

Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka

1st April -31st June 2021



When the government imposed a ban on the use of vehicles for travel soon after a lockdown was temporarily lifted, an individual protested by transporting grocery items using a wheelbarrow. He was arrested for allegedly violating covid19 health guidelines by not wearing a facemask. Image courtesy: Sri Lanka tweet.

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Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka in April-June 2021.

Published in August 2021.

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Colombo, Sri Lanka

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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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Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka

January- March 2021

1. Methodology

This report provides some general trends and details of some significant incidents related to the repression of dissent in Sri Lanka in the months of April to June 2021.

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.

The report is based on 78 incidents related to repression of dissent in Sri Lanka. Section 1 describes the methodology. Section 2 describes the socio-political context and some trends relating to the human rights situation in Sri Lanka during the month. Section 3 provides updates about ongoing legal cases related to dissent. Section 4 provides a thematic summaries of the incidents described in the report. This month’s report is organized under 5 themes: (4.1) repression of media and journalists, (4.2) Repression of Freedom of Assembly, (4.3) Repression of NGOs and civil society, (4.4) Repression of state officials, (4.5) Repressive legal and policy actions, and (4.6) Other incidents. Section 5 includes the list of incidents presented in a table, with a brief description about each incident.

2. Context

Rule of law: One convict and a few accused who had a close connection with the ruling government were pardoned and acquitted from their cases. In June 2021, the murder convict and former MP Duminda Silva was granted Presidential pardon despite of strong opposition from UN, human rights and civil society activists¹. The other convicts of the same case were not granted pardon. However, 92 other prisoners including 16 Tamil political prisoners received presidential pardon². One month after pardoning, in July 2021, President Rajapaksa appointed Duminda Silva as the chairman of National Housing Development Authority³. Soon after Hirunika Pemachandra, the daughter of assassinated MP Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra filed a fundamental rights petition in the Supreme Court⁴. In September 2016, former MP Duminda Silva along with three others were sentenced to death for shooting late MP Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra and three of his supporters during local elections in Colombo in 2011⁵.

On 21st of May, a three-judge bench of the Permanent High Court Trial-at-Bar ordered the acquittal and release of eight suspects, including Nissanka Yapa Senadhipathi, Chairman of Avant Garde, who were charged with operating a floating armoury at sea. The defendants were accused of operating a floating armoury on board the MV Avant Garde near the Galle Harbour, illegal possession and transportation of 203,395 live ammunition without a license on board and causing a financial loss of 11.4 billion rupees to the Government by granting approval to the Avant Garde Maritime Services to operate a floating armoury in Galle Harbour during the period from 07 August 2012 to 8 January 2015⁶. The three-judge panel ruled that the ship appeared to have a valid license to possess firearms and ammunition based on a letter issued by the defence Ministry and a statement given by the former Defence Secretary⁷. On 7th May, former MP Nishantha Muthuhettigama and four other suspects were released from the case filed over the abduction and unlawful detention of an individual⁸. On 1st April ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) MP Milan Jayathilake and former Chairman of the Dompe Pradeshiya Sabha Ajith Sisira Kumara were released from the charges filed in connection to a bribery case, after the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption had informed the Court that it will withdraw the case filed against the two suspects.⁹ Four bribery cases filed against former Development Lotteries Board Chairman Chandrawansa Pathiraja were withdrawn by the bribery commission as the commission withdrew its charges claiming that the case was filed without the approval of all three commissioners. He was accused of incurring a loss of Rs.64 million to the government in 2010 during his tenure as Development Lotteries Board Chairman by dealing with private institutions that had not signed agreements for the sale of lotteries.¹⁰

¹ [Duminda Silva: Anger as Sri Lanka frees politician sentenced for murder](#). BBC. 26 June '21. Last accessed 24 August '21.

² [Sri Lanka releases 93 prisoners, including 16 LTTE suspects](#). The Hindu. Published 24 June '21. Last accessed 24 Aug '21.

³ [Duminda Silva appointed Housing Development Authority Chairman](#). Daily Mirror. Published 17th July 2021. Last accessed 24th August 2021.

⁴ [Hirunika files petition against Presidential pardon for Duminda Silva](#). Colombo Page. Published 21st July 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

⁵ [Duminda Silva: Sri Lankan ex-MP sentenced to death](#) BBC. 8th Sept 2016. Last accessed 24th August 2021.

⁶ [Nissanka Senadhipathi and others acquitted and released in Avant Garde case](#). Colombo Page. Published 21st May 2021. Last accessed 24th August 2021.

⁷ [Senadhipathi, others acquitted from Avant-Garde](#). Daily News. Published 21 May. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

⁸ [Former MP Muthuhettigama released from case](#). Newswire. Published 7 May. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

⁹ [MP Milan Jayatilake released from Bribery case](#). Newswire. Published 1st April. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

¹⁰ [Charges withdrawn: Former DLB Chairman acquitted](#). DailyNews. published 28 April. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

Extrajudicial killings: Two custodial killings of underworld figures occurred 11-13 of May. On 11th May, underworld figure Mabulage Dineth Melan Mabula alias “Urujuwa” was killed in the custody of Nawagamuwa Police. He had been arrested soon after his release from Boosa prison and taken “to a location in Nawagamuwa where an incident occurred that Police had to shoot him” according to the Police¹¹. Similarly on 13th of June, underworld figure Kosgoda Tharaka was shot dead at Meerigama when he had supposedly attempted to attack the police who had escorted him to a site to recover some stashed weapons according to Police. However, the news website [Lankaenews](#)¹² warned that Kosgoda Tharaka was going to be shot dead by an alleged hit squad purportedly operated by the Peliyagoda Crimes Division hours before his death.¹³ Following these incidents, several organisations, including the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL), the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL), and the Committee for Protecting the Rights of Prisoners (CPRP) called for in-depth investigations into these two deaths and Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka also wrote to the Inspector General of Police requesting information¹⁴.



Two underworld figures were killed in Police custody. Hours before Kosgoda Tharaka's death, a news website published that he is going to be killed. Photo courtesy: Colombo Telegraph.

Committee for Protecting of Rights of Prisoners (CPRP) submitted a letter to the UN Special rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions and UN Special rapporteur on Torture about three other suspicious deaths where family members have implicated alleged Police violence as the reason for the deaths. The victims included (1) a 49 years old Sinhalese man from Weligama area in Matara district who had been allegedly beaten by Police for violating quarantine regulations when a bus had run over him, (2) a 22 years old young Tamil man from Batticaloa district who had died due to alleged Methamphetamine intoxication according to Police, whose body had non-fatal trivial injuries which have allegedly occurred due to Police torture according to family members, and (3) a 42 years old Muslim man who had died after allegedly jumping out of the Police vehicle according to Police, who had died due to

¹¹ [‘Urujuwa’ death: Rights group to file complaint](#). The morning. 13th of May. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

¹² Lankaenews journalist Keerthi Rathnayake who revealed this news was arrested under Prevention of Terrorism Act in August 2021 for allegedly providing information to the Indian High Commission.

¹³ [Kosgoda Tharaka's death foretold several hours ahead; Death by alleged 'hit-squad'](#). Newshub. 13th May. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

¹⁴ [Custodial deaths of underworld figures](#). The morning. 19th May. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

alleged Police torture according to his family members¹⁵. On 21st of June, protests occurred in Batticaloa after a Sri Lankan Ministerial Security Division (MSD) officer attached to ruling government parliamentarian Sathasivam Viyalendiran allegedly shot dead a Tamil man.¹⁶

Street punishments to Muslim civilians



Images of a group of people who purportedly violated travel restrictions being punished with kneeling down on a street in Eravur were widely circulating in social media. Photo courtesy: [ColomboPage](#)

A probe was ordered after social media posts show soldiers forcing minority Muslims to kneel on the streets as punishment for flouting COVID lockdown rules. Issuing a media statement, the Army said “it immediately removed” the personnel from their duties, “after an alleged improper conduct of a few army personnel” in Eravur, a Muslim-majority town in the eastern Batticaloa district. Initial investigation has begun, the army said, pledging “strictest action”.¹⁷

Sinking of chemical cargo ship: The Singapore-flagged MV X-Press Pearl, a chemical cargo ship, sank off Colombo in early June¹⁸ after catching fire since 20th May¹⁹. The sinking ship caused ‘significant damage’ to the environment by releasing hazardous substances into marine environment²⁰. By 30th of June, caracasses of 176 sea turtles, 20 dolphins, and 04 whales washed ashore, as a result of the disaster²¹. Fishing was temporarily banned from Kalutara South to Negombo covering more than 80 Km coastal belt. The fishing communities who were directly affected by the disaster filed a fundamental rights petition²² organized protests seeking compensation, however they were paid meagre compensation²³.

¹⁵ [Sri Lanka: CPRP writes to UN Special Rapporteurs on recent deaths and torture in police custody](#). Sri Lanka Brief. 9th June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

¹⁶ [Protests in Batticaloa after Tamil man shot dead by Sri Lankan security forces](#). Sri Lanka Brief. 21st June. Last accessed 24th August 2021.

¹⁷ [Sri Lanka investigates troops over ‘humiliation’ of Muslims](#). Aljazeera. 21st June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021. [Sri Lanka to probe ‘army attack and humiliation’ of Muslims](#). 21st June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

¹⁸ [Sri Lanka braces for ‘almost inevitable’ oil spill as ship sinks](#). Aljazeera. 3rd June. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

¹⁹ [Navy assists to douse fire onboard MV X-Press pearl](#). Newsfirst. 21st May. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

²⁰ [UN: Sri Lanka ship fire caused ‘significant damage to planet’](#). Aljazeera. 20th June. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

²¹ [176 sea turtles dead following X-Press Pearl disaster](#). Newswire. 30 June. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

²² [X-Press Pearl disaster: FR filed seeking compensation for fishermen](#). Daily News. 24th June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

²³ *Only 5000 LKR (approximately 25 USD) was paid to the around ten thousand fisher families by mid June, though the government claimed it has allocated 2 million USD out of 3.2 million USD (200 usd per family) immediate compensation they received from the*

Economic crisis: Sri Lanka has been undergoing an economic crisis²⁴ as covid19 has made a strong negative impact on the country's economy along with large foreign debt repayment commitments and reduced foreign-exchange reserves. As of end-April 2021 foreign exchange reserves were reduced to USD 4.5 billion²⁵ while Sri Lanka also obtained a 250 million USD SWAP loan from Bangladesh in May.²⁶ Fuel prices were increased in mid-June.²⁷ Inflation rates also continued to increase, while food prices increased by 9.9 percent²⁸ bringing a number of challenges to the general public. In April 2021, the government also imposed import restrictions on chemical fertilizers which led to many protests among farmers around the country.²⁹



"No fertilizer, No food tomorrow" A group of farmers protesting from their farm lands in Sapugolla area in Badulla District. Photo courtesy [Newsfirst](#).

EU Resolution: On 10th June, European Parliament adopted a resolution "on the situation in Sri Lanka, in particular the arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)"³⁰ ahead of reviewing the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), the special incentive programme which Sri Lanka is a beneficiary. The resolution paid special attention to the recent expansion of PTA that allows two years detention without trial and other issues concerning deteriorating human rights situation and accountability in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government responded to the resolution claiming that it contains factual inaccuracies, and does not take cognizance of the multifaceted progress made by Sri Lanka in reconciliation and development³¹.

shipping company. Initial compensation was paid to 9883 fishing families who lost their livelihood. See [Fishing community affected by MV X-Press Pearl shipwreck to receive Rs. 5000 allowance](#). News.lk. 15th June '21. Last accessed 24th Aug '21.

²⁴ [Sri Lanka has little tax money left after paying state workers, economy in historic crisis: Bandula](#). Economy Next. 26th June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

²⁵ Fitch Affirms Sri Lanka at 'CCC'. Fitch Ratings. 14th June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

²⁶ [Bangladesh - Sri Lanka Currency Swap increased to US\\$ 250 mn](#). Daily News. 4th June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

²⁷ [Sri Lanka increases fuel prices with effect from midnight on 11](#). Newsfirst. 11 June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

²⁸ [Sri Lanka's inflation rise to 4.5-pct in May, foods up 9.9-pct](#). EconomyNext. 1st June. Last accessed 24 Aug 2021.

²⁹ [Farmers continue protests against fertilizer crisis](#). Newsfirst. 24th June. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

³⁰ [The situation in Sri Lanka, in particular the arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act](#). Adopted 10 June 2021 at Strasbourg. European Parliament. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.

³¹ [Sri Lanka responds to EU resolution: Regrets the adoption of a resolution, defends 20th amendment and the use of PTA](#). Sri Lanka Brief. 14th June. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.

Remembrance Events: Sri Lanka remembered the second anniversary of Easter Sunday bomb attacks on 21st April 2021. The catholic churches across the country organized events praying and demanding justice for the victims of the attacks. Colombo Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith stated that he was ‘deeply saddened’ by the lack of progress in the investigation and accused the government of political posturing and the need to protect alliances that had hindered the probe³².

On 19th of May, Sri Lankan government commemorated the 12th National War Heroes’ Day at the War Heroes’ Memorial in Battaramulla remembering the soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the war with the participation of Sri Lankan President and Prime Minister³³. However, Tamil politicians and civil society leaders faced various restrictions and reprisals when they attempted to commemorate Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day remembering their relatives, friends and leaders who died during and end of the war.



President Gotabaya Rajapakse paying tribute to the war heroes. Photo courtesy: Colombo Page.

³² [Sri Lanka archbishop criticises gov't over Easter attacks probe](#). Aljazeera. 21 April 2021. Last accessed 25 Aug 2021.

