

Repression of Dissent

April 2022



A protestor shouts anti-government slogans during a protest outside Sri Lankan president's private residence in Mirihana on the outskirts of Colombo, Sri Lanka (Photo |AP)

INFORM

Human Rights Documentation Centre

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

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1. Executive Summary

In April, Moody's Investors Service ("Moody's") downgraded Sri Lanka's debt ratings to Ca from Caa2, due to debt servicing suspension on external public debt repayments. On the night of 31st March, and early morning of 1st of April, amid worsening economic crisis, thousands of protestors protested in front of the President's private residence in Colombo. Protestors were tear gassed, attacked with water cannons and assaulted by Police. Around 54 protestors including journalists were arrested and detained by the Police. Later anti-government protesters started occupying the Galleface Green urban park located in front of the Presidential secretariat in Colombo and the site was named as the GoGotaGama (GGG/GoGotaVillage). Protesters demanded the resignation of the President and the government.

Case updates: The Puttalam High Court granted bail to three accused of the case against Lawyer Hejazz Hisbullah. Hizbullah in a tweet said that the accused were arrested to falsely implicate him in the case of Easter sunday bomb attack case. 7 people who had been arrested and detained for around 7 months under the prevention of terrorism act (PTA) were acquitted and released. They were arrested for holding a memorial event in memory of those who lost during the war.

Repression of Media and Journalists: At least 6 journalists covering the protest in front of the President's private residence were physically assaulted and arrested by Police, while around 9 journalists and hundreds of protestors have been assaulted. CID¹ of Police interrogated a photojournalist for over 4 hours, regarding the same protest. A director of the President's Media Division threatened journalists who were reporting on the damages that occurred during the protest. The Inspector General of Police ordered an inquiry against a private Television channel for distributing updates about a protest for allegedly instigating public outrage. Intelligence officers visited houses of two journalists in Batticaloa over social media posts regarding the anti-government protests. Police obstructed the journalists from attending a press conference organized by a Tamil political party in the North. Social Media was restricted on the instruction of Director General of TCRC² who had acted upon a request made by the Ministry of Defence, however the decision was withdrawn after the Public Utility Commission and Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) intervened.

Repression of Freedom of Assembly: The government issued a gazette order banning the public from gathering at public places at a time protests against the government were being organized around the country. President also declared a state of public emergency, which allows the arrest and detention of individuals without a warrant and provides more powers to the military and Police. Police fired tear gas and water cannon attacks on protestors at

¹ Criminal Investigation Department

² Telecommunication Regulatory Commission

multiple protests. These included the Protest in front of President's private residence in Colombo, a protest in front of Prime Minister's private residence in Tangalle, a protest organized by IUSF³ in front of Parliament roundabout, a protest organized by Peradeniya University students, a protest organized by residents in Rambukkana, a protest in front of SLPP office in Kalutara and several other protests organized near the private houses of Parliamentarians. One protester was shot dead and several others were injured in Rambukkana protest, while the Police alleged that protestors attempted to fire a fuel bowser. Pro-Government protesters attempted to interrupt a candlelight vigil conducted by anti-government protesters. The Police requested a court order against the protest conducted in front of the Temple trees: the Prime Minister's official residence in Colombo. Police also requested a court order against a protest organized in front of Fort Railway station. However the request was declined by the court. In Rideemaliyadda in Badulla district, the chairperson of the local council assaulted a protester causing a tense situation. Banners with photographs of murdered, assaulted and disappeared journalists during the previous Rejapakse regime were removed the Presidential Secretariat officials. Police assaulted a protester in front of the Temple Trees. A social media activist engaged with #GoHomeGota2022 facebook group was abducted and then called to be arrested by Police. A former athlete working in a government institution received verbal threats for supporting anti government protests. Parliamentarian Rasamanickam received a court order preventing him from participating in protests. Batticaloa magistrate court banned a memorial event organized in memory of Annai Poopathy, who died in 1988 in a hunger strike in protest of atrocities committed by Indian Peace Keeping Forces. A Senior Police officer assaulted a bus driver who protested against the fuel hike.

Other incidents: Police arrested and took legal action against a Police officer who took part at the anti-government protests wearing his uniform. The Army commander requested the Inspector General of Police to launch an inquiry against the Police officers who interrupted and questioned the masked armed military men, riding motor bikes with no vehicle registration numbers in a manner intimidating the protesters.

