gotabaya-rajapaksa-re-issued-the-gazette-calling-on-armed-forces-to-maintain-public-order/ Published 22nd February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
46	4-Feb-2020	Colombo	<p>National anthem was only in Sinhala in the National Independence Day event. Dropping of Tamil, the country's second national language was a departure from the previous government. A group of activists who sang the anthem in both languages in a public place, faced online threats and vilification in various social media platforms.</p>  <p>Replies</p> <p>gayan sanjeeewa · 2 months ago කොහේද බල්ලෝ එකම රටේ ජාතිදෙකකින් ජාතික ගීය කියන්නේ...එල්ලපල්ලා මේ බල්ලෝ.</p> <p>ආනති සේවයේ · 2 months ago ඇයි මේ හරක්ට තේරුම් ගන්න බැරි හානා දෙකකින් ජාතිකගීය කියන්න බැහැ කියලා ඇයි මේ ලංකාවට පටිට දෙමළු එහෙම කරන්නෙ</p> <p>danu denuwan · 2 months ago ගහල මරන්න ඕන මුත් වාගෙ හරක්</p> <p>Image: <i>One of the screenshots with death threats among youtube comments</i></p>	<p>Sri Lanka scraps Tamil national anthem at Independence Day. Aljazeera. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/sri-lanka-scraps-tamil-national-anthem-independence-day-20204103334093.html published 4th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>Some Links related to online threats and vilification which are still online (see comments):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. vikalpa tweet. https://twitter.com/vikalpavoices/status/1224559066145529861 published 4th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020. 2. කොළේ බලන් කොළඹදී ජාතික ගීය දෙමළින් කියු.. Rivira News. https://www.facebook.com/RiviraNews/posts/190901018962887 published 4th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020. 3. ජාතික ගීය දෙමළෙන් අවශ්‍ය ඇයි ? Voice Tube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKYXW4jRaMI published 4th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020. 4. අපි ආධිමර වෙන්න ඕන දෙමළෙන් ජාතික ගීය කියන්න..දෙමළෙන් ජාතික ගීය ගයි. Sath TV. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu-GNxuYQ-A published 4th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.

47	4-Feb-2020	N/A	One of the key accused persons in Rathupaswala killings (killing of three persons during a protest demanding clean drinking water in August 2013) was promoted to the rank of Major General. Brigadier S A D Anura Deshapriya Gunawardane has allegedly ordered the shooting	<p>Biggest-Ever Share of Army Promotions Effected on National Independence Day. Sri Lanka Army official website. https://www.army.lk/news/biggest-ever-share-army-promotions-effected-national-independence-day published 4th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>En route to Promised Land. Groundviews. Tisaranee Gunasekara. https://groundviews.org/2020/02/09/en-route-to-promised-land/ published 9th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>AG asks CJ to appoint Trial-at-Bar to hear Rathupaswala shooting: Army Brigadier, 3 other personnel to be charged. Daily News. https://www.dailynews.lk/2019/07/11/la-w-order/190854/army-brigadier-3-other-personnel-be-charged?page=1 published 11th July 2019. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
48	26-Feb-2020	Mullaitivu	Additional District Secretary (a senior government official) in Mullaitivu had made a written request to NGOs in the area asking to focus on infrastructure development and other programs and to reduce programs on women empowerment, youth training, human rights, land rights and similar other programs. The letter said programs that contained less than 70% of specified activities will not be approved.	<p>copy of the letter dated 26th February addressed to Heads of NGOs signed by K.Kanakeshwaran. Additional District secretary of Mullaitivu District shared online. See https://twitter.com/Mari_deSilva/status/1232594243107147777 Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
49	15 th February or earlier	n/a	Army spokesperson told Anidda newspaper at a press conference that there is no problem in giving promotions to those accused in crimes, as far as they are not proven guilty when they inquired about recent promotions given to military personnel accused of key crimes. This is seen as potential intimidation and possible reprisals against human rights defenders, survivors of violations and victim families who oppose such promotions.	Anidda newspaper, 16 th February, page 2
50	12-Feb-2020	Colombo	The Attorney General (AG) requested the magistrate court to stop arrested MP Ranjan Ramanayake from expressing views to the media. However, the court refused the request, saying that it does not have the authority to do so.	Ravaya newspaper, 16 th February page 1