³³ [In Pictures: 12th National War Heroes’ Day commemorated in Sri Lanka](#). Colombo Page. 20th May 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.

3. Case updates

On 16th June, former Director of CID Shani Abeysekera was granted bail after being detained for more than 10 months. Former Sub Inspector of CID Sugath Mendis was also granted bail with him.³⁴ During the last regime, Abeysekera led the investigations on high profile criminal cases including killings of journalists. On 31st of July 2020, he was arrested under the allegations that he had falsely introduced certain weapons and fabricated false evidence to frame a false case against former Deputy Inspector General of Police Vass Gunawardena who was convicted for a murder. In November 2015, Former DIG Vaas Gunawardena, his son Ravindu Vaas Gunawardena and four police officers were sentenced to death by the Colombo High Court for committing the murder of millionaire businessman Mohamed Shyam in 2013 based on investigations conducted by CID led by Shani Abeysekera.³⁵ In 2018, he was again convicted for another 5 years with rigorous imprisonment for making death threats to CID detectives including Shani Abeysekera in 2013.³⁶ The alleged planting of evidence against Abeysekera is related to the firearms that were used for the murder of Mohamed Siyam. In his bail petition, Abeysekera argued that Complainant has failed to establish prima facie to the reasonable satisfaction of the court that there was material in support of any of the allegations; and there are no reasonable grounds for believing that he is likely to have committed the offence alleged against him, and unsubstantiated allegations are ill-founded and based on purported positions³⁷.

On 11th June, the long detained human rights lawyer under Prevention of Terrorism act Attorney-at-law Hejaaz Hizbullah and a suspect of the same case Mohamed Khan Mohamed Shakeel made an application before the Puttalam High Court requesting that their indictments be served soon, as it has been more than one year since Hizbullah has been arrested in April 2020. Madrasa School Principal Shakeel was arrested in February 2021 for allegedly conspiring with and abetting Hejaaz Hizbullah on charges under the PTA and ICCPR Act and it has been 4 months since his arrest³⁸. Hizbullah was under the custody of CID, and thereafter in remand prison for more than 14 months in total. It was also brought to the notice that certain persons who are not accused in this case but witnesses have been coerced during the past 2-3 months by the CID to give incriminating evidence against Hejaaz Hizbullah and they have filed a fundamental rights petition at the Supreme Court. Since it was required that the accused being present at the time of indictments being served, high court judge made an order calling for a report from the Director General of Health Services into the viability of the accused being present before this court for serving of the indictments.³⁹

Two Fundamental Rights petitions filed on behalf of two teachers of the Al- Zuhriya Arabic College in early June said that two teachers were forced by the Criminal Investigations Department to implicate Attorney-at-Law Hejaaz Hizbullah. President's Counsel MP M.A. Sumanthiran told the court that the two teachers had told their lawyer Balasooriya during a consultation held in the presence of two CID officers who had an audio recording device, that the officers had promised "leniency" if they implicate Hizbullah⁴⁰. Similarly, a year before on 11th May 2020 three children filed Fundamental Rights petitions before the Supreme Court through their guardians that the Police have coerced them to

³⁴ [Shani Abeysekera granted bail](#). Ada Derana. Published 16th June 2021. Last accessed 26th Aug 2021.

³⁵ [Mohamed Shyam murder: Death sentence for dig Vaas, five others](#). Daily News. Published 28th November 2015. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.

³⁶ [Former DIG Vass Gunawardena sentenced to five years RI](#). Daily FT. Published 13th Feb 2018. Last accessed 26th Aug '21.

³⁷ [C.A CPA 18/2021 Kamani Shriyantha Abeysekera Vs Officer-in-Charge, Colombo Crime Division - Hon. N. Bandula Karunaratna, J.](#) Court of Appeal Order. 16th of June 2021. Last accessed 26th Aug 2021.

³⁸ [Madrasa School Principal Mohammed Shakeel arrested](#). The Morning. 17 Feb 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

³⁹ [Tweet](#). Justice4Hejaaz. Statement of Lawyer Hafeel Farisz. Published 11 June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

⁴⁰ [Lawyer says teachers were forced to implicate Hejaaz](#). Daily FT. Published 9th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

provide statements against Hejaaz Hizbullah.⁴¹

On 16th of May, a collective of local and international human rights organizations issued a Joint Statement Calling for Immediate Release of Poet Ahnaf Jazeem detained for a year without Charge⁴². Ahnaf Jazeem was arrested on 16th May 2020 as he was a teacher at the same school relating to the Hejaaz Hizbullah case. He was accused that the poetry he wrote allegedly promoted extremism as he had shared them with his students at the school. On 12th June, the Terrorism Investigation Division (TID) has produced the poet in court without informing the lawyer and family members, depriving the lawyer of an opportunity to make any submissions before the court in Jazeem's defence. Attorney-at-Law (AAL) Sanjaya Wilson Jayasekera, the lawyer representing poet speaking to a newspaper said that although Jazeem's father had called the Tangalle Detention Centre on 12 June, where Jazeem was previously held, it had not been communicated to him that Jazeem had been brought to Colombo to be produced before the court. When Jayasekera had contacted the TID on 14th June, they had informed him that Jazeem had been brought to Colombo on 11 June and produced before the Colombo Magistrate's Court the following day under Section 8(2) of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (PTA). Jazeem was arrested in connection to his Tamil language poetry anthology, titled *Navarasam* (Nine Emotions), which the authorities have alleged promoted "extremist" ideology, which has been refuted by academics, intellectuals and civil society activists.⁴³

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Free Trade Zone Solidarity - a collective of organizations on rights of Free Trade Zone workers issued a media release commemorating the 10th anniversary since the assassination of Free trade Zone Worker Roshen Chanaka at a protest held on 30th May 2011. On the day, Police fired at protesting workers. 400 workers were hospitalized and approximately 3,000 others faced physical and mental stress related issues. Roshen Chanaka succumbed to death due to his injuries on 1st of June whilst the other 7 sustained injuries which resulted in life-long disabilities. The statement marking the 10 years highlighted that they are uncertain when the justice will be served, as the hearing of evidence is not yet over and the case is still being heard in the Negambo in the Negombo High Court. The statement also made several demands with regards to workers' rights in the context of covid-19.⁴⁵

⁴¹ [FR Petitions Reveal CID Threatened And Coerced Children To Sign False Statements To Fix Attorney Hejaaz Hizbullah](#). Colombo Telegraph. 12th May 2020. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

⁴² [Sri Lanka: Joint Statement Calls for Immediate Release of Poet Detained for a Year Without Charge](#). HRS. 16th May 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.

⁴³ [Poet produced in court without lawyer](#). Published 14th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.

⁴⁴ [Arrest of Mannar poet under PTA: Academics, writers and activists cry foul](#). Daily FT. published 6th January 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.

⁴⁵ [Sri Lanka: Ten years since killing of Roshen Shanaka; FTZ Solidarity put forward five demands](#). Sri Lanka Brief. 2nd June 2021. Last accessed 30th Aug 2021.

4. Summary of incidents

4.1 Repression of Media and journalists

Journalists were restricted from directly participating at the District and Regional Coordinating Committee meetings, but allowed to have separate briefings with chairpersons and people's representatives after the meetings, according to a circular issued by the Secretary to the State Ministry of Defense, Home Affairs and Disaster Management. In another incident, Moratuwa Mayor Samanlal Fernando did not allow journalists to report on the Urban Council meeting held on 30th June, citing covid19 health concerns.



Journalist Malika Abeykoon. Image Courtesy: [Aithiya.lk](https://aithiya.lk)

On 7th April, freelance Journalist Malika Abeykoon was arrested by Maradana police in Colombo, while he was covering a health workers' protest rally organised by the United Health Workers Union (UHWU). He had been later assaulted by the Police while in custody. As the Police had submitted a fabricated medical report to the court claiming that he had not been assaulted, he removed his shirt and showed the judge of bruises and scars he received as a result of assaults in the previous night. A provincial journalist, Prasad Muthukudaarachchi was allegedly assaulted by a police sergeant when the journalist was covering a visit of forest officials to investigate an illegally transported load of firewood into a garment factory in Liyanagemulla, Seeduwa in Gampaha District. Later Police apologized to the journalist.

Tamil journalists travelling to Mullaitivu have repeatedly been allegedly harassed, intimidated and blocked at checkpoints by Sri Lankan military officers, despite presenting travel permits. On 20th May, a journalist was not allowed to travel to Mullaitivu despite the fact that he was covering a story as per the request of the District Secretariat and confirming his identification as a journalist. On 22nd May, another provincial journalist Shanmugam Thavaseelan was also refused permission to travel for work, despite the prior-permission obtained from the Police. Though he has been allowed to travel after

contacting the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) in the Police, the delay in travelling has caused him unable to participate at the event he is going to cover. Uthayan newspaper journalist Ramachandran Sanath has complained to the Inspector General of Police alleging that he and his family have been subjected to surveillance by Police at multiple times. Sanath is a former founding co-editor of Sudar Oli newspaper and a social activist.

Journalist Chamuditha Samarawickrama has informed Inspector General of Police (IGP) Chandana D. Wickramaratne in writing about alleged death threats made against him and has requested an investigation. Samarawickrama further claimed that there could be a link between the death threats he had received and his recent commentary demanding legal action regarding an incident involving a party organised by an actress and a fashion designer during a period when the travel restrictions were in place. The Director of the Karapitiya Teaching Hospital has complained to the Galle Police Headquarters, seeking the disclosure of sources related to an article published on rata.lk by its editor Sajeeva Wijeweera regarding an investigative article on covid19 situation. The hospital's Director requested an inquiry to figure out how an internal document had been obtained by the journalist and subsequently the journalist was summoned to the Police. A journalist working for Newsfirst television channel has been obstructed and intimidated while recording footage of a Chinese Sri Lankan Joint Venture to dredge and clean Tissamaharama ancient irrigation tank.

4.2 Repression of Freedom of Assembly

Army Commander General Shavendra Silva announced that a decision has been taken to suspend all rallies and events related to the Labour Day on 1st May. Though he claimed that a common consensus was reached among the leaders of political parties on this, several opposition parties spoke to the media claiming that they were not consulted. On 1st of May, when a coalition of 12 trade unions organized a May Day rally, Police initially attempted to disrupt it, though they were later allowed. This was the third consecutive year that May Day rallies were not held due to Easter Sunday Bombings and covid-19 situation.

The Foreign Minister MP Dinesh Gunawardane requested the Speaker of the parliament to conduct an inquiry into the posters and materials arrested by Parliament Police that were brought into parliament by the Opposition MPs demanding justice for easter Sunday bombings. Gunawardane alleged that they have breached the security of the parliament. The Kaduwela Magistrate's Court has instructed the Thalangama Police to take legal action against a group of Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) parliamentarians and party members who allegedly violated the quarantine laws and staged protests on the way to Parliament. Opposition political parties JVP and SJB held protests against the port city bill on 19th and 20th May.



Wheelbarrow protestor was arrested for allegedly violating covid19 health guidelines by not wearing a facemask. Image courtesy: Sri Lanka tweet.

When the government imposed a ban on using private vehicles to travel, an individual who protested the government's ban by using a wheelbarrow to transport goods purchased from a Supermarket and shared the video in social media was arrested for allegedly violating covid19 regulations for not wearing a facemask in the video. A man was arrested for his involvement in encouraging motorists to honk in protest against the closing of roads in Borella town to allow the movement of the VVIP convoy of visiting Chinese Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe. After being released on bail, he extended his apology to the Police and the Government for his actions.

Police have arrested ten people, including the provincial council's deputy chairman for Puthukkudiyiruppu, Mullaitivu, following protests against the reopening of a garment factory amidst fears of the COVID-19 pandemic spreading. The ten people arrested by the police were later released on bail. Police disrupted a protest organized by fishermen of Modara whose livelihoods have been jeopardized owing to the sinking of MV XPress Pearl ship incident. Protestors alleged that police had groped their private parts while disrupting a protest. Members of the Front-Line Socialist Party who joined the protest were admitted to the hospital with injuries. During a protest by students held in Colombo, Police have forcefully seized an effigy that resembles President Rajapakse, and other protest materials. It seemed that Police had been primarily tasked with removing the effigy of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa from the protest site. A group of assailants led by Chairman of SLPP-ruled Rideemaliyadda Pradeshia Sabha Nishantha Jayasundara has reportedly assaulted a group of residents who were carrying out a silent protest over alleged irregularities occurred during the carpeting of the Rideemaliyadda - Weeragolla road. Jamburewela Chandrarathana a Buddhist monk linked to ultra-nationalist group Bodu Bala Sena was also arrested during a protest demanding to solve pension issues of wives of 'war veterans'.



10 persons who commemorated Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day in Kalkudah beach in Batticaloa were arrested. Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

Those who commemorated the Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day remembering the Tamils who lost their lives at the end of the civil war faced numerous harassments at the hands of military and Police. Sri Lankan military have allegedly vandalised the Mullivaikkal memorial monument located in

Mullivaikkal East in early hours of 13th May, just hours after the security forces blocked Tamils from erecting a memorial stone at the site. When they finally were allowed access in the early hours of the morning, the constructed site was in ruins. The memorial monument, which depicts a pair of outstretched hands, had been broken off and tossed into the nearby sand, while a large memorial stone with engraved names had disappeared completely. Ten individuals were arrested under Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) for allegedly commemorating for holding memorial event on 18th of May in Kalkudah area in Batticaloa district. Former Northern Provincial Council (NPC) member M.K. Sivajilingam has been allegedly harassed for organizing and taking part at several remembrance events held at several places. Police have seized the memorial banner in his possession, and have attempted to arrest him stating that he had violated the identity card procedure in place during the covid19 pandemic despite having obtained permission from relevant authorities. He was also obstructed while holding a vigil at the World Tamil Conference massacre memorial in Jaffna. A video showed soldiers trying to snatch the candles that he is trying to light. The Police who arrived at the scene later have allegedly threatened to arrest him for allegedly violating health restrictions. His office in Valvettithurai in Jaffna had been surrounded by the military when he was conducting another vigil. Similarly, the military have surrounded the private residence of the Tamil politician Peter Ilancheliyan when he was holding a private vigil remembering lives lost during the war, while public commemorations had been completely banned on the day.

