

Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka

1st -31st August 2020



"If those environmentalists are there, this country cannot be developed. (They) destroy this country" said person in the crowd to the President who visited Lankagama where a road a development project across Sinharaja world heritage forest was carried out with the involvement of military without conducting a proper environmental impact assessment. This news was telecasted and shared online. [See Video: Ada Derana https://youtu.be/BGQ5yAY8bm4?t=134](https://youtu.be/BGQ5yAY8bm4?t=134)

INFORM

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Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka in August 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.

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1. Executive Summary

This report provides some general trends and details of some significant incidents related to the repression of dissent in Sri Lanka in the month of August. This report was prepared mainly based on the information reported in mainstream and social media.

The report is based on 18 incidents related to repression of dissent in Sri Lanka. Section 1 includes the Executive summary which provides an overall summary of the report. Section 2 describes the methodology. Section 3 describes the socio-political context and some trends relating to human rights situation in Sri Lanka during the month. Section 4 provides a thematic summaries of the incidents described in the report. This month's report is organized under 4 themes: (4.1) Repression of civil society and NGOs, (4.2) Repression of state officials, (4.3) Legal, policy and institutional changes and (4.4) other incidents. Section 5 provides updates on previous cases relating to dissent with a focus on legal updates reported in media. Section 6 provides a statistical analysis of the incident included in the report looking at geographical location, ethnicity and gender of the victims, types of violation, category of victims, and perpetrators.

Context: Sri Lankan Parliamentary General Election was held on 5th August 2020. Sri Lanka Podujana Party (SLPP) led by President Gotabaya Rajapaksha won the election with an overwhelming majority winning 145 seats almost two thirds in the 225 member legislature¹. The cabinet of ministers, state ministers and other portfolios were appointed. Continued militarization, and Sinhala Buddhist majoritarian ethno nationalism were general trends. Focus of public discourse and media was much on election and post-election situation. Several incidents of election violence were reported before and after election. There was a crisis in the AJPB political party led by ultranationalist monk Gnanasara after they have won a single seat in the Parliament. A member of the party – a monk claimed that he was kidnapped by a group led by Gnanasara Thero. Protest in the Colombo port stopped after they had a discussion with the PM. Ten thousand unemployed graduates were given jobs. A group of unemployed graduates who were initially disqualified protested and they were included in the program after President had a brief conversation with them. However this was not the case of protests organized by relatives of the disappeared in Batticaloa who faced repression at the hands of Police. A web journalist was arrested under the charges of publishing news articles on his website that negatively impact the judiciary and the judicial hierarchy. Media organizations pointed out the lack of respect of media ethics in the case, but also said that “they believe this incident will not develop into a process of positive analysis of court decisions, exploring the work of court decisions, freedom to report its irregularities will be deprived.”

¹ [Rajapaksas win super majority in Sri Lanka parliamentary poll](#). The Hindu. Published 7th August 2020. Last accessed 29th September 2020.

Major incidents and trends related to dissent

Repression of NGOs and civil society: Repression of environmentalists, Policy changes to restrict activities of NGOs, Possibility of banning Tamil diaspora human rights groups were key concerns arising from the incidents related to repression of civil society and NGOs in this month. Police made a surveillance visit to a house where an environmentalist stayed, and asked to fill a form that includes information such as visitors, and their vehicle numbers. A son of the PM sent a letter of demand to another environmentalist, while anti-environmentalist rhetoric was expressed in mass media and social media. NGO secretariat was again gazetted under the Ministry of Defence. This may lead militarization, fear and increased surveillance of civil society activities by military, restricting freedom of association. Giving evidence before the PCol, a key suspect of journalist Prageeth Ekneligoda disappearance case claimed that two well-known human rights activists of Tamil Diaspora were former LTTE members and delisting them from terrorist groups was a mistake by former government. Last month media reported that the government has been considering to relist Tamil Diaspora activists and groups as terrorism related groups and individuals.

Repression of state officials: A State Minister speaking in parliament, denounced the members of office of Missing Persons (OMP) as having associations with Tamil diaspora and advocated, made statements against Sri Lankan army in relation to war crimes allegation and that hence, financial allocation to OMP should be curtailed. A sub-inspector who worked in key investigations occurred during former Rajapakse government was arrested. He was charged with fabricating evidence along with former CID director Shani Abeysekera who was also arrested previous month. A drug dealer who has threatened Police officers of anti-corruption unit of Mount Lavinia Police in Colombo District was arrested. Another Police officer was assaulted during raid in Balangoda in Ratnapura district.

Legal, policy and institutional changes: Several incidents during this month suggest that representation of ethnic minorities has been systematically denied institutionally, increasing militarization of state institutions and denial of representation of ethnic minorities could possibly limit and restrict freedom of dissent concerning ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups. Kandy Municipal staff hoisted and then removed 'lion only national flags' in which colour stripes that represent ethnic minorities were not included. Four monks were appointed to the controversial Presidential Task force for Archeological Management in the Eastern Province. There is no representation of ethnic minorities in the Task Force, despite of 75% of the population in the Eastern province being ethnic minorities. Women's Ministry was downgraded into a non-cabinet ministry, and a male minister was appointed as the minister. Same as the previous months, President issued a gazette calling for armed forces allowing them to engage in civilian affairs.

Other Incidents: President addressing a rally in Badulla stated that he is not afraid of the protest referring to then ongoing protest in the Port city, and criticized it as a baseless act conducted with the objective of causing inconvenience to the public. A court order was issued against a leader of families of enforced disappearances who organized a protest march on the international day against enforced disappearances. Young Tamil journalist in Jaffna was assaulted. A statement made at the parliament about Tamil people's history and heritage was

asked to be expunged from official hazard records, and online hate speech comments were made against the MP due to the statement.