51	12-Feb-2020	n/a	AG refused the request of acting Inspector General of Police (IGP) asking to temporarily suspend selected ongoing legal cases until IGP confirms that investigations previously conducted by CID, Police Special Investigations Unit, and Financial Crimes Investigation Division (FCID) have not occurred in a biased manner. However, AG refused claiming that he does not possess an authority to do so.	Lankadeepa newspaper, 13 th February, page 1
52	17-Feb-2020	Colombo	Colombo Magistrate Ranga Dissanayake questioned why an investigation officer who handled a key corruption case for the last 5 years was suddenly replaced with a new officer. The case was against Udayanga Weerathunga, former Sri Lankan ambassador to Ukraine for alleged money laundering and misappropriation over his involvement in the 2006 purchase of four MiG 27 aircraft for the Sri Lankan Air Force. The suspect is a close associate of Rajapakse government and he recently returned to Sri Lanka, after the appointment of the new President. There has been a red notice issued against Weerathunga by INTERPOL. As reported by Sri Lanka Brief, the government has been trying to get the bail for him even though according 8(1) of the Offences Against Public Property Act of Sri Lanka when the value of the offence exceeds 25000 LKR, bail cannot be granted until the conclusion of the case. The Magistrate also questioned why the case was not filed under public property act. As reported by Sri Lanka Brief, the transfer of the investigation officer was due to him not agreeing to these malpractices.	Udayanga Weerathunga case: What has happened to the Sri Lanka Police? Asks Magistrate Ranga Dissanayake. Sri Lanka Brief. https://srilankabrief.org/2020/02/udayanga-weerathunga-case-what-has-happened-to-the-sri-lanka-police-asks-magistrate-ranga-dissanayake/ Published 17 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
53	24-Feb-2020	Colombo	An accused of the case on the alleged abduction of 11 youths, former Navy commander Wasantha Karannagoda was unable to be present at the courts for the fourth time despite notices issued by the court. Police have told the court that they were unable to hand over the notices to the accused. However, he was seen at the National Independence Day ceremony sitting next to the AG. When this was questioned by a journalist on 28 th February at a press meeting, cabinet spokesperson MP Bandula Gunawardane said Karannagoda has been accused falsely, politically persecuted and has a right of not attending court hearings after presenting alternative facts as a war hero who has accomplished a great duty to the nation. When the journalist further asked why he did not attend the courts to present such facts, the spokesperson said that he will ask Mr. Karannagoda on the matter and will let know.	No show at courts by former Sri Lanka Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda for the fourth time! Sri Lanka Brief. https://srilankabrief.org/2020/02/no-show-at-courts-by-former-sri-lanka-navy-commander-wasantha-karannagoda-for-fourth-time/ published 24 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. Sri Lanka Rupavahini telecast on cabinet decisions today [Video: see minutes 42:00 -44:00] https://www.facebook.com/srilankarupavahini/videos/201823330895887/ Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

54	3 rd March 2020	Colombo	Sri Lanka rejected the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief claiming that it contained "inaccurate assertions and inadequate assessments."	UN special rapporteur on religious freedom: SL rejects "inaccurate assertions". EconomyNext. https://economynext.com/un-special-rapporteur-on-religious-freedom-sl-rejects-inaccurate-assertions-55215/ published 3 rd March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
55	5 th March 2020	Colombo	President Gotabaya Rajapaksa told the Heads of electronic and print media at the Presidential Secretariat that the 19th Amendment to the Constitution is a hindrance in fulfilling the aspirations of the people and added that he is hoping to secure a two thirds majority at the upcoming General Election to install a stable Government to carry forward his policies.	19 A, a hindrance to governance – President. Sunday Observer. http://www.sundayobserver.lk/20/03/08/news-features/19-hindrance-governance-president Published 8 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