Police have also threatened the family of Tamil activist Annai Poopathi, warning that if they commemorated her death anniversary near her grave, they would be imprisoned under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Valikamam Pradeshiya Sabha chairman, Thiyagarajah Nirosh was blocked from commemorating Ponnuthurai Sivakumaran, the first Tamil rebel to die in the armed struggle. Nirosh who was lighting a flame in memory of Sivakumaran has been told that they were not allowed to pay their respects due to travel bans in the area. The police have stated that only 'essential' services have been allowed to take place.

4.3 Repression of NGOs and civil society

Plans to strengthen NGO secretariat and related laws: On 12th of May, the Morning newspaper published that the National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO Secretariat) is planning to be transformed into a monitoring body with powers to conduct probes and to file cases against malpractices carried out by NGOs. A subcommittee has been appointed to propose reforms to the NGO secretariat, is expected to hand over its final draft to the Secretary of Defence by June this year. Meanwhile Government owned newspaper Dinamina published an article calling for mandatory registration of all NGOs with the NGO Secretariat. It also called for special attention into foreign government funding programmes such as USAID, UKAID, KOICA, JAICA, NORAD, SIDA, GiZ etc. and claimed that these funding programmes have been designed to serve hidden political interests of Western Nations. It also called to maintain a database that includes information on funding sources, objectives of the organization, target groups, geographical locations, beneficiaries and how the project is implemented at provincial level, and using government administrative mechanisms to monitor activities of NGOs at the provincial level and proposed instruction from Divisional Secretariats in designing projects, and selection, and prioritization of target groups. Also it proposed to bring laws to regulate entry and exit of INGOs into the country.

Investigations into civil society organizations: On or before 14th April, Director General of NGO Secretariat Raja Gunarathna stated that the government has launched investigations into 38 NGOs. On 3rd April, Divaina newspaper reported that a government official had called three officers of the Movement for Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) into an inquiry and questioned why they had sent a report to a German funder⁴⁶ claiming that Gotabaya Rajapakse had abducted and killed journalists.

The same newspaper article also made several defamatory accusations against two local NGOs, former HRCSL commissioner, and an INGO, and USAID. The article claimed that MONLAR has produced such a report for financial gains as 'selling human rights is a profitable business' while their organizational mandate is a different one. It also alleged that the National Peace Council (NPC) had made undue interventions into national security and local politics in Sri Lanka, while Global Communities had allegedly implemented 'mystery projects' in the former conflict zones of the country, with the support of USAID that was labelled by the newspaper as a 'CIA agent'. Former Human Rights commissioner Ambika Satkunathan was accused of allegedly being pro-LTTE in the same press article.

Banning organizations: On 13th April, the state owned Sinhala language newspaper Dinamina published a news article claiming that the government has banned NGOs in Sri Lanka from (1) signing agreements with foreign countries, and (2) accepting money from foreign countries. Article further said the government has taken this decision in the context that various NGOs have provided funds for religious extremism and fundamentalism. It also said that Security forces have found out that 32 Islamic organizations and 11 'separatist' organizations in the North have received such funding.

A gazette notification was issued by the Sri Lankan government banning 11 islamic groups including 'Save the pearls' organization which detained human rights lawyer Hejaaz Hizbullah's arrest is linked to. Hejaaz Hizbullah played a key role in the organization before his arrest. The list of organizations that were banned included two well-known international islamic terrorist groups Al-Qaeda and ISIS,

⁴⁶ Apparently Brot fur die Welt.

local islamic groups that included the term 'Thowheedh' in their name, Sri Lanka Islamic Student Movement (SLISM) and several other groups. While majority of these local groups are not publicly known to have any links with terrorism, inclusion of 'Save the pearls' in the list seems as an extension of the legal case against Hizbullah. Save the Pearl is an organization that supported the education of underprivileged children, hoping to lure them away from criminal activities and drug abuse.



Few days before his arrest, Asela Sampath alleged that the government relief package provided at 1000 LKR does not differ from the market prices. Photo Courtesy: Lankanewsweb

Arrests of individual activists: Asela Sampath, the Convener of the Movement for the Protection of Public Rights and consumer rights advocate was arrested by the Police over accusations of threatening officials in the Consumer Affairs Authority two years ago. On 19th of April he was released on bail. Asela Sampath complained that he was subjected to assault during detention. The Chairman of the Information Technology Society Sri Lanka (ITSSL) Rajeev Yasiru Kuruwitage Mathew was arrested over a statement pertaining to cyber-attack on several state-owned websites. The Police said he had published a press release on social media recently claiming that the websites of the Presidential Secretariat, Foreign Ministry, Medical Research Institute, Survey Department, and several other websites had been hacked. The 23-year-old suspect was arrested by the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) after a complaint had been filed seeking legal action against him for allegedly providing fake news. He was released on bail after two days. The Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Readiness Team (SLCERT) clarified earlier that Government websites had not been hacked. However he clarified that the websites have been affected due to other websites conducting the search engine optimization update. Websites add metadata into the Google search engine in order for their websites to show up on Google and it has been observed that certain websites are currently misusing metadata based on the google optimization feature to attract traffic by using popular Government site names SLCERT said.

4.4 Repression of state officials



Chamila Jayasinghe, an assistant land commissioner working in Kotmale area in Nuwara Eliya district was arrested by CID of Police for sharing a facebook post critical of the government. Photo courtesy: [The leader](#)

Freedom of expression: Two employees working in the Ratnapura and Gampaha District branch offices of National Transport Medical Institute have been transferred to the head office in Nugegoda as an interim disciplinary action for publishing social media posts that criticize the Sri Lankan President. Chamila Jayasinghe, an assistant land commissioner working in Kotmale area in Nuwara Eliya district was arrested by CID of Police for sharing a facebook post pertaining to the alleged deforestation in the Sinharaja forest reserve. Chamila Jayasinghe who was summoned to the CID head office in Colombo on 21st May, has been duly arrested. He was produced before the Colombo Magistrate's Court on 22nd May with the charge of 'provoking the people against the government' under Section 120 of the Penal Code. Magistrate Mr. T.K. Prabhakaran granted bail, while rejecting the request made by the police to keep him under remand custody further. A disciplinary inquiry was conducted against Dr. Chamal Sanjeewa, Deputy Director at Health Ministry regarding his views that were shared during a talk show on YouTube. The Health Ministry Secretary's office has reportedly informed Dr. Sanjeewa that they wish to meet him to record a statement in this regard. The ParaMedical Services Front of Sri Lanka wrote to the Secretary of the health ministry objecting to this inquiry. Kurunegala mayor in Kurunegala district has allegedly threatened to take legal action against the assistant medical officer for allegedly exposing the mayor's undue intervention in prioritizing the second dose of astrazeneca vaccine for his friends and relatives.

Obstructions to Covid-19 duties: Moratuwa Mayor Samanlal Fernando in Colombo district was arrested for allegedly threatening a female doctor and obstructing duties of officials, during a

vaccination programme. The mayor has demanded vaccination to be provided based on a list that he has previously prepared which the medical doctor has refused.



Moratuwa Mayor demanded vaccination to be given based on a chit he had provided and threatened a medical officer during a vaccination program. Photo Courtesy: Hiru News.

A Samurdhi Development Officer who was engaged in the distribution of Rs. 5,000 allowance in the Agbowwa Samurdhi area in Alawwa in Kuruengala district has been assaulted and admitted to the hospital. A Samurdhi Development officer in Kampane area of Kolonna Divisional Secretariat division has been assaulted when he was returning from his work, by a woman who has been angered for not receiving 5000 LKR allowance. The victim Subash Prasanna Kamburugamuwa has been admitted to Kolonna Basic Hospital following the attack. A female Development Officer serving the Delthara West GN Division of the Kesbewa Divisional Secretariat in Colombo District has been assaulted by an unknown person, while returning home after distributing the Rs 5,000 dry ration parcels. A grama seva officer has been assaulted by a Pradeshiya Sabha member in Ukuwela Pradeshiya Sabha in Matale district for disagreeing to distribute 5000 LKR Covid-19 relief provision to those recommended by the PS member. PS Member Himali Erandika representing the ruling SLPP at the Ukuwela Pradeshiya Sabha in Matale has been arrested by police on charges of having assaulted the female Grama Niladhari Officer. The wife of a Samurdhi officer attached to Kudalunuka area in the Rideemaliyedda Divisional Secretariat in Badualla district was also assaulted by a woman who came to the officer's house demanding the Rs. 5,000 allowance. Three people who threatened a Samurdhi officer in Hiriwala area in Gampaha district have been arrested and produced before the Attanagalle Acting Magistrate. Two females and one male have been arrested for threatening a female Samurdhi officer in Pallewela in Gampaha District.

A public Health Inspector (PHI) was assaulted by a man for asking him to wear the face mask at the Rambukkana town. Similarly a public Health Inspector (PHI) was assaulted in Santhasolai area in Vavuniya by a youth travelling in a motorbike after the PHI had asked the youth why he was not wearing a face mask.

A policeman who was on duty at a checkpoint near the Ananda College in Maradana has been subjected to a reprisal for not allowing the wife of a top ranked police officer-in-charge in the Colombo area to pass the checkpoint for jogging, as covid-19 travel regulations were in-effect. Though he had been transferred to another checkpoint within minutes, the decision had been changed after other senior Police officers had intervened.

Environmental protection: Forest officials complained to the Habarana Police that a group of army officials have threatened them with death, assaulted one officer and obstructed their duties over an incident allegedly linked to the abduction of a baby elephant at the Minneriya National Park. Commanding Officer of the Army 21 Division in Anuradhapura Major General Mohan Ratnayake has allegedly assaulted and threatened the forest officials in Ganewalpola, Palugasweva area. After the case was taken at the Kekirawa magistrate court, the judge ordered the suspects to be arrested. The Major General Ratnayake also filed a complaint against forest officials claiming defamation. A sexist fake news article attempting to humiliate forest officer and environmental activist Devani Jayatilake was virally shared on facebook. The post replicating the design of a well-known gossip column included the news title "a wife leaves husband who asked to remove hair in private parts". Some posts shared this image along with the photo of environmental activist Devani Jayatilake with a deliberate intent of carrying out a personal attack on her, while comments were abundant of hate speech targeting her activism. In recent years, Devani Jayathilake has openly criticized politicians and exposed incidents of environmental destruction.

During a search operation, an Officer-in-Charge (OIC) at the Environmental Division of Point Pedro Police station was injured after being knocked down and run over by a tipper truck belonging to illegal sand miners. Subsequently OIC Chief Inspector Ajith Kumara has been admitted to Jaffna hospital due to injuries.

Other incidents: The driver and a female staff member working in the government run Suwaseriya ambulance service attached to Hatton Police were assaulted by two individuals in Kudagama, Agil area in Dimbula Pathana Police division, as they had refused providing free ambulance services to a person who claimed to be a 'patient', but found working in a construction site at the time of ambulance's arrival. A Police officer employed at Kurudugaha Hathapma interchange of Southern Expressway has been assaulted by a lorry driver for warning to wear the seat belt. The suspect has been arrested and produced before the Elpitiya magistrate. The railway gatekeeper of Peradeniya Elugoda Railway crossing was assaulted by a group led by a local politician as he had refused to open the gate, as a train was about to arrive. Two days later, the trishaw driver along with the local politician and another person had carried out this assault as a reprisal for the previous incident. Three employees of the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) had been admitted to the Kandy General Hospital after they were assaulted in Bahirawakanda, Kandy. The attack occurred, when they were travelling to Bahirawakanda area to remove an electricity post that fell on to a house.

4.5 Repressive Legal and policy actions

Cabinet approval was given to a joint Cabinet paper seeking to introduce new laws to stop fake news in social media. The Secretary to the Ministry of Health has issued a warning letter to all health departments and officials, citing several provisions of the Establishments Code affecting public officials that disciplinary action will be taken against those who criticize government health policy, express personal views and incorrect information. The Free Media Movement condemned the authorities' attempt to cover up epidemic information in violation of the public's right to information through various sources. On 8th of June issuing a media statement titled "circulation of fake news, photographs, videos causing disunity, hate and obstructing the Covid-19 programme", the Police stated that various individuals and groups have been found to be spreading fake news on social media platforms and they will be prosecuted under Penal code and other relevant laws. Several organizations pointed out this statement could be misused by Police to restrict freedom of speech and expression.

President issued several gazette notifications declaring a long list of services as 'essential services'. Declaring government services as essential services has been a known tactic to stop protests and trade union actions in the government sector in Sri Lanka.

Gazettes calling on the armed forces to maintain public order were reissued in April, May and June, providing the military with additional powers to intervene in civilian affairs.

5.6 Other incidents

Repression of dissenting Politicians and their supporters: Government politician MP Wijayadasa Rajapaksa alleged that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had threatened him via telephone over his statement that criticized the port city bill. He told the media that the port city bill provides extensive powers that could turn the port city into a Chinese colony and also criticized the appointment of Basil Rajapaksha, president's brother as the Minister of Finance over previous allegations of corruption. Later SLPP announced that the party will take disciplinary action against MP Wijedasa for his criticism of the Government and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.