Statistical analysis: There are 18 incidents in this month's report, a lesser number of incidents compared to the previous months. This may have been resulted by the media focus around the election and as we have refrained from including election related incidents in this report. 4 incidents were reported from Colombo, 3 from north and east provinces, 4 from other areas. In case of 6 incidents (33%) geographical location was not applicable which were mainly legal, institutional and policy changes. 2 incidents of physical attacks, an arrest, a verbal threat, 3 problematic written or verbal statements that could negative impact on dissent, a court order were also reported. All the victims (excluding events that affected both men and women) were men in general. 3 incidents were related to Sinhalese, while 4 incidents were related to Tamils. 5 incidents affected civil society organizations and activists. 2 were concerning protestors. 4 were about state officials. 3 incidents were legal and policy changes that affected ethnic minorities in general, 1 incident similarly affected women in general. In 6 cases, President and the central government were allegedly responsible. In 2 incidents it was other politicians. In 3 it was the court, while government institutions and officers were allegedly responsible in 2 incidents. In general persons and bodies linked to state were responsible for more than 70% of the incidents.

Case updates: Giving evidence before a Presidential commission of inquiry, a retired army intelligence officer said that abduction of journalist Keith Noyahr was ploy deployed by former government, and was acted and filmed by CID officers. He also said he was forced by CID officers to be a state witness. Retired army intelligence officer also said that CID officers influenced him to give a false statement that abduction was done by him on the instructions of current President Gotabaya Rajapakse (former defence Secretary). In the case of Hejaaz Hizbullah the magistrate ordered present copies of all the statements they recorded from the witnesses after defense counsel alleged that CID have only filed selective statements before the court. The Magistrate also made an order the Deputy Inspector General of Police Western Province to submit a report on the investigations as to how confidential statements made in the Magistrate's Court were leaked to the media. Human rights lawyer Hizbullah and social media writer Ramzy Razeek were in detention for more than 140 days by the end of August. Razeek was later granted bail on 17th September.

2. Methodology

This report provides some general trends and details of some significant incidents related to the repression of dissent in Sri Lanka in the month of August. Cases on election violations were not included in this report, expecting that more comprehensive reports on election violations will be published by the Election monitoring organizations.

This report was prepared mainly based on the information reported in mainstream and social media. 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

Parliamentary General Election was held on 5th August 2020. Sri Lanka Podujana Party (SLPP) led by President Gotabaya Rajapaksha won the election with an overwhelming majority, receiving almost 60% of total votes polled, and winning 145 seats almost two thirds in the 225 member legislature². Newly elected government gazetted Duties and functions of Ministries, appointed Ministers and state Ministers, and secretaries to the Ministries. Also the President appointed new members to the Presidential Task forces for 'Archeological heritage management in the Eastern Province', and for 'build a secure, country, disciplined, virtuous and lawful country.' Continued militarization, and Sinhala Buddhist majoritarian ethno nationalism were general trends. Focus of public discourse and media was much on election and post-election situation.



The Kirulapone office of Titus Perera- United National Party candidate contesting the Parliamentary election was attacked, his wife and another supporter were hospitalized. Then Opposition leader Ranil Wickramasinghe visited the hospital to meet with the victims. Photo courtesy: [Newswire](#).

Several incidents of violence reported in before and after the election. On 2nd August Ajith Prasanna, the Hambantota Municipal Councilor in Hambantota District in Southern Province was assaulted. He alleged that a group supporting the Hambantota Mayor has attacked them for refusing to wear a T-shirt supporting the mayor. One of victims also alleged that they were threatened again inside the hospital premises³. On 3rd August, UNP Candidate Titus Perera of Colombo District in the Western Province was assaulted and his office was vandalized. His

² [Rajapaksas win super majority in Sri Lanka parliamentary poll](#). The Hindu. Published 7th Aug 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

³ [Municipal Councillor assaulted after SLPP meeting](#). Newsfirst. Published 2nd Aug 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

wife and a supporter were hospitalized due to sustained injuries⁴. On 7th August, CMEV tweeted that Police and STF seen assaulting persons outside the Jaffna Central College counting centre in Jaffna district in Northern Province in an attempt to disperse the crowd due to a tense situation.^{5 6 7} A group of 4 employees working in Nawalapitiya Pradeshiya Sabha have been abducted and assaulted and pushed into a precipice. According to the media sources, they have been asked to kneel down before the abduction, then stripped off naked and then assaulted with iron bars inside the van. During the assault, the attackers have allegedly said, this was done because the victims have supported a candidate of a main opposition party during the election. They have been pushed into precipice on Nawalapitiya-Kuruduwatte Road after the assault.

The political party Ape Jana Bala Pakshaya (AJBP) led by ultranationalist monk Galabodaththe Gnanasara (also the leader of extremist BBS) received 1 parliamentary seat from the national list. Unable to choose a single member to represent the Parliament, the party went into a crisis. AJBP former secretary Vedinigama Wimalathissa Thero who has self-nominated himself for the position, went missing for some weeks, initially believed to be abducted, later appeared before the media and refuted the claims of being abducted⁸. Meanwhile, another member of AJBP Arambepola Rathanasara Thero claimed that he was abducted and beaten by a group led by Galabodaththe Gnanasara Thero, and reportedly sought possibilities of seeking asylum⁹.

Since previous month, Colombo Port workers have been protesting demanding to withdraw the GoSL's plan to hand over Colombo Port's Eastern Container Terminal to India for its development¹⁰. The protestors demanded that ECT should be kept as a complete Sri Lankan venture. As the protest continued the Police obtained a court order preventing the protestors from blocking access routes to the port on 1st of August¹¹. Though protestors disobeyed the order, it seems that they faced no reprisals. The next day, after discussion with the PM, the protestors called off the protest. Another protest was organized by the local employees of Chinese funded Colombo Port City Project alleged that they were treated discriminatively and their jobs were terminated unfairly¹². Ten thousand unemployed graduates were recruited to the government sector employment. A group of unemployed graduates who were initially

⁴ [UNP candidate Titus Perera assaulted](#). Daily Mirror. Published 4th Aug 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

⁵ [Police clash with mob at Jaffna Central College counting centre](#). Colombo Gazette. Published 7th Aug 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

⁶ [Tweet](#). @CMEV. Centre for Monitoring Election Violence. . Published 7th August 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

⁷ [Human Rights Commission receives complaints of STF and police election-count violence](#). Tamil Guardian. Published 19th Aug 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

⁸ [Ape Jana Bala Party to launch disciplinary inquiry against Vedinigama Wimalatissa Thera over disappearing act](#). LankaNewsWeb. Published 21st Sep 2020. Last accessed 29th September 2020.