56	10 th March 2020	Mannar	Mannar Magistrate Manikkawasakar Ganesharajah ruled that counsel appearing for the victims in the case do not have a legal standing to do so in the case of Mannar massgrave case. Judge however allowed the Office of Missing Persons (OMP) to stand in the dispute. He further said that "there is no locus standi either in criminal procedure or settled case law for attorneys appearing on behalf of fictitious persons called victims, who are staging politically-coloured theatrics on the platform of justice." The Attorney General's Department is conducting the inquiry. Last year when selected skeletal remains were sent to the US laboratory Beta Analytics, for radiocarbon dating, the remains were dated to a period between 1499 and 1719. However experts have told that carbon 14 dating alone was insufficient to conclusively determine the date of the burial site and the court is awaiting a separate report analysing the soil and other materials found in the grave.	Sri Lanka judge denounces victims of disappearances as fictitious Persons. JDS Lanka. http://www.jdslanka.org/index.php/news-features/human-rights/935-sri-lanka-judge-denounces-victims-of-disappearances-as-fictitious-persons Published 13 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
57	12 th March	Batticaloa	C. Chandrakanthan aka Pillaiyan who found guilty for the murder of Joseph Pararajasingham was given permission to contest in the upcoming parliament elections.	பிள்ளையானுக்கு தேர்தலில் போட்டியிட நீதிமன்றம் அனுமதி. Battinews. http://www.battinews.com/2020/03/blog-post_539.html Published 12 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
58	26 th March 2020	N/A	Sunil Ratnayake who was found guilty and sentenced to death for killing 8 civilians including 3 teenagers and on 5 year old child was released under Presidential pardon. The case was infamously known as the Mirusuvil Massacre.	Presidential Pardon to Fmr. Army Staff Sergeant Sunil Ratnayake. Newsfirst. https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/03/26/presidential-pardon-to-fmr-army-staff-sergeant-sunil-ratnayake/ published 26 th March 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

E. Repression against government officers				
During curfew				
59	Feb-2020	Galle	A Coastal Conservation officer was attacked when he went to observe an incident of illegal land filling. The government officers in Hikkaduwa Pradeshiya Sabha, and coastal officers had organized a protest against the police inaction regarding the attack. As reported by the Colombo Post website, the attack has been carried out by a hotel owner who has support from the government. A Police complaint has been filed on this under the complaint number CIB/02/113/124 at Meetiya Goda Police station.	<p>වෙරළ සංරක්ෂණ නිලධාරියාට පහරදුන් මැරයෝ තවමත් නිදැල්ලේ. Colombo Post. http://www.thecolombopost.net/news/56026/</p> <p>and Lankadeepa newspaper, 21st February</p>
60	23-Feb-2020	Anuradhapura	<p>Two forest conservation officers have been attacked during a raid. This has occurred when they arrested a suspect and a tractor.</p> <p>According to timesoflanka.com, forest officer of the Forest conservation Department in Thirappane in Kekirawa Division K.M. Kapila Dinesh, and Eruwawa Forest field assistant Ravindra Kumara have been attacked. The attackers have allegedly told that they clear the forest with the approval from a minister.</p>	<p>අඩවි වන නිලධාරීන් පිරිසකට මැර ජර්නලයක්. Lankadeepa. Click here for the link. Published 24th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>වන විනාශය වැළැක්වීමට ගිය නිලධාරීන්ට පරිසර ඇමති බිරිඳගේ මැරයින් පහර දෙයි. Times of Lanka. https://www.timesoflanka.com/2020/02/27/anuradhapura-forest-officers-assaulted-by-thugs/ Published 27th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
61	Feb-2020	Nuwara Eliya	United National Party (UNP) MP Naveen Dissanayake has allegedly threatened an officer of Urban Council of Nuwara Eliya when they attempted to remove a restaurant of which the lease period had expired two months ago. MP Dissanayake demanded to present a court order in order to remove the premises, while the officer replied that Urban Council has the legal power to remove the illegal premises, without a court order.	<p>මන්නරි නවීන් දිසානායක නිසා උණුසුම් වූ තුවරළුය. Hiru Gossip. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxUTXt-Tfeg published 22nd February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
62	Feb-2020	Galle	Several politicians intimidating the school principal of Waduramba Vidyalaya in Galle to admit a child to a school violating the procedures established by Ministry of Education had gone viral	<p>මේ විදුහල්පතිතුමිය ඔබතුමිය මෙතන උපදෙස් දෙන්න එපා ! ඔබතුමිය ගැනත් අපි දන්නවා " නීතියට පිරිත් වැඩකළ නොහැකි බව පැවසූ විදුහල්පතිවරයෙකුට රාජ්‍ය ඇමතිගෙන් තර්ජන !! Comrade.lk https://www.comrade.lk/latest-news/state-principal-threatened-by-principal-who-said-he-could-not-act published 18th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>