Jaffna mayor was arrested for 'promoting terrorism' as he had selected a blue coloured uniform for an environmental taskforce which allegedly resembles the uniform of the LTTE Police according to Police. Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

Terrorism Investigation Division (TID) of Police arrested the Mayor of Jaffna for allegedly promoting the LTTE's ideology, in the choice of uniforms for an environment task force of the local municipal council. The police alleged that the uniforms worn by the environmental task force of the Jaffna Municipal Council were similar to those formerly worn by the LTTE's police force. He was accused of committing an offence under Section 120 of the Penal Code 'exciting or attempting to excite disaffection towards the President and the government.' Speaking at a press conference, the Mayor said that similar uniforms were worn by a similar Task Force in Colombo Municipal Council. In a different incident, Police interrogated the chair of a divisional council in Kilinochchi over the naming of a street in Santhapuram as 'Vettri Lane', after a former LTTE cadre who had undergone the government's rehabilitation programme. Police have asked the Divisional Council to replace the name to reflect the former cadre's birth name instead of the nom-de-guerre. They have also threatened to take legal action for allegedly attempting to revive terrorism in case if they failed to do so.

Opposition MP Harin Fernando filed a petition at the Supreme Court requesting to prevent his imminent arrest in connection with Easter Sunday attacks, while there is no evidence against him to make such a claim. As MP Fernando was receiving medical care, the Police had questioned his sister for over five hours. Harin Fernando said he had reliable information that the authorities were seeking to arrest and detain him under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) as he has been critical of the government.

Several opposition political party members who protested against the government's decision to increase fuel price by travelling in bullock carts were arrested by Police for allegedly violating quarantine regulations. Police said that suspects were released under Police bail. The protestors wore masks and social distancing was maintained during the protest as per the photos and videos published in media. INFORM believes that these arrests indicate reprisal against criticisms of the government rather than any health priority.

A social media activist supportive of Opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) named Sumudu Tharanga Waidyarathne residing in Galle was arrested in relation to a post he has posted online. He was later released on the same day. According to Lankadeepa he had published a Facebook post accusing that the government had knowingly brought the xpress pearl ship to be sunk in Sri Lankan seas. This statement could have been in the context that government MP Vasudewa Nanayakkara made a public statement claiming that Xpress Pearl ship is a windfall for the country that is amidst much economic difficulties. Other politicians and social activists also expressed their doubts about lack of clarity on how the ship was allowed into Sri Lankan waters when two harbours have already refused their lack of expertise to handle cargoes that were leaking with chemicals.

Freedom of expression online: Various environmental activists accused that their profiles were either blocked, or their posts relating to environmental destruction were removed, allegedly claiming that they have violated community guidelines. According to them, the posts were sometimes removed considering terminology, without considering the context or perhaps based on direct translations. Also they pointed out pro-government facebook users are not blocked for publishing the same content, it seems that they were targeted for publishing content criticizing the government. Government MP Sampath Athukorala published a facebook post alleging that youtuber 'Ratta' is a member of Opposition Party JVP and spread false news targeting the government as he had criticized government's failure to bring justice to the victims of Easter Sunday Bomb attack in April 2019. The statement was later edited and Ratta's name was removed due to public pressure and criticisms. The media spokesperson of Our People's Party attached to infamous ultra nationalist group Bodu Bala Sena, Dan Priyasad has lodged a complaint with the Police Headquarters against the Vasthi YouTube channel alleging that a video to be aired on the Vasthi YouTube channel has insulted Sri Lankan culture, history and the Sri Lankan army. Vasthi is a popular youtube channel that publishes comedy videos.

Other incidents: Director of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Hemantha Herath was caught on camera telling reporters after a media conference that some journalists killed in the past were "3rd class" journalists. Six Sri Lankan Media rights groups issued a statement condemning his statement and demanding public apology for allegedly insulting and undermining the journalists who were killed because of their important work in a context where many of their cases remain in impunity. Such defamatory statements about assassinated journalists from public officials could hurt the feelings of family members and others pursuing justice, and could contribute to long remaining impunity.

A Tamil youth has been arrested in Kopay, Jaffna for allegedly having a photo of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai Prabhakaran on his smartphone. Kopay police have filed a B report against the youth on charges of "inciting or attempting to incite hatred" under Section 120 of the Sri Lankan Penal Code. A covid19 patient in an intermediary treatment centre in Bindunuwewa

run by the military has been allegedly brutally assaulted and tortured by a military official for demanding an additional water bottle for his consumption. The victim Saman Abeygunawardane has published a social media post on the incident.

A Buddhist monk named Thiththagalle Devananda Thero residing in Weligama Kapuwatte Sri Wiwekarama temple has been assaulted and killed by a group of fishermen after the monk had advised them to refrain from fishing in front of the temple. A priest of Devale in Balagolla area has kidnapped two persons for allegedly insulting him through facebook and crucified and tortured them as revenge.

6. List of incidents

	Date	District	Repression of Media and journalists	Source
1	Early April	N/A	A circular containing guidelines for conducting District and Regional Coordinating Committee meetings was issued under the signature of the Secretary to the State Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and Disaster Management, General Kamal Gunaratne (Retd.) restricting journalists from directly participating at those meetings. The circular No. 2/2021 has taken away the existing opportunity for the media to cover relevant meetings. The circular states that journalists who wish to cover the proceedings of these meetings, could conduct separate discussions after the committee meeting with the Chairman and the people's representatives of the relevant District or Regional Coordinating Committees. According to previous guidelines, such meetings were open to the media and providing facilities for the journalists attending such meetings was a responsibility of the relevant Divisional Secretariat / District Secretariats. When the Lankadeepa website inquired about this from the Minister of Mass Media on April 4, 2021, he had stated that he was not aware of this development.	Media Freedom Rights Monitoring Report Free Media Movement. Media Freedom Rights Monitoring Report (Issue No.04). Published May 2021. Last accessed 30 th August 2021. දිස්ත්‍රික් හා ප්‍රදේශීය සම්බන්ධීකරණ කමිටුවලට මාධ්‍ය බැහැ [Media not allowed at District and Provincial Coordinating committees]. Lankadeepa. 4 th April 2021.
2	4/7/2021	Colombo	Freelance Journalist Malika Abeykoon has been arrested by Sri Lankan police, while he was covering a health workers' protest rally organised by the United Health Workers Union (UHWU) on April 7. Following his arrest, he was brutally assaulted multiple times inside Maradana Police Station. The journalist was not given any reason for his arrest. When Abeykoon was presented before the Maligakanda Magistrate on 8th April with a fabricated medical report signed from a judicial medical officer stating that he had not been assaulted, Abeykoon had reportedly removed his shirt and showed the judge the bruises and scars he received the night before in the Maradana police station. He also revealed that no medical attention had been given to him while he had been in police custody. The judge has then asked to submit a medical report from the prison hospital and placed him on remand until April 12. He was granted bail on 16th April. Upon his release, Abeykoon has said "I was beaten up by a senior inspector of the police. He punched my head till I felt dizzy. Kicked me in my chest. He did so many things"	Sri Lanka: Journalist arrested and put under remand. IFJ. Published 12 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th May 2021. Tweet. Prasad Welikumbura. Published 17 th Apr 2021. Last accessed 24 May 2021. RSF condemns arrest of freelance photojournalist Malika Abeykoon. Newswire. Published 9 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th May 2021. Sri Lanka police caught producing bogus documents to cover up torture. Colombo Page. Published 12 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th May 2021.
3	5/20/2021	Mullaitivu	Tamil journalists travelling to Mullaitivu have repeatedly been allegedly harassed, intimidated and blocked at checkpoints by Sri Lankan military officers, despite presenting travel permits. In particular, journalists heading to the Mullaitivu town area have been detained at the third block checkpoint and being sent back despite trying to do their job and getting police permission to travel. On 20 th May, a journalist who went to report about the current situation was detained at a check post	Sri Lankan military harass and block Tamil journalists travelling to Mullaitivu despite having permits Tamil Guardian. Published 22 nd May 2021. Last accessed 30 th August 2021.

			in Mullaitivu. The soldier refused to allow the journalist to travel to Mullaitivu despite saying that he was going to report on a story as per the request of the District Secretariat. Even after clearly identifying himself as a journalist to the Mulliyawalai police, the soldier refused the journalist to pass through.	
4	5/22/2021	Mullaitivu	Shanmugam Thavaseelan a provincial journalist working for Hiru TV has been told that the army will not grant him permission to travel for work, despite the permission he has obtained from the Police. The journalist has subsequently contacted the Office-in-charge (OIC) of the Mulliavalai Police station to inform about him being stopped by the army who in turn spoke to the military persons manning the check point asking them to allow the journalists. But the OIC was told bluntly by the military that “the headquarters had ordered not to allow them”. After considerable delay permission has been granted by the ‘senior officers’ and the journalist has been allowed to travel after all their details were registered. They have been unable to cover the event due to the delay that occurred at the checkpoint.	Army overrule Police to restrict reporting by Tamil journalists during pandemic JDS. Published 25 th May 2021. Last accessed 30 th August 2021.
5	5/25/2021	Kandy	Uthayan newspaper journalist Ramachandran Sanath has complained to the Inspector General of Police that individuals and groups had sought information about him from his family and relations several times. Sanath is a former founding co-editor of Sudar Oli newspaper and a social activist. The journalist has written in his letter that a group of police officers from the Gampola police station have inquired about him in March 2021 from his mother. They have asked, among other information, the reason for him to change residence. A group of police officers of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) from the Thalawakele division have also visited his wife’s house and questioned him. They have inquired about the organization ‘Voice of Justice of Upcountry’ that he has connections with. Also a person who appeared as a police officer visited his sister’s house at Gampola on 25 May. The Free Media Movement has also written to IGP inquiring about the incident.	Media Freedom Rights Monitoring Report (Issue No.05) . Free Media Movement. Published May 2021. Last accessed 30 th August 2021.
6	6/8/2021	N/A	Journalist and former Director of Media to the President Chamuditha Samarawickrama has informed Inspector General of Police (IGP) Chandana D. Wickramaratne in writing about alleged death threats made against him and has requested an investigation. He claimed an organized social media attack against him and received anonymous calls threatening him with death. Samarawickrama further claimed that there could be a link between the death threats he had received and his recent commentary on the incident involving a party organised at the Shangri-La hotel in Colombo by event organiser Chandimal Jayasinghe and model Piumi Hansamali during a period when the travel restrictions were in place. Samarawickrama had, during a live television programme	Chamuditha writes to IGP alleging death threats The morning. Published 8 th June 2021. Last accessed 30 th August 2021.

			on 31 May, questioned the Police Media Spokesman and Senior Officer-In-Charge of the Police Legal Division Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Ajith Rohana on the delay in taking action against Jayasinghe and Hansamali. On 9th June Samarawickrama was summoned to Colombo Crime Division (CCD) and a statement was recorded. Hansamali and Chandimal were forcefully quarantined for two weeks. In early July, Hansamali was questioned by the Police about the alleged threats she had made which she refused.	
7	6/8/2021	Gampaha	A police sergeant has allegedly assaulted provincial journalist Prasad Muthukudaarachchi and damaged his camera when he was covering an incident in a garment factory in Liyanagemulla, Seeduwa. Prasad is the official correspondent of Hiru TV and a freelance journalist for Derana TV, Aruna newspaper and other media. The incident took place when the journalist was covering a visit of Forest Conservation Department officers to the garment factory to arrest a load of firewood transported illegally. The police sergeant has allegedly ordered the journalist not to video record the incident, which the journalist has not obeyed as there was no legal basis for such an order. Then the said Police officer got down from his vehicle and assaulted the journalist. The recorded footage was aired on the news by Hiru TV. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Deshabandu Thennakoon has telephoned Prasad on June 09th and apologised on behalf of the Police Department regarding the incident. Saman Sigera, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Negambo range, has requested Prasad to record a statement, and the relevant police sergeant has apologised when the journalist visited the police station. Journalist Prasad Muthukudaarachchi has told Free Media Movement that there was no other alternative than agreeing to a settlement in the present context.	Media Freedom Rights Monitoring Report (Issue No.06). Free Media Movement. Published June 2021. Last accessed 30 th August 2021.
8	6/16/2021	Galle	The Director of the Karapitiya Teaching Hospital has complained to the Galle Police Headquarters, seeking the disclosure of sources related to an article published on rata.lk by its editor Sajeewa Wijeweera. The hospital's Director, Dr Shelton Perera, had made the complaint following an article titled "Doctors who score points after avoiding coronavirus work". The complaint requested an inquiry to figure out how the letter that was the basis for the article's information was obtained, as it was an internal document. The journalist was summoned to the Police following the complaint. The Free Media Movement, drawing attention to Section 40 of the Right to Information Act, stated that the hospital director has threatened the safety of whistle-blowers. According to the clause, "no officer or employee of a public authority shall be subjected to any punishment, disciplinary or otherwise, for releasing or disclosing any information which is permitted to be released or disclosed."	Sri Lanka: Intimidating journalist Sajeewa Wijeweera to disclose sources, a violation of the Right to Information Act and a threat to media freedom – Free Media Movement. IFJ. Published 23 th June 2021. Last accessed 30 th August 2021.
9	6/23/2021	Hambantota	A journalist working for Newsfirst television channel has been obstructed and intimidated while recording	Journalist prevented from recording footage close to Chinese JV in Hambantota

			footage of a Chinese Sri Lankan Joint Venture to dredge and clean the Tissamaharama ancient irrigation tank. Later Newsfirst revealed that the project employed Chinese national staff wearing a camouflage uniform, similar to a military uniform of China's People's Liberation Army, and the project has not obtained the necessary approval from the archaeological department though it was an archaeological site.	News first. Published 23th Jun 2021. Last accessed 31 st August 2021.
10	6/30/2021	Colombo	Moratuwa Mayor Samanlal Fernando has not allowed journalists to report Urban Council meeting citing covid19 health concerns. Opposition party has organized a protest during the meeting regarding rising cost of living and fuel price. While the mayor claimed the decision to restrict was taken as covid19 precaution, INFORM believes that the restrictions on media could be linked to the recent controversies related to the mayor threatening a health official and the protest planned by the Opposition.	සජිව් උද්ඝෝෂණය අස්සේ මොරටුව නගර සභා ආරක්ෂකයාට ගුවි ප්‍රජාවක් Lankadeepa. Published 30 th June 2021. Last accessed 31 st August 2021.