⁹ [Ape Jana Bala Pakshaya National List crisis reaches Swiss Embassy](#). Newswire. Published 18th August 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

¹⁰ [Colombo Port workers allege 'Indian pressure', to go on indefinite strike over ECL development](#). Economic Times. Published 2nd July 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

¹¹ [Police obtain court order after port workers disrupt operations](#). Colombo Gazette. Published 1st Aug 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

¹² [Local employees of Port City accuse officials of discrimination](#). Colombo Gazette. Published 12th Aug 2020. Last accessed 29th Sep 2020.

disqualified from the program protested in front of Presidential Secretariat on 24th of August. However President while travelling in the vehicle, stopped at the protestors and spoke to them and asked to “go home without getting burned in the sun” and promised to provide jobs to all the unemployed graduates¹³. However when families of disappeared in Batticaloa protested remembering their loved ones and demanding justice on the international day against enforced disappearance, the police tried to stop them by obtaining a court order.



Arrested Web journalist Chathuranga de Alwis under the charges of ‘publishing news that negatively impact judiciary and the judicial hierarchy’. . Photo Courtesy: [Newswire](#).

A web journalist -Editor of the [lankanewsweb.org](#), Desmond Chathuranga de Alwis was arrested under the charges of “with publishing news articles on his website that negatively impact the judiciary and the judicial hierarchy under Article 111 C of the Constitution, for admitting that he is the administrator of this website and for destabilising the public order of the country under Section 6 of the Computer Crimes Act” according to Free Media Movement (FMM). Also his mobile Phone and laptop have been seized by the CID of Sri Lanka Police. FMM in a statement issued said that the article which has led to his arrest which accused judges of corruption was “clearly a careless case of reporting” and also noted that the “website does not seem to respect media ethics in general.” However FMM further warned that “they believe this incident will not develop into a process where the positive analysis of court decisions, exploring the work of the courts and the freedom to report its irregularities, will be deprived”¹⁴.

¹³ [Prez meets protesting graduates, says cabinet approves to recruit 10,000 more](#). Daily Mirror. Published 19th August 2020. Last accessed 29th September 2020.

¹⁴ [Sri Lanka Media Associations say that they are paying attention to the arrest of web editor Chathuranga de Silva](#). Sri Lanka Brief. Published 5th September 2020. Last accessed 29th September 2020.

4. Major incidents and trends related to dissent

4.1. Repression of civil society and NGOs

Repression of environmentalists, Policy changes to restrict activities of NGOs, possibility of banning Tamil diaspora human rights groups were key concerns arose from the incidents related to repression of civil society and NGOs in this month.



Environmentalist Sajeewa Chamikara speaking at a press conference. Photo Courtesy- [Lankaviews](#).

Police have visited an environmental rights activist's sister's house and asked her to fill a form that included information like visitors, vehicle numbers etc. A letter of demand asking compensation of 500 million rupees was sent to Sajeewa Chamikara -another environmental activist - by the Prime Minister's son for allegedly saying that there is hotel belonging to him nearby the Sinharaja forest- a world heritage tropical forest reserve site with high bio diversity- which recently came into discussion for government implementing a road development project using military, without proper environmental impact assessment. After the letter of demand, environmentalist issued a statement saying that alleged claim about a hotel belonging to Prime Minister's son is as an attempt to divert the discussion from its environmental focus. Few days later, the President visited area. One of the persons in the crowd told the President "If environmentalists exist we cannot develop this country further. They destroy the country." Also many anti-environmentalist rhetoric by various individuals, targeting environmentalists were published in social media at this time.

On 9th of August, the National Secretariat for Non- Governmental Organizations was gazetted as an institution under the purview of Ministry of Defense. Having NGO secretariat under the Defense Ministry could put NGOs and their employees under the surveillance of military, could silence dissenting opinions, and restrict activities of NGOs.

Giving evidence before the Presidential Commission on Political Victimization, a key suspect of in Prageeth Eknaligoda abduction case Shammi Arjun Kumararatne allegedly said that two well-known rights activists of the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) were LTTE members and delisting them from banned list of LTTE front groups under the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 by former government was wrong. A Press article published last month (July 2020) said that government has been considering to re-list the Tamil diaspora groups as terrorist groups.

4.2. Repression of state officials

A State Minister speaking in parliament, denounced the Chairman and a member of Office of Missing Persons (OMP) as having associations with Tamil diaspora and advocated, made statements against Sri Lankan army in relation to war crimes allegation and that hence, financial allocation to OMP should be curtailed. The Chair and members were lawyers and well known human rights activists.

A sub Inspector formerly attached to CID of Sri Lanka Police was arrested under the charges of fabricating evidence has reportedly told the Magistrate that the Police had “pressured” him to give a false statement to falsely implicate former CID director SSP Shani Abeysekera. Several former CID staff who have handled investigations of key crimes conducted during the former Rajapakse regime, alleged facing reprisals after government change. Currently former CID Director SSP Abeysekera is also under the arrest, and a key detective who handled the investigations fled the country several months ago.



Former Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Director Shani Abeysekera and Sub Inspector (SI) Mendis were further remanded. Photo courtesy : [Kushan Pathiraja FT.lk](https://www.ft.lk/news/sri-lanka-police-arrests-cid-director-shani-abeysekera/)

A suspected drug dealer has been arrested after he had threatened the Police officers of Corruption Prevention Unit in Mount Lavinia Police through a telephone call. Another Police constable attached Balangoda Police was hospitalized following an assault by a person, when Police went to investigate a person behaving an unruly manner.

4.3. Legal, policy and institutional changes

Several incidents during this month suggest that representation of ethnic minorities has been systematically denied institutionally, increasing militarization of state institutions and denial of representation of ethnic minorities could possibly limit and restrict freedom to express dissent concerning ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups.