63	Feb-2020	Gampaha	A video went viral of a forest officer Dewani Jayatilaka who refused to release a mangrove forest island in Negambo to build a playground for a community despite pressure from a politician at a community meeting.	පරිසරය රැකගන්න තනිව සටන් කළ නිලධාරියා. Newsfirst. https://youtu.be/bHl4_5pEuzY Published 12 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
64	Feb-2020	Polonnaruwa	A local politician attached to the government has allegedly assaulted three Police officers when they went to arrest a suspect with a warrant. One police officer who suffered injuries has been hospitalized. R.M. Chaminda Lakshman Rajakaruna- a Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) member of Hukuragoda Pradeshiya Sabha has assaulted in this manner, when Police went to arrest the suspect who has not appeared in the court after given bail for an offence related to illicit alcohol. At the time, the suspect had been at the house of the politician.	පොදුජන පෙරමුණේ මන්ත්වරයෙක් පොලිස් නිලධාරීන් තිදෙනෙකුට පහර දෙයි. Ada. Click here for the link. Published 3 rd February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
65	10-Feb-2020	Colombo	Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) D.B.M. Kalanasiri has been transferred as a punishment for giving a lift to the interdicted investigation officer Shani Abeysekera to leave the CID premises after giving a statement. His lift has helped Abeysekera to leave the premises without facing the journalists who were waiting at the front gate. Abeysekera headed key criminal investigations on crimes committed against HRDs, journalists and others allegedly committed by the military during former Rajapakse period. The transfer has been done after an inquiry, and the National Police Commission has approved the transfer.	Lankadeepa newspaper, 10 th February, page14
66	01-February - 2020 or earlier	Colombo	A group of parents and teachers of Anula college in Nugegoda has made a complaint (ICB-1-144/224) to the Police saying that they were threatened with death and verbally abused by an unknown group claiming that they have complained to the educational department regarding some irregularities that had occurred in the school.	Lankadeepa newspaper, 1st February, page 7

During curfew				
67	24 th March 2020	Matara	Two Police officers were attacked by a group of people who were gambling during curfew in Mederipitiya, Deniyaya, Matara district, when the Police attempted to arrest them.	Lankadeepa epaper මාර්තු 25 page 3 ඇදිරි නීතිය අස්සේ සුදු කෙළලා අල්ලන්න ගිය පොලීසියට පහර දීලා http://www.epaper.lk/Epaper_Digital/Read/27/28/211 Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
68	25 th March 2020	Puttalam	Hospital security staff person was assaulted for informing a person that he cannot be allowed to enter a ward without permission.	Lankadeepa epaper (page 3) on 26 th March 2020 අවසර නැතිව වාට්ටුවට යන්න එපා කිව්වම පුත්තලම රෝහල් ආරක්ෂකට පහරදීලා http://www.epaper.lk/Epaper_Digital/Read/27/28/213 Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
69	4 th April 2020	Kegalle	A 16-year old teenager had attacked a Public Health Officer on covid19 prevention duty in Paththampitiya area in Rambukkana in Kegalle district. Note: The juvenile suspect was arrested while hiding in a jungle. The journalists were allowed to photograph and video the arrest in a manner that violates the privacy of arresting a juvenile suspect. The suspects photos were shared online, and were subjected to hate speech comments.	Teen who stabbed PHI placed in detention center. Ada Derana. http://www.adaderana.lk/news/62327/teen-who-stabbed-phi-placed-in-detention-center Published 6 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
70	12 th April 2020	Ratnapura	A Samurdhi officer was attacked by a villager over a dispute on irregularities of distributing 5000 LKR.	රුපියල් 5000 දීමනාව නොදුන්නැයි සමෘද්ධි නිලධාරියාට ගුවි අනි. Lankacnews. Click here for the link . Published 13 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
71	14 th April 2020	Galle	Grama Niladhari officer was threatened and blamed in obscene language by two local council members of Amabalangoda Pradeshiya Sabha stating that she should distribute the 5000 rupees according to their wishes, as their government is in power. The GN officer KD Nishanthi works at 66E, Thilakaudagama GN Division.	5000 දීමනාව කම ලබාදීමට දෙන්නැයි පුංචි මන්තරීන් රෝරාම සේවිකාවට කුණුහරුපෙන් බනිනි.. පොලීසි යයි.. Lankacnews. Click here for the link . Published 17 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
72	17 th April 2020	Matale	A Samurdhi officer was attacked by a villager over a dispute on alleged irregularities of distributing 5000 LKR.	රු. 5000 බෙදද්දී බහින්නස් වී පුස්සැල්ල සමෘද්ධි නිලධාරියාට පහර දීලා. Divaina. https://divaina.com/daily/index.php/pradeshiya-puwath/41374-2020-04-17-15-57-27 Published 18 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