	Date	District	Freedom of Assembly	Source
11	4/8/2021	Colombo	Jamburewela Chandrarathana a Buddhist monk linked to ultra-nationalist group Bodu Bala Sena was arrested during a protest demanding to solve pension issues of wives of 'war veterans'. According to the Police protestors have stoned at the Police. A video showed that a glass window of a Police vehicle has been damaged. Chandrarathana Thero and another person were arrested under the charges of unlawful assembly and causing damages to a police jeep during a protest. Thero was released on Police bail on the same day. According to Thero, the Prime Minister has spoken to Thero and has promised to solve the matter. Thero alleged that an outsider had stoned at the Police in an organized attempt to disrupt the protest.	Ven. Jamburewela Chandrarathana Thero arrested Ada Derana. Published 8 th April, 2021. Last accessed 31 st August 2021.
12	4/21/2021	Colombo	Since 21st of April marked two years since the Easter Sunday bomb attacks, the opposition members in the parliament protested calling for justice. Then Foreign Minister MP Dinesh Gunawardane requested the Speaker of the parliament to conduct an inquiry into the posters and materials that were seized by parliament Police that were brought into parliament by the Opposition MPs. He alleged that they have breached the security of the parliament by bringing these protest materials. In response, the Opposition MP Nalin Bandara noted that similar inquiries should be conducted against government MPs who have brought such protest materials into the parliament in the past.	විපක්ෂය ගෙනා බැනර් ඇතුළු ද්රව්ය රැසක් අත්අඩංගුවට Dinamina. Published 22 nd April 2021. Last accessed 29 th August 2021.
13	4/27/2021	Colombo	A 31-year-old man was arrested for his involvement in encouraging motorists to honk in protest against the closing of roads in Borella town to allow the movement of VVIP convoy of visiting Chinese Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe. The Police media spokesperson said the suspect had been arrested after an investigation into a video on the incident that had been circulated on social media. The suspect was accused of obstructing Police officers from carrying out their duties and aiding the illegal gathering of the public. Police also said that his actions were deemed as posing a threat to a visiting dignitary and his VVIP convoy. Speaking to the media, after being released on bail, the suspect extended his apology to the Police and the Government for his actions.	Man arrested for vehicle honking incident in Borella Newswire. Published 30 th April 2021. Last accessed 25 th August 2021. Man arrested for honking at VVIP convoy gets bail, issues apology. Publisher: Newswire. Published 30 th April. Last accessed 25 th August 2021.
14	20th April	N/A	Army Commander General Shavendra Silva announced that a decision has been taken to suspend all rallies and events held in view of Labour Day, which is commemorated on 1st May. He said a common consensus was reached to cancel all events for Labour Day during a meeting held between the National Operations Centre for the Prevention of COVID-19 and political party representatives. This was the third consecutive year in which the Labour day events were cancelled as similar decisions were made in years 2019 and 2020 due to Easter Sunday bomb attack and covid-19 situation. Several political parties refuted the claim made by the Army commander that the cancellation was based on a common consensus of political party leaders. JVP	May Day rallies suspended. Colombo Gazette. Published 20th April 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021. "මැයි රැලි අවලංගු කළේ සෞඛ්‍ය හේතු නිසා නෙවේ ආණ්ඩුවේ අර්බුදය නිසා" - හඳුන්වනන්නි. Mawbima. Published 20 th April. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021. මැයි රැලි නැවැත්වීමට දේශපාලන පක්ෂ එකඟවූ බවට යුද හමුදාපතිවරයා කරන

			<p>politician Sunil Hadunneti speaking to Mawbima said that their party disagree with the decision of cancelling the Labour day events and argued that government is cancelling the event as the labour rights have been curtailed in the context that country is facing an economic crisis, and political crisis within the government. He also pointed out that the government has organized many events recently despite of covid19 health concerns. Pubudu Jagoda representing Frontline Socialist Party also stated that they have not been consulted in taking such a decision to cancel Labour day events.</p>	<p>ජර්නලය අසන්නක් - පුබුදු ජයගොඩ. News19. Published 20th April. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>
15	1st of May	Colombo	<p>Police tried to disrupt a Labour Day rally organized by 12 trade unions, though they were later allowed to conduct the rally. As seen in the video, a small group of people walked in the protest march maintaining social distance and wearing face masks. The major political parties who organized remembrance events on the same day were allowed though they did not even maintain social distancing. It seemed that the Police tried to disrupt it based on the government's decision to cancel the May day events.</p>	<p>කම්කරු දිනයේ ගොවීන් පිරිසක් කුඹුරක විරෝධතාවක (වීඩියෝ). Publisher: Hiru Tv. Published 1st of May 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>
16	5/20/2021	Colombo	<p>The Kaduwela Magistrate's Court has instructed the Thalagama Police to take legal action against a group of Samagi Jana Balawegaya parliamentarians and party members who violated the quarantine laws and staged a protest on the way to Parliament. Prior to the protest, the police had notified that it could not be held under quarantine laws. Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa was also informed about this. However, supporters of the Samagi Jana Balawegaya had taken steps to hold the protest despite the instructions of the police. The police stated that the group had violated the health guidelines by not maintaining one meter distance and obstructed the civilians. The court has also instructed the Police to obtain unedited video footage of the incident from TV channels and to conduct further investigations. Previously Police Media Spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana has said that legal action would be taken against Opposition parties, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), over recent protests conducted by them near the Parliament against the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill. The Media Spokesperson said that they have allegedly violated quarantine-related rules and regulations. The JVP, which is represented in the parliamentary Opposition under the National People's Power (NPP) alliance, staged the said silent protest at the Polduwa Roundabout on 19 May, while the protest of the main parliamentary Opposition party, the SJB led by party Leader and Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa, was held near the Parliament Roundabout on 20 May. The bill was passed in the parliament despite their opposition.</p>	<p>Police to prosecute JVP, SJB Port City protestors The Morning. Published 21st May 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p> <p>Sri Lanka police to prosecute two main opposition parties over anti-portcity protests! Sri Lanka Brief. Published 21st May 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p> <p>Sri Lanka : Legal action against Opposition group for staging protest in violation of quarantine rules Colombopage. Published 22nd May 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>
17	5/25/2021	kalutara	<p>When government imposed a ban on using private vehicles, a man protested government's ban by using a wheelbarrow to transport goods purchased from a Supermarket and shared the video in social media. The</p>	<p>Wheelbarrow man arrested for not wearing face mask (Video) newswire. Published May 25th May 2021. Last</p>

			man was arrested on the same day as he was not wearing a face mask when he was transporting the goods. There was no issue of social distancing as there was nobody in the street except him and the cameraperson. The Ministry of Health guidelines states that it is not advisable to wear masks while engaging in exercises or heavy manual work. Considering these aspects, the arrest seemed as an act of reprisal for protesting against the government restriction.	accessed 29 th Aug 2021. General guidance for the public on covid-19 prevention. Ministry of Health. Published 2020. Last accessed 29 th Aug 2021.
18	early june	Mullaitivu	Police have arrested ten people, including the provincial council's deputy chairman for Puthukkudiyiruppu, Mullaitivu, following protests against the reopening of a garment factory amidst fears of the COVID-19 pandemic spreading. The reopening of the garment factory follows orders from Sri Lanka's President that Governors and District Secretaries should continue the operations of development plants and factories so as to avoid an economic collapse. The ten people arrested by the police were later released on bail.	Sri Lankan police arrest garment factory protesters in Mullaitivu Tamil Guardian. Published 09 th June 2021. Last accessed 30 th Aug 2021.
19	6/20/2021	Colombo	Police cracked down a large protest organized by fishermen of Modara whose livelihoods have been jeopardized owing to the sinking of MV XPress Pearl ship incident. Following the MV XPress Pearl incident and the ensuing leakage of oil & nitric acid to sea water fishermen have been left destitute unable to engage in fishing. Members of the Front-Line Socialist Party including Party members Pubudu Jayagoda & Duminda Nagamuwa who joined the protest have been allegedly injured at the hands of police and have been admitted to hospitals. Fishermen engaged in the protest said that police had groped their private parts during the protest in order to subdue them.	SL Police crackdown on starving fishermen protest; Protesters groped by genitals (Video) - NewsHub Publisher: News Hub. Published 21 st June 2021. Last accessed 30 th Aug 2021.
20	6/21/2021	Colombo	During a protest organized by Inter University Student Federation (IUSF) against the Kotalawala University Act held in front Colombo fort Railway station, Police have forcefully seized an effigy that resembles President Rajapakse, a model of coffin with words printed on it saying 'funeral of free education' and some posters. While protestors repeatedly requested Police to maintain the social distance, the Police ignored their request, and attempted to intimidate and obstruct the protest. The IUSF engaged in protest against several demands during which effigies of President Gotabaya Raajapaksa & Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa were displayed. In this case, it seems that Police had been primarily tasked with removing the effigy of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa from the protest site.	විරෝධතාකරුවන්ගේ පමුණ පොලීසිය උස්සගෙන දුවයි. News19. Published 21 st June 2021. Last accessed 30 th Aug 2021. Police dispatched to seize Sri Lanka President Gotabaya's effigy during protest. Sri Lanka Brief. Published 22 nd June 2021. Last accessed 30 th Aug 2021.
21	6/27/2021	Badulla	A group of assailants led by Chairman of SLPP-ruled Rideemaliyadda Pradeshia Sabha Nishantha Jayasundara has reportedly assaulted a group of residents who were carrying out a silent protest over alleged irregularities occurred during the carpeting of the Rideemaliyadda - Weeragolla road. The protest was about the poor quality of a road construction project.	Rideemaliyadda SLPP Chief launches attack on protesters demonstrating road irregularities (VIDEO) Publisher: Lanka News Web. Published 28 th June 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
22	4/19/2021	Batticaloa	Police have threatened the family of Annai Poopathi, warning that if they commemorated her death anniversary near her grave, they would be imprisoned	Sri Lankan police threaten Annai Poopathy's family against commemoration. Tamil Guardian. Published

			under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Annai Poopathi is a Sri Lankan Tamil activist who died during a fast unto death in 1988, demanding the Indian government to arrange a ceasefire between Indian Peace Keeping Forces and LTTE.	19 th April 2021. Last accessed 7 th May 2021.
23	5/13/2021	Mullaitivu	Sri Lankan military have allegedly vandalised the Mullivaikkal memorial monument located in Mullivaikkal East in early hours of 13 th May, just hours after the security forces blocked Tamils from erecting a memorial stone at the site. The military have cordoned off the area in the evening of the previous day when people have been making preparations for the upcoming remembrance event. Journalists who attempted to access the area at approximately 10.30 pm in the night were prevented from entering by armed troops. All four roads leading to the area had been blocked by soldiers, who refused to allow anyone through. When they finally were allowed access in the early hours of the morning, the constructed site lay in ruins. A memorial monument, which depicts a pair of outstretched hands, had been broken off and tossed into the nearby sand. In recent years the monument has been the site of annual memorials, with survivors of the massacres lighting flames of remembrance on it. People also found that a memorial stone that had been specially constructed and engraved for the 12 th anniversary and brought there the previous day had disappeared entirely. However, the military have refused to take responsibility for the destruction, telling reporters that they had nothing to do with vandalism or the disappearance of the memorial stone.	Sri Lankan army vandalises Mullivaikkal monument and steals memorial stone Tamil Guardian. Published 13 th May 2021. Last accessed 31 st Aug 2021. Tamils' war memorial in Sri Lanka's Mullaitivu found vandalised The Hindu. Published 13 th May 2021. Last accessed 31 st Aug 2021
24	5/18/2021	Batticaloa	Ten suspects including two women were arrested under Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) for allegedly commemorating the death of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai Prabhakaran in Kalkudah for holding memorial event on 18 th of May. On 18 th of May, 2009, the decades long civil war in Sri Lanka came to an end while many lives of Tamil people in the North East were also lost. Tamils commemorate the day as a day of mourning, while the government celebrates it as a day of victory. The suspects were residents of Valachchenai and Kalkudah. According to Ada Derana, Wimalasena Lavakumar who organized the event has been identified as a 38-year-old male who runs a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).	10 arrested for commemorating LTTE leader in Kalkudah - Breaking News Daily Mirror. Published 18 th May 2021. Last accessed 28 th Aug 2021 Sri Lanka arrests Tamil men and women under terrorism charges over Mullivaikkal commemoration Tamil Guardian. Published 18 th May 2021. Last accessed 28 th Aug 2021
25	5/18/2021	Jaffna	Former Northern Provincial Council (NPC) member M.K. Sivajilingam has been allegedly harassed for organizing and taking part at several remembrance events held at several places. After participating at a small vigil at the Nandikadal lagoon in Mullaitivu with other politicians, Sivajilingam has been stopped and allegedly threatened with arrest by police near Jaffna town. Police have seized the memorial banner in his procession, and have attempted to arrest him stating that he had violated the identity card procedure in place during the covid19 pandemic. In response Sivajilingam has told the police	Tweet Tamil Guardian. Published 18 th May 2021. Last accessed 31 st Aug 2021. Sri Lankan military and police harass Tamil politician throughout Tamil Genocide Day. Tamil Guardian. Published 20 th May 2021. Last accessed 31 st Aug 2021.