National flags without colour stripes representing ethnic minorities along with Buddhist flags were hoisted in the middle of Kandy city on the cabinet swearing day. Video: [Sunday Times](#)

The Kandy Municipal Council took urgent steps to remove some 'lion only' national flags - without colour stripes that represent ethnic minorities in the national flag. These flags were put up around the city area ahead of the cabinet swearing in ceremony by the municipality staff. Hoisting these flags representing only majority ethnic group in parallel to swearing ceremony of cabinet ministers of the country seemed like action to promote the idea that ethnic minorities would have lack of acceptance under the newly elected government. Four leading Buddhist monks from two major Buddhist Nikayas in Kandy, central province were appointed to the Presidential Task Force for Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province. None of the Task Force members belong to ethnic and religious minorities despite of more than 75% of the population in the eastern province are ethnic minorities¹⁵. Only two members in the Task Force are women. Previously, Peoples' Alliance for Right to Land (PARL) has issued a briefing note explaining how this task force implies a prioritizing of Sinhala Buddhist interests to the detriment of minority interests, and insensitive to the complexities of land ownership and ethnic issues in the Eastern province, goes beyond the

¹⁵ According to National Census of Population and Housing (2012), the population in Eastern province include 39.5% of Tamils, 36.9% of Moors, 0.3% of Burghers, 23.2% of Sinhalese.

legal mandate of a Presidential Task Force. After the general election 2020, Archeology department was brought under the Ministry of Defense. It previously functioned under the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Cultural and Religious Affairs. Same as the Presidential Task Force for Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province, it could have detrimental effects on ethnic minorities.



MP Piya Nishantha De Silva assumed duties as the State Minister of Women. Photo courtesy: [Women's Ministry website](#).

Further a male Minister was appointed as the State Minister of Women and Child Development under the cabinet minister of Education. This further resulted the downgrading of previous cabinet Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and narrowing its scope mainly into education. A group of activists and academics wrote to the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, requesting him to re-establish a separate ministry for women and children. This downgrading may contribute to the increase of further neglect of women's opinions, systematic oppression and discrimination of women in state affairs including limited female representation of women in politics and other right-based institutions.

President issued the gazette calling for armed forces same as in the previous months. The involvement of armed forces in civilian activities is considered with fear by those who have dissenting views and engaged in dissenting actions with the government and critical of militarization.

4.4. Other incidents

Two incidents were related to the restriction of freedom of assembly. There were also two other incidents concerning freedom of expression.

Addressing an election rally held in Badulla, the President Gotabaya Rajapakse said that "I am not afraid of protests" referring to the protest being conducted by the port employees. He accused that the protest was conducted baselessly with the objective of causing inconvenience to himself and the government and to create a crisis.

A court order was issued against the leader of families of enforced disappearances who organized a protest in Batticaloa on the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. Police also tried to lock the protestors inside a church, and grabbed a photo carried by a protest leader.



Tamil families of the disappeared rallied across the North-East today to mark International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. Photo Courtesy: [Tamil Guardian](#)

A 20-year-old Tamil journalist was attacked with a barbed wire by two unidentified persons in Jaffna when he was travelling after work on a motor bike. The victim Vijayanathan Janarthan is a media correspondent at Tamil newspaper and website, Valampuri. A complaint has been lodged with the police in relation to this incident.

On 20th August, Leader of Tamil People's National Alliance (TMTK) MP CV Vigneshwaran in his first speech in the new parliament greeted the Speaker in Tamil language and also told that the Tamil language is "the oldest living language of this world and the language of the first indigenous inhabitants of this country." MPs from the government and primary opposition party called to expunge this sentence from the official Hansard records. Meanwhile number of hate speech comments in response to this statement were published by sinhala nationalists in social media and websites.

5. Statistical Analysis

There were total 18 incidents in this month. In comparison to previous months, less number of incidents were reported in this month. Perhaps incidents could be a result of both underreporting and other dynamics related to media focus on parliamentary elections, and also as we omitted incidents directly linked to elections in this report.

Location	Number	Percentage
Colombo	4	22%
North and East	3	17%
Other areas	3	17%
Not mentioned	1	6%
Not Applicable	7	39%
Total	18	100%

Table 1: Geographical distribution of incidents

7 incidents (39%) were policy actions that affect more than one specific district/ region, that cannot be categorized as belonging to one specific area. 4 incidents were from Colombo district, there were no incidents reported from other districts of western province that Colombo belongs to. There were 3 incidents from North and Eastern provinces – former conflict zones. 3 incidents were reported from other areas.

Major type of violation	Number	Percentage
Physical attacks	2	11%
Arrest	1	6%
Verbal threats	1	6%
Other problematic verbal or written statements	4	22%
Court order	1	6%
Visits, inspection and questioning	1	6%
Legal, institutional and policy changes	6	33%
Others	2	11%
Total	18	100.0%

Table 2: Type of violation

When incidents were categorized the majority – 6 incidents were related to legal, institutional and policy changes that could restrict the freedom of dissent. Secondly there were 4 incidents related to problematic statements made by politicians and others. A court order restricting a protests, two physical attacks including an assault on a journalist, a visit and a questioning of a residents where a human rights activist was staying, a threatening telephone call were the other types of incidents reported in this month.

Ethnicity of the victim	Number	Gender of the victim	Number
Sinhala	4	Male	8
Tamil	4	Female	0
Not Applicable	8	Not Applicable	10
Not mentioned	2		
Total	18	Total	18

Table 3: Ethnicity and gender of the victims

Gender and ethnicity was not applicable in many of the incidents due to the limited number of incidents and information available. In 4 incidents, persons belonging to Sinhala ethnicity (major ethnic group in Sri Lanka) were victims, while in 4 incidents, persons belonging to Tamil ethnicity were the victims. In 8 cases, ethnicity was not applicable since they include policy and institutional actions that cannot be named as affecting to one specific ethnic group. In 2 incidents, ethnicity was not mentioned. In 9 incidents the victims were males, while in another 8 incidents gender was not applicable.

Type of victims	Number	Percentage
Journalist	1	6%
Civil Society Activist	5	28%
Protestors	2	11%
State officials	4	22%
Politicians	1	6%
Ethnic Minorities in general	3	17%
Women in general	1	6%
Not Applicable	1	6%
Total	18	100%

Table 4: Type of victims

When the type of victims or affected party considered, there were 5 incidents relating to civil society activists and NGOs, 4 relating to state officials, 2 relating to protestors, 1 relating to a journalist, and 1 relating to a politician. 3 incidents were legal, policy and institutional actions related to ethnic minorities, 1 incident was relating to women. In one incident type of victims was considered not applicable as it is a legal/ policy action that affected multiple parties.