73	18 th April 2020	Matara	A Samurdhi officer was attacked by a villager over a dispute on alleged irregularities of distributing 5000 LKR.	සහනාධාර මුදල් දෙන්න ගිය සමාද්ධි නිලධාරියාට පහර දෙයි. Click here for the link. published 18 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
74	20 th April 2020	Kandy	A Buddhist monk and illegal liquor business persons have threatened and assaulted a Police officer in Wariyapola Police station	වූදින හික්ෂුවට ඇප ගන්න අපිගේ ටිකට් කපයි. Janayugaya. https://janayugaya.lk/2020/04/25/bail-for-accused-monk-cuts-ips-ticket/ published 25 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. වාරියපොල සැකකාර හිමිනමට ඇප. Ada. Click here for the link. published 25 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
75	22 nd April 2020	Kegalle	A military officer was arrested for threatening a Samurdhi officer over alleged irregularities of distributing 5000 LKR rupees	සමාද්ධි නිලධාරියාට තර්ජනය කළ හමුදා නිලධාරියා රිමාන්ඩ්. Lankadeepa. Click here for the link. published 22 nd April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
76	22 nd April 2020	Kandy	Excise officers were threatened with death by pointing of a gun at them by a former MP and a group of thugs, when the officers attempted to arrest several persons who continued liquor business despite of government ban.	හඟුරන්කොන පොහොට්ටු මන්ත්‍රී ඇතුළු මැරුමින් සුරාබදු නිලධාරීන්ට පහරදෙයි... මරණ බවටත් තර්ජනය කරලා. Lankatruth. Click here for the link. published 23 rd April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
77	24 th April 2020	Puttalam	A GN officer and a Samurdhi officer were assaulted for alleged irregularities in 5000 rupees assistance distribution.	සමාද්ධි-ග්රාම නිලධාරී දෙදෙනෙකුට පහර දුන් පිරිසකට ඇප. Ada. Click here for the link. published 26 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
78	28th April 2020	Mullaitivu	Two Police officers who went to investigate a dispute between two groups in Kokilai, Mullaitivu were assaulted by a group of persons. They were admitted to the Mancholei hospital in Mullaitivu.	පොලීස් නිලධාරීන් දෙදෙනෙකුට පහරදීමක්. Mawbima. https://mawbima.lk/news-more/57001 published 29 th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
79	April 2020	Colombo and other districts	The President of Sri Lanka Grama Niladhari (GN) Association Sumith Kodikara told media that politicians of two major parties have made threats and assaults to the GN officers regarding the distribution of 5000 LKR. Another GN officer working in Kottawa area had told media that he was assaulted by a politician in the area who threatened him to withdraw from the 5000 rupees distribution work. He has made a complaint to the Kottawa Police on the matter.	දේශපාලකයන්ගෙන් ග්‍රාම සේවකලාට තර්ජන. Ravaya https://ravaya.lk/%E0%B6%AF%E0%B7%9A%E0%B7%81%E0%B6%B4%E0%B7%8F%E0%B6%BD%E0%B6%9A%E0%B6%BA%E0%B6%B1%E0%B7%8A%E0%B6%9C%E0%B7%99%E0%B6%B1%E0%B7%8A-%E0%B6%9C%E0%B7%8A%E2%80%8D-%E0%B6%BB%E0%B7%8F%E0%B6%B8-%E0%B7%83%E0%B7%9A/ published 1 st May 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

F. Other Incidents				
Before curfew				
80	Feb. 2020	Colombo	Shamila Liyanarachchi - a member of Committee to Protect Prisoners Rights (CPPR) has been threatened with death by a businessman because of her activism to bring justice regarding a child sexual abuse case. She also said that her colleague received a phone call threatening that her nude photos will be released if she continued the activism.	අපයෝජනයට ලක්වූ දැරිය වෙනුවෙන් කතා කළ ෂමීලාට මරණ තර්ජන. Voice Tube. https://voicetube.lk/all-videos/100-politics/2987-shamila-threatened-to-speak-out-on-behalf-of-abused-girl published 25 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
81	1st week- Feb-2020	Batticaloa	A human rights defender got 4 calls from intelligence officers asking questions about their activities and have told him that he needs to be careful because the situation has changed.	Direct information given to INFORM
82	22 Feb-2020 or earlier	n/a	Presidential committee on Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) chairman Dr. Lalithasiri Gunaruwan said the content of the MCC agreement is confidential, and cannot be provided even under an RTI request. This will make it difficult for concerned persons and groups to critique the agreement and campaign against it.	Ravaya newspaper, 23rd February page 1