			that he had already gone to the court and obtained the relevant permissions. Then he has been obstructed while holding a vigil at World Tamil Conference massacre memorial in Jaffna. When he attempted to light candles, the soldiers have attempted to snatch the candles and to obstruct the vigil. Then Police who have arrived at the scene have allegedly threatened to arrest him for allegedly violating health restrictions. As he carried out a final vigil at his office in Valvettithurai in Jaffna in the evening, several soldiers and police have allegedly surrounded the building.	
26	5/18/2021	Mullaitivu	The Tamil politician Peter Ilancheliyan has been allegedly subjected to harassment and surveillance by the Sri Lankan military as he attempted to remember Tamils who lost their lives during Sri Lankan civil war on May 18. Earlier on the day, Ilancheliyan had taken part at another remembrance event held in Nandikadal with fellow politician M K Sivajilingam. In the evening, soldiers surrounded Ilancheliyan's home as his family held a private vigil at the entrance to their property. Public commemorations had been banned in the Mullaitivu district and soldiers had been patrolling key areas to enforce the ban.	Sri Lankan soldiers surround Tamil politician's home during Mullivaikkal vigil. Tamil Guardian. Published 22 nd May 2021. Last accessed 31 st Aug 2021.
27	6/6/2021	Jaffna	Valikamam Pradeshiya Sabha chairman, Thiyagarajah Nirosh was blocked from commemorating Ponnuthurai Sivakumaran, the first Tamil rebel to die in the armed struggle. Nirosh was lighting a flame in memory of Sivakumaran before allegedly being disrupted by Sri Lankan police who claimed that they were not allowed to pay their respects due to travel bans in the area. The police have stated that only 'essential' services have been allowed to take place.	Sivakumaran commemoration disrupted by Sri Lankan police Tamil Guardian. Published 06 th June 2021. Last accessed 31 st Aug 2021.

	Date	District	Repressive Legal and policy actions	Source
28	4/19/2021	N/A	Cabinet approval was given to a joint Cabinet paper presented by Justice Minister Ali Sabry and Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella seeking to introduce new laws to stop fake news in social media. Accordingly the Cabinet of ministers requested the legal draftsman department to draft a suitable law. Issuing a statement, the Free Media Movement stated that they are deeply concerned about the right to the Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom that could be severely compromised with the new legislation.	Midea Statement By FMM 30th April 2021. FMM Sri Lanka. Published 30 th April 2021; Sri Lanka cabinet nod for laws against "false propaganda" online. Economynext. Published 20 th April 2021; Cabinet Decision - 2021.04.19. Department of Government Information. Last accessed 27 th Aug 2021.
29	5/10/2021	N/A	The Secretary to the Ministry of Health has issued a warning letter to all health departments and officials, citing several provisions of the Establishments Code affecting public officials that disciplinary action will be taken against those who criticize government health policy, express personal views and incorrect information. The Free Media Movement condemned the authorities' attempt to cover up epidemic information in violation of the public's right to information through various sources.	Statement Issued by FMM Ejournalist. . Published 21 st May 2021; Health Min. issues circular on disciplinary action against media statements Ft. Published 21 st May 2021; සෞඛ්‍ය නිලධාරීන්ට මාධ්‍ය ජර්නාලිස්ට් ආණ්ඩු විරුද්ධව Gossiplanka. Published 20 th May 2021. Last accessed 29 th Aug 2021.
30	5/27/2021	N/A	President declared a long list of services as 'essential services'. These included the "services provided by any Public Corporation, Government Department, Local Authority ,Co-operative Society or any of its branches engaged in providing the services related to Sri Lanka Ports Authority, supply and distribution of all fuels, including petroleum products and liquefied gas, all types of labour and services related to transfer oil or fuel from vessels within any port, railway, buses and any type of public transport, maintenance, security and operational aspects of such public services, all types of work related to District Secretariats, Divisional Secretariats, Grama Seva Officers, Samurdhi Development Officers, Agricultural Research Assistants including all field level officers of all District and Divisional Secretariats, state banking and insurance services, waste management services, supply, storage, distribution and regulatory activities of food and beverages and government offices under the Provincial Councils". Declaring government services as essential services has been a known tactic to stop protests and trade union actions in the government sector in Sri Lanka. This tactic has been used historically by different Presidents since 1978. Soon after this gazette was issued trade unions issued a letter condemning the decision. In the following month, gazettes were issued further extending the same gazette and also declaring services related to health and services related to postal services as essential.	Extra Ordinary Gazette No. 2229/8 GoSL. Published 27 th May 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021.

31	20th April, 19th May, and 21st June	N/A	Gazettes calling on the armed forces to maintain public order were reissued in April, May and June, providing the military with additional powers to intervene in civilian affairs. Human rights defenders, families of victims, and survivors of violations fear that this may lead to more intimidation and surveillance of them, and restrictions on activities that may be perceived as dissent.	Extra Ordinary Gazette No. 2228/26 . GoSL. Published 19 th May 2021; Extra Ordinary Gazette No. 2224/11 . GoSL. Published 19 th May 2021; Extra Ordinary Gazette No. 2233/5 . GoSL. Published 21 st June 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021
32	6/8/2021	N/A	On 8th of June issuing a media statement titled "circulation of fake news, photographs, videos causing disunity, hate and obstructing the Covid-19 programme", the Police stated that various individuals and groups have been found to be spreading fake news on social media platforms causing issues relating to public movement, Covid and Dengue prevention programmes, criminal activities, and disharmony between religions and communities. Police stated that anyone creating, publishing, sharing, forwarding, and aiding the spread of such fake news on social media will be prosecuted under Penal Code, Computer Crimes Act, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), ICCPR Act, Obscene publications Act etc. Police also said that a team of Police has been deployed to monitor fake news in Social Media. In response to this statement, on 11th of June the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) said that the provisions of the laws mentioned in the circular could be misused by police officers in order to stifle the freedom of speech and expression. BASL quoted from a court judgement said that "Supreme court has recognized that the right to comment on public issues, and criticize public officials and public institutions is essential for the exercise of the civil and political freedoms so valued by democratic society"	Police clarifies laws applicable for those who share fake news Newswire. Published 8 th June 2021. Last accessed 26 th Aug 2021. Sri Lanka's Fake News Circular: The laws mentioned could be misused by police to stifle the freedom of expression rights – BASL Sri Lanka Brief. Published 12 th June 2021. Last accessed 26 th Aug 2021.

	Date	District	Repression of state officials	Source
33	4/1/2021	online	A fake news article attempting to humiliate forest officer and environmental activist Devani Jayatilake was widely circulated on facebook. The post included an image that looks similar to the famous gossip news column 'Deyya Sakki' published in the sinhala language Lankadeepa newspaper. It was titled as "a wife leaves husband who asked to remove hair in private parts." The news mentioned since woman has gone to the extreme end of not harming any tree, she even gone extent of not removing private hair (in Sinhala body hair is called 'mayil gas' (literally 'mayil trees')). The photo of this news was shared with the photo environmental activist Devani Jayatilake. A fact checking organization checked with the newspaper Lankadeepa and verified that it was a fake news that was not published by the newspaper. Also the artwork included in the post has been prepared editing two artworks previously used by the newspaper. Devani Jayatilake has criticized the politicians openly and exposed environmental destruction due to government development projects in several instances and subsequently she has received much popularity in the recent past.	Fact Check: ලංකාදීප පුවත්පතේ පළවූ ලිපියක ආකාරයෙන් හුවමාරු වූ වියාජ පුවත් සංස්කරණයක්! Sri Lanka Fact crescendo. Published 5 th April 2021. Last accessed 30 th Aug 2021
34	4/5/2021	Jaffna	Illegal sand miners have attempted to escape while knocking down the officer-in-Charge (OIC) of Environmental Division of Point Pedro Police using a tipper truck transporting sand during a search operation. OIC Chief Inspector Ajith Kumara has been admitted to Jaffna hospital due to injuries. The incident has occurred when six police officers including the OIC had been travelling to a location of illegal sand mining based on a complaint they have received from villagers. The suspects were arrested on 5th April.	හොර වැලි අල්ලන්න ගිය පොලිස් ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ ලොරියට යට කරලා Lankadeepa. Published 5 th April 2021. Last Accessed 31 st Aug 2021.
35	4/6/2021	Kandy	The railway gatekeeper of Peradeniya Elugoda Railway crossing has been assaulted by a group led by a local politician due to an incident of keeping the gate closed without temporarily allowing a trishaw to pass in the early hours of 4th April morning. The trishaw driver has then threatened the gatekeeper demanding to open the gate, which the gatekeeper has refused. Next day, the trishaw driver returned and again threatened the gatekeeper. On 6th June the trishaw driver, along with a local politician and others returned again, assaulted the gatekeeper and vandalized his guard room as a reprisal. The local politician and two others have been arrested by the Police.	දුම්රිය ගේට්ටු මුරකරුට පහර දුන් උඩුනුවර ජරාදේශීය සභා මන්ත්‍රී හා ගෝලයෝ අත් අඩංගුවට ! Kandy Prime News. Published 7 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
36	4/14/2021	Galle	A Police officer has been allegedly assaulted by a lorry driver for warning to wear the seat belt. The Police officer who was on duty at the Kurudugaha Hathapma interchange of Southern Expressway has been assaulted in this manner according to the Police Media Unit. The suspect who was arrested has been presented before the Elpitiya magistrate.	Police officer assaulted for requesting to wear the seat belt Hiru News. Published 14 th April 2021. Last accessed 23 rd Aug 2021

37	4/16/2021	Kurunegala	A Samurdhi Development Officer who was engaged in the payment of an allowance of Rs. 5,000 in the Agbowwa Samurdhi area in Alawwa has been assaulted. He is currently receiving treatment at the Alawwa Hospital and the assailant has been arrested, police said	Programme of providing Rs. 5,000 allowance underway. The Morning. Published 16 th April 2021. Last accessed 27 th Aug 2021
38	4/19/2021	Ratnapura and Gampaha	Two employees working in the Ratnapura and Gampaha District branch offices of National Transport Medical Institute have been transferred to the head office in Nugegoda as an interim disciplinary action for criticizing the President in social media. On 20 th April, TNA MP Shanakiyan Rasamanickam questioned if State employees could be punished via disciplinary action or transfers, for sharing their personal views on social media.	ලේස්ලික් මගින් ජනාධිපති විවේචනය කළ රාජ්‍ය සේවකයන් දෙදෙනෙකුට විනය පරීක්ෂණ. Lanka C News. Published 19 th April 2021. Last accessed 30 th Aug 2021. TNA MP questions transfer of state employees for allegedly criticizing President on social media Newswire. Published 21 st April 2021. Last accessed 30 th Aug 2021
39	5/8/2021	Colombo	Kurunegala mayor has allegedly threatened the assistant medical officer for exposing the mayor's undue intervention in prioritizing the second dose of astrazeneca vaccine for his close friends and relatives. The medical doctor has provided this information to a journalist over a phone call. The mayor who has been able to get a copy of the call recording through the media company that the news was published, and has played the recording in front of the medical officer before threatening him that he would file a legal case against the medical doctor for making false accusations. MP Nalin Bandara Jayamaha has spoken about the matter at the Parliament on 5 th May 2021. Later Moratuwa mayor while threatening to a medical officer demanding how the vaccines should be prioritized, mentioned that same has been done in Kurunegala.	කුරුණෑගල පුරපතිගෙන් සහකාර වෛද්‍ය නිලධාරීට තර්ජන ! Lanka Web. Published 8 th May 2021. Last accessed 26 th Aug 2021. Sri Lanka Parliament Published 5 th May 2021. Last Accessed 26 th Aug 2021.
40	May	Badulla	The wife of a Samurdhi officer attached to Kudalunuka area in the Rideemaliyedda Divisional Secretariat was assaulted by a woman who came to the officer's house to demand the Rs. 5,000 allowance. The woman had attacked the couple with bricks, and the officer's wife had to be admitted to Mahiyanganaya base hospital for treatment to injuries.	Frontline Samurdhi officers face flak over relief omissions Sunday Times. Published 2 nd May 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
41	May	Gampaha	Attanagalle Acting Magistrate warned and released three people on personal bail of Rs. 50,000 each for threatening a Samurdhi officer in the Hiriwala area.	Frontline Samurdhi officers face flak over relief omissions Sunday Times. Published 2 nd May 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
42	May	Gampaha	In Palaweela, police arrested two females and one male and produced them in court after a female Samurdhi officer was shouted at and threatened	Frontline Samurdhi officers face flak over relief omissions Sunday Times. Published 2 nd May 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.