Alleged Perpetrator/ Responsible party	Number	Percentage
Police	1	6%
Government Institutions and officers	2	11%
President or central government	6	33%
Other Politicians	2	11%
Court	2	11%
Unknown	1	6%
Others	4	22%
Total	18	100%

Table 5: alleged perpetrator or responsible party of incidents

In 6 out of 18 incidents (33%), allegedly responsible party was the President or the central government. They included legal, policy and institutional actions and public statements that could have deterrent effect on the freedom of dissent. In two other incidents, alleged responsible persons were Members of Parliament including a State Minister. In another two incidents government institutions and offices were allegedly responsible, while in one incident it was the Police. In two cases, court was allegedly responsible for restricting freedom of dissent through court orders and ordering arrest or detention. When looked at this month, various state parties were mainly responsible for the incidents that limited the freedom of dissent.

6. Updates on previous cases related to dissent



For many years, journalists in Sri Lanka have been protesting against impunity on assault and abduction of journalist Keith Noyahr. Press freedom day in 2011. Photo Courtesy: [Uvindu Kurukulasooriya, Colombo Telegraph](#)

Giving evidence before Presidential Commission of Inquiry on Political victimization, retired army intelligence officer Priyantha Kumara Somasooriya has alleged that abduction of journalist Keith Noyahr was ploy deployed by the previous government. He further alleged that it was a film directed by Police Inspector Nishantha De Silva using other CID officers who took part as the film actors. One officer who has been blindfolded has played the role of Keith Noyahr. Somasooriya has eye witnessed how this film was being made in February-March 2017. He claimed that he has been forced to be a state witness of the alleged abduction which he is not aware of. He has been also forced to sign on 21 blank papers given by the CID. "I was threatened by Silva that if I fail to make such statements, I would lose my pension and that the future of my children will be affected," he stated¹⁶. However, he claimed despite of the influences and intimidation by the Police, he has told the magistrate that he was not involved in such a case¹⁷ ¹⁸ Former "Nation" newspaper Deputy Editor Keith Noyahr was abducted, tortured and left on a roadside on 22nd May 2008¹⁹. One of the key suspects Major Prabath

¹⁶ [Journalist Keith Noyahr abduction case: Was coerced into appearing as State witness – Rtd Sgt Somasuriya](#). Ceylon Today. Published 1st Sept 2020. Last accessed 29th September 2020.

¹⁷ [PCoI probing alleged political victimization: Dragging intelligence officers into Noyahr case, a ploy adopted by Yahapalana Govt.-Retired officer](#). Daily News. Dinamina Published 1st Sept 2020. Last accessed 29th September 2020.

¹⁸ [කිත් නොයාර්කිත් නොයාර් පැහැර ගැනීම විත්තරපටයක්](#). Dinamina Published 1st Sept 2020. Last accessed 29th Sept 2020.

¹⁹ [CID cracks journalist Keith Noyahr's abduction and assault case](#). Published 20th Feb 2017. Last accessed 29th Sept 2020.

Bulathwatte was reinstated in service in May 2019²⁰. In November 2019, IP Nishantha Silva who investigated the case fled the country soon after the government changed, fearing his safety²¹ and then Director of CID Shani Abeysekera currently under arrest for allegedly fabricating evidence concerning another high profile crime case. In February 2020, Colombo Telegraph website claimed that the PCOI on Political Victimization has dispatched military intelligence officials who have no role to play in the work of the Presidential Commission to retrieve the copies of investigation files including abduction of Keith Noyahr and other similar cases²².

Retired *Corporal Ravindra Rupasinghe* of the Army Intelligence said that CID officers influenced him to provide a statement claiming that he was involved in abducting and killing journalist Ekneligoda by sinking in the sea with a stone in the sea nearby Akkaraipattu area on the instructions of current President Gotabaya Rajapakse (then Defence Secretary). He also told that his wife and son were threatened and taken into custody in his absence and without the presence of a female Police officer²³.

On 19th August, Fort Magistrate Ranga Dissanayake has ordered the CID of the Police to submit a comprehensive report on all statements obtained in the investigations relating to Hejaaz Hizbullah. The order made after Defense Counsel argued that despite of many statements recorded from many parties including all members of Save the Pearls and persons from the Al- Zuhriya Madrasa, CID had selectively filed only statements made by children and had left out all evidence which would show Hizbullah's innocence. The Magistrate making the order informed the CID to produce all statements obtained from persons related to the investigations. The Magistrate also made an order the Deputy Inspector General of Police Western Province to submit a report on the investigations as to how confidential statements made in the Magistrate's Court were leaked to the media²⁴. By the end of August, Hejaaz Hizbullah has been in detention for 140 days. Hejaaz Hizbullah is a Sri Lankan Lawyer and an activist who was arrested by the CID of Sri Lanka Police on April 14, 2020 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and has since been kept in detention, based on a detention order authorized by the Sri Lankan President.

Arrested social media writer Ramzy Razeek remained in detention for 145 days by the end of August. He was later granted bail on 17th September after being kept in detention for more than five months²⁵.

²⁰ [Sri Lankan army reinstates official suspected in Lasantha murder, other attacks](#). Published 15th May 2019. . Last accessed 29th Sept 2020.

²¹ [Top detective who investigated high-profile cases flees Sri Lanka](#). Aljazeera. Published 26th Nov 2019. Last accessed 29th Sept 2020.

²² [Presidential Commission Aids Criminal Cover-Up: Army Intelligence Secures Files On Key CID Investigations](#). Colombo Telegraph. Published 29th February 2020. Last accessed 29th Sept 2020.

²³ [CIDයේ බලපෑමක් ගැන දේශපාලන පළිගැනීම් පිළිබඳ විමර්ශන කොමිසමේදී සිදුකළ හෙළිදරව්ව \(වීඩියෝ\)](#). Hiru News. Published 28th August 2020. Last accessed 29th Sept 2020.