83	Feb-2020	Colombo	Sulari Laknima: a disabled young woman has been allegedly threatened not to continue legal actions against those responsible for the accident made her permanently disabled. She and two others were wounded after a pandol constructed on roadside to welcome then Presidential candidate (and now President) Gotabaya Rajapakse has fallen down on them. The key suspect arrested, former Provincial Council member Upali Kodikara is a close associate of Rajapakse government. The pandol which led to the accident has been constructed without an approval from the relevant authorities. Despite of the incident, Kodikara was appointed as the chairman of Western Province Road Development Authority in last January.	කිසිදා ඇවිදිය නොහැකි ලෙස පොහොට්ටු තොරණ හිස මත වැටී එක් තැන් වුනු තරුණියට තර්ජන. Janayugaya. https://janayugaya.lk/2020/02/10/slpp-threatens-girl-who-is-helpless-due-to-slpp/ published 10 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. මහරගම පොහොට්ටු තොරණට යට වුණු සුලාච්ඤේ කළු එ කතාව. Silumina. Click here for the link. published 14 th September 2019. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. Tweet. Prasad welikumbura. @Welikumbura. https://twitter.com/welikumbura/status/1216408193347141632?lang=en published 12 th January 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
84	14-Feb-2020	Monaragala	Rathugala indigenous Vedda community leader was physically attacked after criticizing sand mining in the local area allegedly by the people engaged in sand mining.	පරිසරය වෙනුවෙන් කතා කලාට පහර කෑ ආදිවාසී නායකයා. Swarnavahini live at 8. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0preC-17rV8 published 16 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020. පහර කෑමට ලක්වූ රතුගල ආදිවාසී නායකයා රෝහලේ. Hiru news. http://www.hirunews.lk/234521/rathugala-indigenous-leader-who-was-assaulted-hospitalized published 16 th February 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

85	27-Feb-2020	Colombo	<p>Chairman of Information Technology Society Sri Lanka (ITSSL) Yasiru Kuruwitage was questioned by Police after he made a statement in social media that an ATM machine of a leading private Bank was insecure, and customer information and money could be stolen. He has made this statement based on information he received that a customer had experienced twice that the operating system of the computer of the ATM machine of the said bank was accessible after the ATM app in the ATM machine had crashed. After ITSSL made this statement, the National Movement for consumer rights protection has also written to the central bank of Sri Lanka requesting an inquiry in to the said risks.</p> <p>In the meantime, there has been an inquiry against Mr. Kuruwitage at Slave Island Police station for allegedly making a false statement against the bank. Slave island Police has noted down a verbal statement from him in the presence of several lawyers representing the bank. He says that he faced inconvenience while making his statement as the Police officer did not understand the technological aspects.</p>	<p>සමපත් බැංකුව ගැන මහ බැංකුවට පැමිණිල්ලක්- යයි රුව පොලීසි ගෙන යයි. Sri Lankan mirror. https://sinhala.srilankamirror.com/news/news-in-brief/22976-2020-02-29-12-20-15 published 29th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p> <p>Facebook video status. Chirantha R. Anthony Amerasinghe https://www.facebook.com/chirantha7777/videos/10219620124725090/ Published 29th February 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
<u>During curfew</u>				
86	31 st March 2020	N/A	<p>A journalist of Derana TV at the presence of several leading politicians made several racist slurs hurled at Muslims during a break in the political talkshow – Wadapitiya. It seemed as if it had been mistakenly aired.</p>	<p>Derana TV Chathura's Double Standards Exposed: Citizens Enraged Over Racist Slurs Of Derana TV Anchor. Colombo Telegraph. https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/derana-tv-chathuras-double-standards-exposed-citizens-enraged-over-racist-slurs-of-derana-tv-anchor/ published 2nd April 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
87	April	Jaffna	<p>Social workers distributing food were stopped and questioned by men in civil who claimed to be Army in Maruthankerny in Jaffna district</p>	<p>Direct information provided to INFORM</p>
88	1 st week of April	Matale	<p>Former Kandy district MP and Velukumar claims in a video that because of an order to not allow him to carry out relief work in the Panwila area by the Panwila Pradeshiya Sabha member of CWC he could not carry out the planned Covid-19 relief activities. He states that politics should not interfere in humanitarian work.</p>	<p>Facebook video status of Malayaga Kuruvi https://www.facebook.com/497554810404205/videos/1898665773600837/ Published 8th April 2020. Last accessed 29th May 2020.</p>
89	April first week / March last week	Vavuniya	<p>Intelligence agent visited house of activist</p>	<p>Direct information given to INFORM</p>