43	5/16/2021	Colombo	A female Development Officer of the Kesbewa Divisional Secretariat has been assaulted while on duty. The Development Officer serving the Delthara West GN Division had been returning home after distributing the Rs 5,000 dry ration parcels to an isolated area when the incident had occurred. An identified person who came on a motorcycle has carried out the attack.	Female Development Officer assaulted in Piliyandala Ada Derana, Published 17 th May 2021. Last accessed 31 st Aug 2021. Development Officer assaulted after distributing relief packages to isolated areas Newsfirst. Published 17 th May 2021. Last accessed 31 st Aug 2021.
44	5/18/2021	Matale	A grama seva officer has been assaulted by a Pradeshiya Sabha member in Ukuwela Pradeshiya Sabha, for disagreeing to distribute 5000 LKR Covid-19 relief provision to those recommended by the PS member. PS Member Himali Erandika representing the ruling SLPP at the Ukuwela Pradeshiya Sabha in Matale has been arrested by police on charges of having assaulted the female Grama Niladhari Officer. PS member has dragged her from hair, and slapped her several times for refusing her request. Following the incident GS officer has been admitted to the hospital as she experienced pain in the head and slight loss of hearing. PS member who was arrested was later released on bail after presenting before the magistrate. Later SLPP suspended her party membership due to the incident.	Female SLPP PC assaults Grama Seva Officer during distribution of goods – (Video) News hub. Published 18 th May 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021 SLPP suspends PS member over an assault on Grama Niladhari Officer News First. Published 18 th May 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021.
45	5/21/2021	Colombo	Chamila Jayasinghe, an assistant land commissioner working in Kotmale area was arrested by CID of Police for sharing a facebook post pertaining to the alleged deforestation in the Sinharaja forest reserve. Chamila Jayasinghe who was summoned to the CID head office in Colombo on 21st May, has been duly arrested. He was released on bail on the next day, after presenting before the magistrate. He was produced before the Colombo Magistrate's Court on 22nd May with the charge of 'provoking the people against the government' under Section 120 of the Penal Code. Magistrate Mr. T.K. Prabhakaran granted bail, while rejecting the request made by the police to keep him under remand custody.	The arrest of Chamila Jayasinghe of SLAS is a suppression of freedom of expression – Free Media Movement Sri Lanka Brief. Published 24 th May 2021. Last accessed 28 th Aug 2021. Asst. Land Commissioner arrested for sharing a post on Facebook The Leader. Published 22 nd May 2021. Last accessed 28 th Aug 2021.
46	5/21/2021	Colombo	A disciplinary inquiry was conducted against Dr. Chamal Sanjeewa, Deputy Director at Health Ministry regarding his views that were shared during a talk show on YouTube. The Health Ministry Secretary's office has reportedly informed Dr. Sanjeewa that they wish to meet him to record a statement in this regard. The ParaMedical Services Front of Sri Lanka wrote to the Secretary of the health ministry objecting to this inquiry.	NEWSJVP chides Administrative Service unions for not taking up arrest of SLAS officer over social media post. The Island. Published 24 th May 2021. Last accessed 27 th Aug 2021.
47	5/21/2021	Kegalle	A public Health Inspector (PHI) has been assaulted by a man after asking to wear the face mask at the Rambukkana town. The suspect has fled following the attack. Rambukkana Police are conducting further investigation.	PHI assaulted for asking to wear face mask in Rambukkana town. Sri Lanka Mirror. Published 21 st May 2021. Last accessed 27 th Aug 2021.

48	6/9/2021	vavuniya	A public Health Inspector (PHI) has been assaulted in Santhasolai area in Vavuniya by a youth travelling in a motorbike after the PHI has asked the youth why he was not wear a face mask. 25 years old suspect has been arrested and presented before the Vavuniya magistrate by the Police.	පී:එම්:අයි ට පහරදුන් තරුණයා අත්අඩංගුවට. Lankadeepa. Published 11 th June 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021.
49	5/22/2021	Nuwaraeliya	The driver and a female staff member working in the government run Suwaseriya ambulance service attached to Hatton Police were assaulted in Kudagama, Agil area in Dimbula Pathana Police division. After they have received a call requesting an ambulance claiming that an employee in a hotel has fallen, they have gone there. When the ambulance had arrived, the person who claimed to have faced the accident had been seen working in a construction site and had not shown any sign of injury or health issue. Hence ambulance staff members have refused to take him to the hospital and then they have been assaulted by the 'patient' and another person. Dimbula Pathana Police have arrested the suspects and presented them before the magistrate.	සුවසිරියට පහර දෙයි.. Lanka C News. Published 22 nd May 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021.
50	5/28/2021	Colombo	Moratuwa Mayor Samanlal Fernando was arrested for allegedly threatening a female doctor and obstructing duties of officials, during a vaccination programme. The mayor has demanded vaccination to be provided based on a list that he has previously prepared. However the medical doctor insisted that people waiting in the queue should receive the priority, which mayor did not agree and threatened that he would allow to carry out the vaccination programme otherwise. After presenting before Moratuwa magistrate, the mayor was remanded until 11th June.	Moratuwa Mayor arrested for threatening doctor and obstructing duties. Published 28 th May 2021. Last accessed 27 th Aug 2021. Moratuwa Mayor remanded for threatening and obstructing doctor The Island. Published 30 th May 2021. Last accessed 27 th Aug 2021.
51	5/29/2021	Colombo	A policeman who was on duty at a checkpoint near the Ananda College in Maradana has been subjected to a reprisal for not allowing the wife of a top ranked police officer-in-charge in the Colombo area to pass the checkpoint for jogging, and he has been allegedly transferred to another checkpoint within minutes. After he did allow her to pass through the checkpoint, she contacted her husband, the top ranking officer. The higher ranking officer has then asked the Policeman on duty to allow her to pass through the checkpoint which he had refused saying that he cannot discriminate if other people also come up with similar requests. A moment later, the policeman received a telephone call instructing him to report to the Punchi Borella Police checkpoint for duty with immediate effect. A few hours later the policeman had returned to his earlier station to resume duties, after other officers raised the matter to the senior officers condemning the incident. Police Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana has stated that an investigation has been launched into the incident by the SSP Colombo (Central).	Cop in a soup; transferred for halting top rank officer's wife from jogging. Daily mirror. Published 29 th May 2021. Last accessed 21 st Aug 2021
52	6/8/2021	Ratnapura	A Samurdhi Development officer in Kampane area of Kolonna Divisional Secretariat division has been assaulted with a stick while returning from his work. A woman who has been angered for not receiving 5000	රුපියල් 5000 නොදුන් නිසා 'සමෘද්ධි නිලධාරියාට පහර දුන් කාන්තාව' හසුවේ Live at 8. Published 8 th June 2021. Last accessed 24 th

			LKR allowance has allegedly attacked the officer. The officer Subash Prasanna Kamburugamuwa has been admitted to Kolonna Basic Hospital following the attack. A 34 year old woman has been arrested by Panamure Police as the suspect.	Aug 2021 5000 නොදන්නා සිංහලයන් සමාජයේ නිලධාරියාට පොලීසි පහර Lankadeepa. Published 7 th June 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021
53	6/26/2021	Anuradhapura	Forest officials complained to the Habarana Police that a group of army officials have threatened them with death, assaulted one officer and obstructed their duties over an incident allegedly linked to the abduction of a baby elephant at the Minneriya National Park. The wildlife officials had intercepted two vehicles accessing the main road close to the Habarana town through a marshy land bordering the buffer zone of the park. Since the two vehicles have fled the scene despite forest officials signalling them to stop, the forest officials have followed the vehicles until they enter into the army camp. The incident occurred when they were returning. Commanding Officer of the Army 21 Division in Anuradhapura Major General Mohan Ratnayake has allegedly assaulted and threatened the forest officials in Ganewalpola, Palugasweva area. After the case was taken at the Kekirawa magistrate court, the judge ordered the suspects to be arrested. The Major General Ratnayake also filed a complaint against forest officials claiming defamation.	Night of high drama at Minneriya Park; vehicle chase follows reported bid to abduct baby elephant Sunday Times. Published 27 th June 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021 Court orders arrest of Major General & soldiers for obstruction of duties & assault News First. Published 30 th June 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021 Army Officer complains against Wildlife Officers on defamation Daily News. Published 28 th June 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021
54	4/19/2021	Kandy	Three employees of the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) had been admitted to the Kandy General Hospital after they were assaulted in Bahirawakanda, Kandy. The attack occurred, when they were travelling to Bahirawakanda area to remove an electricity post that fell on to a house. CEB employees held a protest at the Kandy Police demanding the arrest of the suspects. Police said that they have deployed three teams to arrest the suspects.	Three CEB employees on duty attacked; power outage until suspects arrested Daily News. Published 21 st April 2021. Last accessed 23 rd Aug 2021

	Date	District	Repression of NGOs and civil society	Source
55	4/3/2021	N/A	Divaina newspaper alleged that the Movement for Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) had sent a report to a German funder claiming that Gotabaya Rajapakse had abducted and killed journalists. As reported by the newspaper a government official had called three officers of MONLAR into an inquiry and questioned why they sent such a report as their organizational mandate on land and agricultural reform has been a different one. The newspaper alleged that MONLAR have produced such a report for financial gains as 'selling human rights is a profitable business.' Similar accusations were made against the National Peace Council (NPC) for allegedly intervening in national security and local politics as it conducted a project on reconciliation. Global Communities was accused of implementing 'mystery projects' in the North- former conflict zones of the country, with the support of USAID which was labelled as a CIA agent. Former Human Rights commissioner Ambika Satkunathan was accused of allegedly being pro-LTTE in the same press article.	දෙස් විදෙස් රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධානවලින් ජාතික ආරක්ෂාවට එල්ල වූ බරපතළ තර්ජනය. Divaina. 3 rd April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
56	13th April	N/A	State owned Sinhala language newspaper Dinamina published a news article claiming that the government has banned NGOs in Sri Lanka from (1) signing agreements with foreign countries, and (2) accepting money from foreign countries. Article further said the government has taken this decision in the context that various NGOs have provided funds for religious extremism and fundamentalism. It also said that Security forces have found out that 32 Islamic organizations and 11 'separatist' organizations in the North have received such funding.	NGOවලට තහනම් 2ක්. Dinamina. Published 13 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
57	13th April	N/A	A gazette notification was issued by the Sri Lankan government banning 11 islamic groups including 'Save the pearls' organization which detained human rights lawyer Hejaaz Hizbullah's arrest is linked to. Hejaaz Hizbullah played a key role in the organization before his arrest. The list of organizations that were banned included two well-known international islamic terrorist groups Al-Qaeda and ISIS, local islamic groups that included the term 'Thowheedh' in their name, Sri Lanka Islamic Student Movement (SLISM) and several other groups. While majority of these local groups are not publicly known to have any links with terrorism, inclusion of 'Save the pearls' in the list seems as an extension of the legal case against Hizbullah. Save the Pearl is an organization that supported the education of underprivileged children, hoping to lure them away from criminal activities and drug abuse.	Gazette issued banning 11 extremist organisations. Daily News. Published 14 th April 2021. Last accessed 25 th May 2021. Sri Lanka bans 11 extremist groups, including ISIS and al-Qaeda. The Hindu. Published 14 th April 2021. Last accessed 25 th May 2021. Extraordinary Gazette 2223/03. GoSL. Published 13 th April 2021. Last accessed 25 th May 2021. On Hejaaz Hizbullah: The latest victim of Sri Lanka's draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act. Amnesty International. 15 th July 2020. Last accessed 25 th May 2021.

58	13th April 2021	N/A	<p>On 13th April, Asela Sampath, the Convener of the Movement for the Protection of Public Rights and consumer rights advocate was arrested by the Police. While he was not informed the reasons when he was arrested, later Police claimed that the was arrested over accusations of threatening officials in the Consumer Affairs Authority two years ago, while Opposition politician claimed that it was linked to his recent criticism of government. Recently, he was a strong critic of the government regarding the sugar scam, aflatoxin contaminated coconut oil and the concessionary food pack. Many including Asela Sampath, opposition political party members and media alleged that his arrest was a reprisal against his activism. He was detained at Pallansena Quarantine centre and Bogambara prison. On 19th of April he was released on bail. Asela Sampath complained that he was subjected to assault during detention. He also alleged that he was detained for another week after granting bail, under the pretext of quarantining.</p> <p>Around 3rd May, the Prison department recorded a statement from him about the alleged assault. Prison department also said they have made a request to the CID of Police to conduct an inquiry into the incidents.</p>	<p>Civil Activist Asela Sampath arrested. Newswire. Published 13th April 2021; Consumer Rights Advocate Asela Sampath arrested. Newsfirst [youtube]. Published 13th April 2021; Asela Sampath arrested for revealing fraud in Minister Bandula's relief bag - Mujibur. Lankanewsweb. Published 14th April 2021; Consumer rights activist Asela Sampath released on bail. Lankanewsweb. Published 19th April 2021; Complaint on assault to Asela Sampath during detention. Committee for protecting Prisoners. Senka Perera. Facebook status. Published 27th April 2021; Activist Asela Sampath challenges President Rajapaksa to visit the prison with him to show tortured inmates (Video). SrilankaBrief. Published 30th April 2021; 04-hour statement recorded from Consumer Rights Activist Asela Sampath on alleged prison torture. Lankanewsweb. Published 3rd May 2021; Prison dept requests IGP to inquire Asela Sampath's torture accusation (Video). Newswire. Published 2nd May 2021. Last accessed 25th May 2021.</p>
59	4/14	N/A	<p>Director General of NGO Secretariat Raja Gunarathna stated that the government has launched investigations into 38 NGOs.</p>	<p>රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධාන 38 ක් ගැන විමර්ශන. Hiru News. Published 14th April 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>
60	5/12/20 21	N/A	<p>Morning newspaper published that the National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO Secretariat) is planning to be transformed into a monitoring body that is empowered to conduct independent probes and file cases against malpractices carried out by NGOs. A subcommittee has been appointed to propose reforms to the National Secretariat for NGOs is expected to hand over its final draft to the Secretary of Defence by June this year. The Director of NGO Secretariat, Raja Goonerathna has said that "we hope to establish it as a strong monitoring body with more powers that would allow it to carry out independent investigations and to file cases in courts against malpractices carried out by NGOs."</p>	<p>National Secretariat for NGOs to be given teeth. The morning. Published 12th May 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>
61	6/25/20 21	N/A	<p>Government owned newspaper Dinamina published an article calling for mandatory registration of all NGOs with the NGO Secretariat currently functioning under the Ministry of Defence. It also called special attention into foreign government funding programmes such as USAID, UKAID, KOICA, JAICA, NORAD, SIDA, GiZ etc. and claimed that these funding programmes have been designed to serve hidden political interests of Western Nations. It also called for mandatory registration of all NGOs at NGO secretariat, and maintaining a database on funding</p>	<p>රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධාන නිවැරදිව නියමනය කරමු. Dinamina. Published 25th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>