²⁴ [Magistrate orders CID to produce all statements on Hejaaz investigation](#). Daily FT. published 20th August 2020. Last accessed 29th September 2020.

²⁵ [Ramzy Razeek released on bail after 5 months of Sri Lankan detention](#). Daily Express.

7. List of incidents

	Date	District	Repression of civil society and NGOs	Source
1	9th August	N/A	On 9th of August, the National Secretariat for Non- Governmental Organizations was gazetted as an institution under the purview of Ministry of Defense, after government won the recently held General election 2020. Under the previous government (2015-2019), it functioned under the purview of the Ministry of National Co-existence, Dialogue and Official Languages. It was shifted to the Ministry of Defense, following last Presidential election held in 2019. Having NGO secretariat under the Defense Ministry could put NGOs and their employees under the surveillance of military, could silence dissenting opinions, and restrict activities of NGOs. Last July, Prime Minister Rajapakse stated that government would pay special attention to regulate finances of NGOs after the elections.	Extra Ordinary Gazette 2187-27 . GoSL. Published 9 th August. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020.
2	30th August or before	N/A	During a meeting held with NGO heads, Director General of the Sri Lankan NGO Secretariat Raja Gunaratne has told that the government is planning introduce a new bill within next two months to restrict the NGO sector. According to Sri Lanka Brief, a committee led by Susantha Goonethilake will be appointed for the task of drafting the bill, which could be an updated version of the bill that former government tried to introduce, and withdrawn due to the resistance from the civil society organizations. The Committee chairman Goonethilake is the author of the book “Recolonisation: Foreign Funded NGOs in Sri Lanka.” Raja Gunaratne who was appointed as the Director General of NGO secretariat in April 2020 is a legal academic and a member of Rajapakse election advocacy group Viyathmaga.	රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධාන පාලන පනත මාස දෙකකින් ඉදිරිපත් කිරීම සුසන්ත ගුණතිලක කමිටුවට පැවරේ . Published 31 st August 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020.

3	26th August	N/A	Giving evidence before the Presidential Commission on Political Victimization, a key suspect in Prageeth Eknaligoda abduction case Shammi Arjun Kumararatne allegedly said that Father S. J. Emmanuel and Suren Surendran of the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) were LTTE members and delisting them [from banned list of LTTE front groups under the UN Security Council Resolution 1373] by former government was wrong. He also told that the decision was influenced by the former Foreign Affairs Minister Mangala Samaraweera. Fr. Emmanuel and Surendran of GTF are well known human rights activists critical of government, but who been engaging with the previous government. Fr. Emmanuel was exiled in Germany for decades, had returned to Sri Lanka few years ago and is living in Northern city of Jaffna. A Press article published in July 2020 said that government has been considering to re-list the Tamil diaspora groups as terrorist groups.	Tweet. @Sunandadesh Sunanda Deshapirya. Published 27 th August 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020. නිරසන ලේඛනයට කොටින් 2කගේ නම් ආන්ත එළැයි මංගල බලපෑම් කළා. Dinamina. Published 27 th August 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020.
4	7th August 2020 or around	Not mentioned	Police have visited a sister's house where environmental rights activist Ravindra Kariyawasam, head of the Centre for Environment and Nature Studies (CENS) was staying and they have asked to fill a form, which included information like visitors, vehicle numbers etc.	Tweet. @Sunandadesh Sunanda Deshapirya. Published 28 th August 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020.
5	24 th August and after	N/A	On 21st August, addressing a press briefing, Environmental activist Sajeewa Chamikara speaking about the road development project across Sinharaja forest which was allegedly done without Environmental Impact Assessment process, told that there is new interests in developing tourism in the area, and briefly mentioned that there is a hotel belonging to Yoshitha Rajapaksa (son of present Prime Minister and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa) in the region. Denying these allegations Yoshitha Rajapaksa has sent a letter of demand to environmentalist Sajeewa Chamikara through his lawyers seeking a compensation of Rs. 500 million within seven days. Rajapaksa in his letter cites that Chamikara's statement is false, baseless and insulting. After the letter of demand, Chamikara through a video published in facebook and said that alleged claim about a hotel	Yoshitha Rajapaksa sends Letter of Demand to Sajeewa Chamikara over allegations. Lanka News Web. Published 24 th August. Last accessed 23 rd September 2020. A Hotel owned by Yoshitha Rajapakse in Sinharaja Forest Area- Sajeewa Chamikara. News of Lanka. Published 21 st August 2020. Last accessed 23 rd September 2020. Mahinda Pathirana. ඉදිරියේ දී සංවර්ධන