90	April first week / March last week	Vavuniya	Intelligence agent visited office of an NGO	Direct information given to INFORM
91	14 th April 2020	Colombo	Prominent lawyer Attorney at law Hejaz Hisbullah was arrested by the CID allegedly in connection with the Easter bombings in April 2019. On the 15th of April 2020 -The Bar Association of Sri Lanka wrote a letter to the IGP regarding the arrest. The President of Bar Association said that according to the information they have received, "the reasons for his arrest have not been made known at the time." and they were informed that "the arrest was based on certain functions attended by Mr. Hizbullah in his professional capacity, as a member of the Bar" Hizbullah has been legal counsel in a number of high-profile cases, including the challenge to the dissolution of parliament in 2018 and fundamental rights cases. Officers from the CID had visited him at his home on April 14, where they handcuffed and questioned him, and later took him into custody. A habeas corpus petition brought on his behalf said the authorities searched Hizbullah's legal office, opened files, and "perused his briefs and professional work related files."	https://twitter.com/CourtNewsLk/status/1250811907759411203/photo/1 (last accessed 16th April 2020) https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/president-gota-strikes-against-prominent-lawyer-while-tamed-basl-maintains-silence/ (last accessed 16th April 2020) http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=221208 (last accessed 16th April 2020) https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/23/sri-lanka-due-process-concerns-arrests-muslims (last accessed 30th April 2020)
92	20 th April 2020	Galle	A businessman was assaulted and CCTV camera equipment at his house were damaged by Police after he questioned about Police violence against two other persons in his neighbourhood.	මට පහර දුන්නේ, කරුණයෙකුට අමානුෂික ලෙස පහර දීම ගැන ප්‍රශ්න කළ නිසා https://peoplesforums.lk.blogspot.com/2020/05/blog-post_13.html published in May 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
93	24 th April 2020	NuwaraEliya	Local council member S. Karupan of Walapane Pradeshiya Sabha has been threatened with death by chairperson of the Pradeshiya Sabha Ananda Hiththatige. The chairperson Hiththatige has blamed the opposition members in obscene language and has made a death threat against Karupan. A police complaint has been lodged regarding the incident. Before the incident occurred, there has been an argument in the council over irregularities in distribution of 5000 rupees government assistance.	කොරෝනා අස්ථේ විපක්ෂය මරණ බවට චලපනේ සභාපති කියයි – video. NEWSI.lk https://www.newsi.lk/walapane-chairman/ published 24th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
94	24 th April 2020	Badulla	Former MP Chandima Wijesiri has threatened a woman for distributing financial aid given by another candidate <i>Note: distributing financial aids given by candidates could be in violation of election laws.</i>	මුදල් ආධාර බෙදූ කාන්තාවකට වම්න්ද විනේශිරිගෙන් තර්ජන. Neth News. http://nethnews.lk/article/76528 published 24th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.
95	29 th April 2020	Jaffna	Ariyakutti Nirmalarogan: a local council member representing EPDP in Chavakachcheri Pradeshiya Sabha and another person have been assaulted. This has occurred as they have spoke against illegal liquor business in the area.	කසිප්පු නවත්වන්න කතා කළ සභිකයාට පහර දීමක්...කැපුම් තුවාල සහිතව රෝහලට.. Gagana.lk https://www.gagana.lk/security/02/116762 published 30th April 2020. Last accessed 29 th May 2020.

End Notes

- ¹ President of Sri Lanka official website. “progress of first 100 days” <https://www.president.gov.lk/progress-of-first-100-days/> published on 25th February 2020. Last accessed 28th May 2020.
- ² 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council – High Level Segment Statement by Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Minister of Foreign Relations of Sri Lanka <https://www.mfa.gov.lk/43rd-session-hrc/> published on 26th February 2020 (Last accessed 27th May 2020)
- ³ Extra ordinary Gazette 2165-8 “A proclamation by His Excellency the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka” <https://www.parliament.lk/uploads/documents/gazettes/20200302-2165-8-en.pdf> published on 2nd March 2020. Last accessed 28th May 2020.
- ⁴ Article 70 (5) (a) A Proclamation dissolving Parliament shall fix a date or dates for the election of Members of Parliament, and shall summon the new Parliament to meet on a date not later than three months after the date of such Proclamation.