			sources, objectives of the organization, target groups, geographical locations where the project is implemented, beneficiaries and how the project is implemented at provincial level. It also called for using government administrative mechanisms to monitor activities of NGOs at the provincial level and proposed instruction from Divisional Secretariats in designing projects, and selection, and prioritization of target groups. Also it proposed to bring laws to regulate entry and exit of INGOs into the country.	
62	6/7/2021	N/A	The Chairman of the Information Technology Society Sri Lanka (ITSSL) Rajeev Yasiru Kuruwitage Mathew was arrested over a statement pertaining to cyber attack on several state-owned websites. The Police said he had published a press release on social media recently claiming that the websites of the Presidential Secretariat, Foreign Ministry, Medical Research Institute, Survey Department, and several other websites had been hacked. The 23-year-old suspect was arrested by the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) after a complaint had been filed seeking legal action against him for allegedly providing fake news. He was released on bail after two days. The Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Readiness Team (SLCERT) clarified earlier that Government websites had not been hacked. However he clarified that the websites have been affected due to other websites conducting the search engine optimization update. Websites add metadata into the Google search engine in order for their websites to show up on Google and it has been observed that certain websites are currently misusing metadata based on the google optimization feature to attract traffic by using popular Government site names SLCERT said.	<p>ITSSL Chairman released on bail. Sri Lanka Mirror. Published 9th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p> <p>ITSSL Chairman arrested over fake news on cyber attack on state-owned websites. Newswire. Published 8th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>

	Date	District	Other Incidents	Source
63	4/11/2021	Kilinochchi	Police have interrogated the chair of a divisional council in Kilinochchi over the naming of a road after a former cadre of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The interrogation was about the naming of a street in Santhapuram as 'Vettri Lane', after the nom-de-guerre of a local former combatant who had undergone the government's 'rehabilitation' programme after the end of the armed conflict. The Police have advised him to take down the new board or to change the road name to reflect the former cadre's birth name. He has been warned that he will be prosecuted for attempting to revive terrorism if he fails to do so.	Sri Lankan police threaten Kilinochchi council chair over road named after former LTTE cadre Tamil Guardian. Published 11 th April 2021. Last Accessed 22 nd Aug 2021.
64	4/8/2021	Jaffna	TID of Police arrested the Mayor of Jaffna for allegedly promoting the LTTE's ideology, in the choice of uniforms for an environment task force of the local municipal council. He was arrested early morning on 9 th April and released on bail in the evening of the same day, after presenting before the Jaffna magistrate. The B Report presented to the court alleged that Manivannan had committed an offence under Section 120 of the Penal Code 'exciting or attempting to excite disaffection towards the President and the government'. The police alleged that the uniforms worn by a Municipal environmental task force were similar to those formerly worn by the LTTE's police force. The Jaffna Municipal Commissioner was summoned by police on the night of 7 th April and interrogated for around 3 hours regarding the uniforms. Police also told the Commissioner to halt the task force's duties and to hand over its uniforms, which the commissioner carried out the following day. The Jaffna Mayor and another council member were summoned to Jaffna Police around 8pm the next day, and were subjected to lengthy interrogation. The mayor was subsequently arrested. Before being summoned to the Police, Manivannan held a press conference to address the allegations, and explained that the uniforms were in fact the same as those worn by a similar task force ran by the Colombo Municipal Council. The Mayor said that the uniforms held no further connotations and that the police were making allegations based on social media conspiracy theories.	Jaffna Mayor Arrested for 'promoting LTTE ideology' The Hindu. Published 9 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021. Mayor of Jaffna released on bail after arrest by Sri Lanka's Terrorism Investigation Division . Tamil Guardian. Published 9 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
65	4/16/2021	N/A	MP Wijayadasa Rajapaksa alleged that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had threatened him via telephone over his statement criticizing the port city bill. MP Wijayadasa has told the media that the port city bill provides extensive powers that could turn port city into a Chinese colony and he has also criticized appointment of Basil Rajapaksha, president's brother as the Minister of Finance over previous corruption allegations against him. He told that he fears his life after the threat. Later SLPP announced that the party will take disciplinary action against MP Wijedasa for his criticism of the Government and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.	Wijedasa claims life under threat by Prez . Daily Mirror. Published 16 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021. SLPP will take disciplinary action against Wijeyadasa – Keheliya . Ceylon Today. Published 20 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.

66	4/27/2021	Colombo	<p>Opposition MP Harin Fernando filed a petition at the Supreme Court requesting to prevent his imminent arrest in connection with Easter Sunday attacks, while there is no evidence against him to make such a claim. The petition also noted that this has occurred since he has consistently been severely critical of the Government over the bombings. As MP Fernando was receiving medical care, the Police had questioned his sister for over five hours. In his petition before the Supreme Court, Harin Fernando said he had reliable information that the authorities were seeking to arrest and detain him under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). This is linked to a previous public statement Harin made that his late father had advised him not to attend the church mass on the day of Easter Sunday Bombing based on information he had personally received from a friend in government intelligence. Harin has already given a statement about this at the PCol on Easter Sunday Bombings.</p>	<p>CID Grills Harin's Sister For Five Hours; MP Goes To Court Against Imminent Arrest Under PTA. Colombo Telegraph. Published 30th April 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p> <p>No arrest, Harin gets relief in SC. Newswire. Published 30th April 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>
67	6/17/2021	Galle	<p>A social media activist supportive of Opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) named Sumudu Tharanga Waidyarathne residing in Galle was arrested in relation to a post he has posted online. He was later released on the same day. According to Lankadeepa he had published a Facebook post accusing that the government had knowingly brought the xpress pearl ship to be sunk in Sri Lankan seas. This statement could have been in the context that government MP Vasudewa Nanayakkara made a public statement claiming that Xpress Pearl ship is a windfall for the country that is amidst much economic difficulties. Other politicians and social activists also expressed their doubts about lack of clarity on how the ship was allowed into Sri Lankan waters when two harbours have already refused their lack of expertise to handle cargoes that were leaking with chemicals. SJB working committee member and politician Kanishka De Lanerolle who shared information about his arrest further added "when people don't post what the government wants, it becomes lies to this pathetic government. No matter what dramas you stage, your days are numbered." Waidyarathna has not published any public posts in his facebook profile for almost 2 months since his arrest.</p>	<p>Tweet. Kanishka De Lanonrolle. Dated 18th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p> <p>Tweet. Kanishka De Lanonrolle. Dated 17th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p> <p>මුහුණු පොතේ අසන්ය නොරතුරු දැමූ සැකකරුට ඇප. Lankadeepa (web). Published 17th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p> <p>Statement by JVP General Secretary Tilvin Silva. Newsfirst. 6th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>
68	6/19/2021	Galle	<p>Several opposition political party members who protested against the government's decision to increase fuel price by travelling in bullock carts were arrested by Police for allegedly violating quarantine regulations. Samagi Jana Balawegaya youth Committee member Kanishka Lanerolle was among those who were arrested. Police said that suspects were released under Police bail. The protestors wore masks and social distancing was maintained during the protest as per the photos and videos published in media. INFORM believes that these arrests indicate reprisal against criticisms of the government rather than any health priority.</p>	<p>Tweet. Manjula Basnayake. Dated 19th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021</p> <p>Opposition activists arrested for bullock cart protest violating quarantine rules. Newswire. Published 19th June 2021. Last accessed 24th Aug 2021.</p>

69	Early April	Jaffna	A Tamil youth has been arrested in Kopay, Jaffna for allegedly having a photo of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai Prabhakaran on his smartphone. Kopay police have filed a B report against the youth on charges of "inciting or attempting to incite hatred" under Section 120 of the Sri Lankan Penal Code. The youth was presented before the Jaffna Magistrate on the following day.	Tamil youth arrested over photo of LTTE leader on phone. Tamil Guardian. Published 24 th April. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
70	4/16/2021	online	Various environmental activists accused that their profiles were either blocked, or their posts relating to environmental destruction were removed allegedly claiming that they have violated community guidelines. According to them, the posts were sometimes removed considering terminology, without considering the context or perhaps based on direct translations. Also they pointed out pro-government facebook users are not blocked for publishing the same content, it seems that they were targeted for publishing content criticizing the government. Human Rights Lawyer Achala Senevirathna stated that even the profiles of those who made death threats against her were not removed.	ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පරිසර විනාශය: ලේස්ලක් ගිණුම් අවහිර කිරීමේ තැත් පවතින බවට පරිසරවේදීන්ගෙන් වෝද්දනාවක් BBC sinhala. Published 16 th April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
71	4/21/2021	online	Government MP Sampath Athukorala published a facebook post alleging that youtuber Ratta is a member of Opposition Party JVP and has been spreading false news targeting the government for criticizing government's failure to bring justice to the victims of Easter Sunday Bomb attack in April 2019. The statement was later edited and Ratta's name was removed due to public pressure and criticisms.	ද්විටා JVP කාරයෙක්.. ආණ්ඩුවට මඩ ගහනවා..- පොහොට්ටු මන්ත්‍රී. LankaCNews. Published 22 nd April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021. Facebook Status. Sampath Athukorala. Published 21 st April 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
72	5/3/2021	Badulla	A covid19 patient in an intermediary treatment centre in Bindunuwewa run by the military has been allegedly brutally assaulted and tortured by a military official for demanding an additional water bottle for his consumption. The victim Saman Abeygunawardane has published a social media post on the incident after coming out of the centre. An officer named Major Janaka Peiris has allegedly assaulted the victim using approximately 5 feet long stick after asking to kneel down, and blamed them in obscene language, and 5 others have also joined in torturing him for around an hour.	බිදුණුවැව කොවිඩ් ජර්නිකාර මධ්‍යස්ථානයේ හමුදා ජර්ධනියෙන් ආසාදිතයෙකුට අමානුෂික ලෙස පහර දෙයි.. Lanka Truth. 13 th May 2021. Last accessed 24 th Aug 2021.
73	5/7/2021	Colombo	The media spokesperson of Our People's Party attached to infamous ultra nationalist group Bodu Bala Sena, Dan Priyasad has lodged a complaint with the Police Headquarters against the Vasthi YouTube channel. In the complaint, he has alleged that a video to be aired on the Vasthi YouTube channel has insulted Sri Lankan culture, history and the Sri Lankan army. Vasthi is a popular youtube channel that publishes comedy videos. In the relevant video former Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera also acted as a character. In his statement, Dan Priyasad also highlighted the need for regulating youtube content by the government as they corrupt morality and culture in the country.	‘වස්ති’ Youtube නාලිකාවට එරෙහිව ඩැන් ජරියසාද් පොලීසි යයි - අනෙක් Youtube නාලිකාවලටත් තර්ජන! Newshub. Published 7 th May 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021. Dan Priyasad goes to the police against Vasthi - Video. Gossip Lanka news. Published 8 th May 2021. Last accessed 25 th Aug 2021.

74	5/17/2021	Matara	A Buddhist monk has been assaulted and killed by a group of fishermen as the monk had advised them to refrain from fishing in front of the temple. Thiththagalle Devananda Thero residing in Weligama Kapuwatte Sri Wiwekarama temple has been assaulted and killed by a group of five persons. A fisherman who was offended by the monk's advice had later arrived at the temple along with 4 other young men who had assaulted the monk. The monk died after being admitted to the Matara hospital.	සාතනය වූ හිමිනම මැරුණේ පහර දෙද්දි වැද වැටීම. News Centre. Published 18th May 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021. Monk who advised youth against fishing assaulted and killed: Two arrested.. Newsweb. Published 17th May 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.
75	6/3/2021	Colombo	Director of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Hemantha Herath was caught on camera telling reporters after a media conference that some journalists killed in the past were "3rd class" journalists. Six Sri Lankan Media rights groups issued a statement condemning his statement for allegedly insulting the journalists who were killed because of their work. They demanded a public apology from the official and noted that those killings of journalists still remain in impunity for many years. Such defamatory statements about killed journalists from public officials could hurt the feelings of family members and others pursuing justice, and could contribute to long remaining impunity.	Media groups slam Health Ministry official over "3rd class" comments. Colombo Gazette. Published 7th June 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021. Media organisations demand apology from Health Ministry spokesman. Newswire. Published 7th June 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.
76	6/25/2021	Kandy	A priest of Devale in Balagolla area has kidnapped two persons for allegedly insulting him through facebook and crucified and tortured them as revenge. The priest and the group who were involved in kidnapping have fled the area, while Balagolla Police has been conducting investigations. They first kidnapped the two persons and brought them to the house of the priest, and then taken to another location in Ampitiya area for torturing them. The two were later admitted to the Kandy hospital.	කපුවාට අපහාස කළැයි කුරුසියේ තබා ඇණ ගහලා. Lankadeepa. Published 27th June 2021. Last accessed 25th Aug 2021.