		<p>belonging to Yoshitha Rajapakse is as an attempt to divert and to narrow down the discussion from its focus. Yoshitha has been previously accused of money laundering at least in two legal cases, one infamous case about purchasing property under the name of one of his grand mothers who was unable to show how she earnt the money. Sajeewa Chamikara in response told that it was not his intention to focus on the hotel allegedly belonging to Rajapakse, instead his focus was to discuss the negative impact of the ongoing road development project on the environment. On 29th August, President visited Lankagama village to meet the villagers who benefit from the road development project. One of the persons in the crowd told the President "If environmentalists exist we cannot develop this country further. They destroy the country." Also in another incident, an academic published a social media post saying "Environmental Terrorism will grow to the extent that development projects should be implemented in the sky." These indicated this incident resulted many anti-environmentalist rhetoric by various individuals, targeting environmentalists.</p>	<p>විශාපාති ක්‍රියාත්මක විය යුත්තේ අභයය යන මට්ටමට පරිසර නිර්මාණවාදය උග්‍ර වනු ඇත. Facebook post. 27th August 2020. Last accessed 23rd September 2020.</p>
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	Date	District	Repression of state officials	Source
6	4th August	N/A	Sub Inspector R.S.M. Mendis formerly attached to CID of Sri Lanka Police was arrested by the CCD and produced before the Gampaha Magistrate on 4th August. He has reportedly told the Gampaha Magistrate that the Colombo Crimes Division (CCD) had “pressured” him to give a false statement to falsely implicate former CID director SSP Shani Abeysekera. Both Abeysekera and Mendis have been accused of fabricating evidence in relation to the firearms case against death row convict former DIG of Police Vaas Gunawardane who allegedly has close connections with the ruling Rajapakse family. They were further remanded until 2 nd October.	බොරු සාක්ෂි දුන් උප පොලිස් පරීක්ෂක රිමාන්ඩ්. Lankadeepa. Published 4 th August 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020. Witch-Hunt Exposed: Ex-CID Sub Inspector Says CCD Pressured Him To Falsely Implicate Shani Abeysekera. Colombo Telegraph. Published 4 th Aug 2020. Last accessed 22 nd Sept 2020. Former CID director 3 others further remanded. Newsradio. Published 17 th September 2020. Last accessed 22 nd Sept 2020.
7	12th August	Colombo	A suspected drug dealer has been arrested after he had threatened the Police officers of Corruption Prevention Unit in Mount Lavinia Police through a telephone call. 50 grams of heroin was also found in his possession at the time of arrest.	ගල්කිස්ස දූෂණ මර්දන නිලධාරීන්ට මරණ තර්ජනය කළ හෙරොයින් ජාවාරම්කරුවෙකු අත්අඩංගුවට. Hiru News. Published 12 th August. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020.
8	20th August	Ratnapura	A Police constable attached to the Balangoda Police was hospitalized following an assault by a person, when a team of Police went to inquire about a person behaving in an unruly manner, based on a telephone call they received. The incident occurred in Massinna area in Balangoda.	බලන්ගොඩ පොලිසියේ කොස්තාපල්වරයෙකුට පහරදීම. Lankadeepa. Published 21 st August 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020.
9	27th August	N/A	Speaking at the parliament, State Minister of Provincial Councils & Local Government, MP Dr. Sarath Weeraskeera denounced the commissioner of Office of Missing Persons (OMP) Nimalka Fernando and OMP's [former] chairman Saliya Peiris. He argued that financial allocation to OMP should be curtailed since both Fernando and Peiris have associations with Tamil diaspora and advocated, made statements against Sri Lankan army in relation to war crimes allegations. Both of them were lawyers, and well-known human rights activists. <i>With effect from 31st September, Peiris resigned from the position of the chairman of OMP in order to contest for the presidency of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL)</i>	Parliamentary Hansard. Sri Lanka Parliament. Published 27th August 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020. OMP Chief to resign. The Morning. Published 25 th August 2020. Last accessed 9 th October, 2020.

	Date	District	Legal, policy and institutional changes	Source
10	12th August	Kandy	The Kandy Municipal Council took urgent steps to remove some 'flawed' national flags - without colour stripes that represent ethnic minorities - which were put up around the city area ahead of the Cabinet swearing in ceremony at the historic Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic. Commissioner of Kandy Municipal Council Chandana Thennakon has confirmed a couple of those 'lion only' flags were put up by the municipality staff but they were removed later. Since last presidential election, there were alleged claims saying that a Sinhala-Buddhist government has been established without the support of the ethnic minorities, and these flags could have been used to promote restricting rights of ethnic minorities under the new government.	Kandy MC removes 'flawed' national flags put up ahead of Cabinet swearing in ceremony. Sunday Times. Published 12 th August. Last accessed 22 nd of September 2020.
11		N/A	Four leading Buddhist monks from two major Buddhist Nikayas in Kandy were appointed to the Presidential Task Force for Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province. This Task Force first appointed in June 2020 now consists 16 members. Now it includes 6 Buddhist monks, 2 senior military officers, a senior police officer from Western province, a chairman of a pro-government private media network as the sole private sector representation, a professor of medicine, a professor in archeology, Director General of archeology, Land Commissioner General, Surveyor General and Provincial Land Commissioner as its members. None of its members belong to ethnic and religious minorities. Only two are women. Except Eastern Province land commissioner, and a monk, all others are outside the Eastern Province. Only few archeology experts have been included. Peoples' Alliance for Right to Land (PARL) has issued a briefing note explaining how this task force implies a prioritizing of Sinhala Buddhist interests to the detriment of minority interests, and insensitive to the complexities of land ownership and ethnic issues in the Eastern province, goes beyond the legal mandate of a Presidential Task Force.	Extra Ordinary Gazette 2190-17. GoSL. Published 24 th August. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020.

12	9th August	N/A	After the general election 2020, Archeology department was brought under the Ministry of Defense. It previously functioned under the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Cultural and Religious Affairs. Same as the Presidential Task Force for Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province, it could have detrimental effects on ethnic minorities. Further increasing militarization of state institutions on civil affairs could restrict freedom to dissent.	Extra Ordinary Gazette 2187-27 . GoSL. Published 9 th August. Last accessed 22nd September 2020.
13	9th August	N/A	A male Minister was appointed as the State Minister of Women and Child Development under the cabinet minister of Education. This further resulted the downgrading of previous cabinet Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and narrowing its scope mainly into education. A group of activists and academics wrote to the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, requesting him to re-establish a separate ministry for women and children. This downgrading may contribute to the increase of further neglect of women's opinions, systematic oppression and discrimination of women in state affairs including limited female representation of women in politics and other right-based issues.	Extra Ordinary Gazette 2188-43 . GoSL. Published 13 th August. Last accessed 22nd September 2020. Activists and academics ask for separate Cabinet Ministry for Women's Affairs . EconomyNext. Published 14 th August. Last accessed 22nd September 2020. Opinion: Not having a Cabinet level Ministry dealing with Women and Children's needs is regressive . EconomyNext. Published 16 th August. Last accessed 22nd September 2020.
14	22nd August	N/A	President issued the gazette calling for armed forces same as in the previous months. The involvement of armed forces in civilian activities is considered with fear by those who have dissenting views and engaged in dissenting actions with the government and critical of militarization.	Extra Ordinary Gazette 2189-19 . GoSL. Published 22 nd August. Last accessed 22nd September 2020.