- ⁵ Article 70 (7) If at any time after the dissolution of Parliament, the President is satisfied that an emergency has arisen of such a nature that an earlier meeting of Parliament is necessary, he may by Proclamation summon the Parliament which has been dissolved upon the termination of the emergency or the conclusion of the General Election, whichever is earlier.
- ⁶ No need to reconvene Parliament – State Minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage. Sunday Observer. <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2020/04/19/opinion/no-need-reconvene-parliament-%E2%80%93-93-state-minister-mahindananda-aluthgamage> published 19th April 2020. Last accessed 28th May 2020.
- ⁷ මහජනවරණය පැවැත්වීම සහ පාර්ලිමේන්තුව යළි කැඳවීම. Hiru TV. <https://www.hirunews.lk/239434/president-gotabaya-rajabaksa-on-elections-and-reconvening-of-parliament> 25th April 2020. Last accessed 28th May 2020.
- ⁸ See below links for details on the impending constitutional crisis.
A constitutional solution to the impending constitutional crisis. Prof. Jayadeva Uyangoda. <https://groundviews.org/2020/04/30/a-constitutional-solution-to-the-impending-constitutional-crisis/> Groundviews. Published 30th April 2020. Last accessed 28th May 2020.
A Looming Constitutional Crisis, Courtesy Covid-19. Ameer Faiz and Nizam Kariapper. Daily Mirror. <http://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/A-Looming-Constitutional-Crisis--Courtesy-Covid-19/172-186513> Published 11th April 2020. Last accessed 28th May 2020.
Tweet by former Speaker of the Parliament. “Sri Lanka does not need another constitutional crisis”. <https://twitter.com/KaruOnline/status/125316362223810561> Published 23rd April 2020. Last accessed 28th May 2020.
- ⁹ Gazette notification issued by the Election commission http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2020/4/2172-03_E.pdf published on 21st of April 2020.
- ¹⁰ <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/fundamental-rights-petition-filed-against-holding-elections/>
- ¹¹ COVID-19 and Elections: Dilemma in Sri Lanka. Anfrel. <https://anfrel.org/covid-19-and-elections-dilemma-in-sri-lanka/> Published 20th May 2020.
- ¹² Maj. Gen.Hettiarachchi, appointed Rehabilitation Commissioner General. Daily News. <http://www.dailynews.lk/2020/02/15/local/211542/maj-genhettiarachchi-appointed-rehabilitation-commissioner-general> published 15th February 2020.
- ¹³ Maj. Gen. Vijitha Ravipriya appointed Customs DG. Daily FT. <http://www.ft.lk/front-page/Maj-Gen-Vijitha-Ravipriya-appointed-Customs-DG/44-696105> published 21st February 2020.
- ¹⁴ Army Commander Shavendra Silva heads National Operation Center for Prevention of COVID- 19 Outbreak. Presidential Secretariat <https://www.presidentsoffice.gov.lk/index.php/2020/03/17/army-commander-shavendra-silva-heads-national-operation-center-for-prevention-of-covid-19-outbreak/?lang=en> published 17th March 2020.
- ¹⁵ <http://www.themorning.lk/retired-maj-gen-appointed-poverty-eradication-task-force-co-chairman/>
- ¹⁶ Compete List of Task force members <https://www.president.gov.lk/presidential-task-force-on-economic-revival-and-poverty-eradication-established/> published 22nd of April 2020.
- ¹⁷ Former Air Force Commander Roshan Goonetilleke sworn in as Governor of Western Province. President’s Media Division. <http://www.pmdnews.lk/former-air-force-commander-roshan-goonetilleke-sworn-in-as-governor-of-western-province/> Published 24th March.
- ¹⁸ Students demanding on educational rights, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation employees about the termination of their jobs, former employees of National Housing Authority about the termination of their jobs, Project assistants who were given appointment letters but not jobs, pensioners, retired military Personnel, disabled soldiers and their wives, depositors of a bank, depositors of an investment company, several teachers trade unions, women affected by microfinance loans and others protested in front of the Presidential Secretariat and other government offices in Colombo.
- ¹⁹ News first “Over five protests continue in Colombo” <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/02/06/over-5-protests-continue-in-colombo/> published on 6th February 2020.
- ²⁰ News first. “Several protests continue in Colombo” <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/02/18/several-protests-continue-in-colombo/> published on 18th February 2020.
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