	Date	District	Other incidents	Source
15	1st August	N/A	Addressing an election rally held in Badulla, the President Gotabaya Rajapakse said that "I am not afraid of protests" referring to the protest being conducted by the port employees. He said that there is no reason for port employees to engage in a protest at this time. He accused that the protest was conducted baselessly with the objective of causing inconvenience to himself and the government and to create a crisis. He further said whatever conspiracies were launched, whatever disruptions were made, that he could not be made afraid through such attempts. Port workers at the Colombo Harbour protested against government's attempts to lease the East Container Terminal (ECT) to India. Trade Unions at the Colombo Harbour demand the ECT be taken over and developed by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority and demand a pledge from authorities in writing with regard to the fate of the East Container Terminal before the Elections. Workers at the Colombo Port called off their protest on 2nd August, following discussions with Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. This was in the days preceding parliamentary elections held on 5 th August.	වැඩවර්ජනවලට බය නෑ - ජනපති. Dinamina. Published 2nd August. Last accessed 22nd September 2020. "මම බය නෑ" ජනපති කෙළින්ම කිව්ව දේ. Hiru News. Published 1 st August 2020. Last accessed 22nd September 2020.
16	30th August 2020	Batticaloa	A court order was issued against a leader of the group of families of enforced disappearances who organized a protest in Batticaloa to remember their loved ones, celebrating the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances on 30th August. The families who gathered at a Catholic church, along with some nuns, a Catholic priest and politicians, were locked inside by the Police to prevent from going to the road. But the protesters managed to force open the gate, resisted further police attempts to stop them and walked nearly two kilometers up to Gandhi park. Leader of the group in the Ampara district, Thambirasa Selvarani told that a policeman had grabbed the photo of her missing husband, the only one that she had. Alarming, the police had referred to the event as illegal, citing three concerns: (1) nuisance to the public and disturbance to the peace, (2) difficulty of practicing physical distancing and the threat of contracting Covid-19, and (3) potential resurgence of the LTTE. All these reasons seemed to be fabricated by the Police to mislead the court and prevent the event from happening.	Sri Lanka: families of the disappeared face police harassment on the UN Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. Ruki Fernando. Sri Lanka Brief. Published 3 rd September 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020.

17	21st August	Jaffna	A 20-year-old Tamil journalist was attacked by two unidentified persons on Brown Road, Jaffna. Vijayanathan Janarthan, a media correspondent at Tamil newspaper and website, Valampuri was intercepted by two masked men on a motorcycle and attacked using a barbed wire. Janarthan, who was on his way back to his hometown of Urelu from the Valampuri office after work, had his motorcycle smashed up by the assailants. The attackers fled on their motorcycles after nearby onlookers rushed to the scene after hearing about the incident. A complaint has been lodged with the police in relation to this incident.	வலம்புரி அலுவலக செய்தியாளர் மீது இனந்தெரியாதோர் தாக்குதல் . Valampuri. Published 22 nd August 2020. Last accessed 22 nd September 2020. Young Tamil journalist attacked by unidentified men in Jaffna . Tamil Guardian. Published 24th August 2020. Last accessed 22nd September 2020.
18	20th August	N/A	On 20th August, Leader of Tamil People's National Alliance (TMTK) MP CV Vigneshwaran in his first speech in the new parliament greeted the Speaker in Tamil language and also told that the Tamil language is "the oldest living language of this world and the language of the first indigenous inhabitants of this country." MPs from the government and main opposition party, the Samagi Jana Balawegaya called to expunge this sentence from the official hanzard records. Meanwhile number of hate speech comments were published by Sinhala nationalists in social media and websites. This is considered to be discouraging promoting Tamil culture.	Parliamentary Hansard . Sri Lanka Parliament. Published 20th August 2020. Last accessed 22nd September 2020. මෙරට පළමු ස්වදේශික ජාතිය දෙමැයි.. ස්වයං පාලනය ඕනෑ..- විග්නේෂ්වරන් පලමු පාර්ලිමේන්තු දිනයේදීම ජාතිවාදී ගීති අවුලයි . LankaCNews. published 21 st August 2020. Last accessed 22nd September 2020. See comments also විග්නේෂ්වරන් පාර්ලිමේන්තුවෙන් එලවන්න ඕන..අද කෝ ජාතිවාදීන්..පාර්ලිමේන්තුව උණුසුම් . SathTV. Published 27 th August 2020. Last accessed 22nd September 2020. See comments also.

List of Acronyms and Key Terms

- 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
- AJBP or Ape Jana Bala Pakshaya** contested in parliamentary General election 2020 under the leadership of Galabodaaththe Gnanasara – the leader of Buddhist extremist organization Bodu Bala Sena. They received one candidate appointed to the parliament from the National List.
- 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 2020²⁶. 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.
- DIG** : Deputy Inspector General is a high ranking Police officer in Sri Lanka. DIGs usually in charge of Provinces, and key institutions under the Sri Lanka Police. DIGs are the third level of ranking in the hierarchy of Sri Lanka Police, while the SDIG (Senior Deputy Inspector General) takes the second level and the Inspector General of Police (IGP) is the head of the Police and highest ranking officer in the Police.
- 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 and highest ranking officer in the Police.
- 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.

²⁶ [Bodu Bala Sena to disband after Gen. Election - Ven.Gnanasara](#). Daily News. Published 20th Nov 2019. Last accessed 22nd June 2020.

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.

MP: Member of Parliament

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NGO Secretariat: NGO secretariat is an institution currently operating under the Ministry of Defence in Sri Lanka which has been set up to monitor NGOs and their activities including finance. It was established in 1996 in the Ministry of Health, Highways & Social Services.

SI : Sub-Inspector of Police

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.

SSP : Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) is a senior police officer who usually heads a district (an administrative area) in Sri Lanka. There are 25 districts in Sri Lanka.

TID: Terrorist Investigation Department is a section of Sri Lankan Police that conducts inquiries into terrorism of Sri Lanka. In recent times, it has also been referred to as the Counter Terrorism Investigation Department (CTID). 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

UNHRC Resolution 30/1 : UNHRC 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.

UN Security Council resolution 1373: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 was adopted unanimously on 28 September 2001, is a counter-terrorism measure passed following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States. The resolution was adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, and is therefore binding on all UN member states. The resolution aimed to hinder terrorist groups in various ways. Under the United Nations Regulations No. 01 of 2012 issued by GoSL, list of persons and organizations linked to terrorism related activities are made public time to time. [Click here to see more details.](#)

UNP: United National Party (UNP) is a conservative right wing Sri Lankan political Party, favoring 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.