³ Inter University Student Federation

2. Context

In April, Moody's Investors Service ("Moody's") downgraded Sri Lanka's debt ratings to Ca from Caa2, due to debt servicing suspension on external public debt repayments.⁴

Amid worsening economic crisis, thousands of protestors protested in front of the President's private residence in Colombo on the evening of 31st March. In the night, and in the early hours of April 1st, protestors were tear gassed, attacked with water cannons and assaulted by Police. Around 54 protestors including journalists were arrested and detained by the Police.⁵ The president's Media division claimed that there were 'extremists' among the protestors. Protesters in Nuwara Eliya of the Central Province stopped the opening ceremony of the Nuwara Eliya Spring Festival, demanding the festival be stopped because of the worsening economic situation.⁶ As various protests were held around the country, the President declared the emergency law. However protests continued despite the government attempts to control them. On 4th of December, a mass protest was started at the Galleface Green in Colombo in front of the Presidential Secretariat demanding the resignation of the President Gotabaya Rajapakse and the government⁷. A few days later, an occupying protest site was established in Galle Face and it was named as the "GoGotaGama" ("GoGotaVillage" or GGG) and it still continues by mid June, when this report is being written. A number of intimidations were made at GGG protestors. In late April, a number of permanent and temporary barricades were made near to the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo, and some barricades even contained spikes.⁸

A close relative of the ruling Rajapakse family and the former Sri Lanka ambassador to the United States and Mexico, Jaliya Wickramasuriya pleaded guilty for attempting to embezzle more than 330,000 usd while purchasing a new building to the Sri Lankan embassy in Washington in the year 2013.⁹

⁴ https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-downgrades-Sri-Lankas-rating-to-Ca-outlook-stable--PR_465079

⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/31/tear-gas-as-sri-lanka-protesters-try-to-storm-presidents-house>

⁶ <https://groundviews.org/2022/04/02/march-31st-protests-updates/>

⁷ <https://www.newscutter.lk/sri-lanka-news/another-massive-protest-underway-at-galle-face-04042022-29876/>

⁸ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/24/barricades-with-spikes-placed-in-some-parts-of-fort/>

⁹ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/02/us-332027-former-sl-ambassador-pleads-guilty-to-defrauding-sri-lankan-govt/>

3. Case Updates

Three accused granted bail in the case of the Lawyer Hejaazz Hisbulla

The Puttalam High Court granted bail to three accused of the case against Lawyer Hejaaz Hisbulla, despite objections raised by the Attorney General. In a tweet, Hejaaz said that they were arrested in an attempt to implicate him in relation to the Easter Sunday bombings¹⁰. The 3 indicted were the Principal and two teachers of the Al – Zuhriya Arabic College, Puttalam for allegedly aiding and abetting to hold an extremist lecture at the college. President council Mithree Gunarathana appearing on behalf of the three accused argued that there were no prima facie case against the accused, also noted that the accused were arrested years after the alleged incident and have remained in detention on flimsy and contradictory evidence.¹¹



Memorial event that led to arrest and detention for more than 7 months under PTA.

Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

PTA detainees released: 7 people who had been arrested and detained for around 7 months under the prevention of terrorism act (PTA) were acquitted and released. They were arrested for holding a memorial event remembering victims of war on 18th May 2021 in Kalkudah beach in Batticaloa district¹². They were accused that they remembered the LTTE.¹³ They were granted bail in December 2021¹⁴, but the case against them continued until April.

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/hejaazh/status/1511957597930373125>

¹¹ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/07/hejaaz-hizbullah-case-bail-granted-to-3-under-new-pta-amendment-by-puttalam-hc/>

¹² <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/73952/group-arrested-for-commemorating-ltte-in-kalkudah-beach>

¹³ <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/tamils-arrested-detained-and-now-finally-released-lighting-candles>

¹⁴ <https://www.themorning.lk/10-held-under-pta-for-remembering-victims-of-war-released-after-7-months/>

4. Repression of Media and Journalists

Intelligence officer has visited a journalist house:

The homes of S. Nilanthan and P Sasikaran were visited by Sri Lanka Intelligence officers over a social media post regarding anti-government protests in the 3rd week of the month of April. These two journalists were accused of inciting separatism on social media' through their coverage of the protests and of 'attempting to revive the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).¹⁵

Police restricted the journalists to enter the media conference of the TNPF:

Jaffna Police officers have obstructed journalists from entering the Tamil National People's Front press conference held at their Kokuvil office on 3rd April 2022. TNPF tweeted the situation and further claimed that police officers of the Jaffna police station prevented the journalist from entering the TNPF Kokuvil office, harassed them and registered the names of the journalists.¹⁶

Journalists covering the Mirihana Protest were beaten and arrested:



Injured journalist Sumedha Sanjeewa in Mirihana protests was carried to the court without any treatment. photo Courtesy Kumara de Silva Tweet

On 31st March, a massive protest happened near President Gotabaya Rajapaksha's private residence in Mirihana, Nugegoda located in the Colombo suburbs. Thousands of protestors

¹⁵ <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/sri-lankan-intelligence-question-family-tamil-journalist-over-gohomegota-posts>

¹⁶ <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/sri-lankan-police-bar-tamil-journalists-entering-tnpf-offices>

gathered at the street leading to the President's residence, demanding the President to resign while chanting the slogan "Go Home Gota." A tense situation erupted as the protestors tried to break through the Police barriers, and several vehicles were set on fire. At least 9 journalists had been assaulted and injured,¹⁷ and at least 6 had been taken into custody by the Sri lankan police personnel from Sri Lanka's Special Task Force while they were covering the tense situation of the protest. According to the Federation of Media Employees Trade Union six journalists, namely Avanka kumara and Chatura Deshan from Sirasa TV, Sumedha Sanjeewa Gallage, Pradeep Wickramasinghe and Nissanka Werapitiya, Journalists from Derana TV, and Waruna Wanniarachchi, a reporter for Lankadeepa newspaper have been arrested and assaulted.¹⁸ Also cameras and other equipment of a few journalists and media workers have also been severely damaged. Many of the assaulted journalists said that they were assaulted by the Police, despite them presenting their media identity cards to the Police confirming that they were journalists.¹⁹

CID has questioned journalists over 4 hours for the Mirihana Incident:

Daily Mirror newspaper photographer Waruna Wanniarachchi was questioned for over 4 hours by the Criminal Investigation Department on 06th April 2022, regarding the tense situation that occurred during the protest in front of President Rajapakse's private residence. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has asked the journalist to provide videos and photographs of the incident. Wanniarachchi is one of the journalists who had been arrested and injured during the protest.²⁰

A director of President's Media Division threatens journalists covering damages that happened during the Protest in Mirihana

Journalist Tharindu Jayawardhna and other journalists who were reporting on the damages that happened due to the protest in Mirihana were obstructed by a person who claimed to be a Director of the President's Media Division. On 1st April 2022, a person self identified as Nuwan Tharaka, a director of the President's Media Division threatened the journalists videoing and photographing the site where the protest held previous night and asked to leave the site. The journalist Tharidhu Jayawardhna made a complaint at the Mirihana Police Station and to the Inspector General of Police (IGP).²¹

¹⁷ <https://rsf.org/en/least-nine-journalists-injured-during-sri-lanka-protests>

¹⁸ <https://fmetu.org/?p=9664>

¹⁹ <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/sri-lanka-several-journalists-assaulted-and-detained-during-mirihana-protests.html>

²⁰ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/06/cid-grills-photojournalist-over-mirihana-incident/>

²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/100003724565070/posts/2448304621970333/>

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Acknowledgement of the complaint made by the journalist, Tharindhu Jayawardhana.
 Photo Courtesy: Rekha Nilukshi Facebook

IGP orders an inquiry against Sirasa Tv for reporting on Mirihana protests:

Inspector General of Police writing to Criminal Investigation Department (CID) with letter numbered GP/PA/CID/OUT/76/22 on 1st of April 2022 has ordered to launch an inquiry against the private television channel Sirsa TV for allegedly distributing information about the Mirihana protest knowingly instigate outrage among public.²² Several ruling party politicians including the President previously also made statements calling for control of Sirsa TV for publishing critical views about the government.

Social media access restricted:

On 2nd April 2022 the Sri Lanka government banned access to social media in the early hours ahead of planned nationwide protests against the government. The Director General of the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka had advised the service providers to temporarily restrict access to social media, on the request of the Ministry of Defence.²³ This was after the President declared a state of emergency and imposed a 36-hour nationwide curfew.²⁴ ²⁵ The Chairperson of the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission stated that this restriction was imposed in the interests of the country and people to remain calm. The Public Utility Commission requested TRCSL and service providers to restore the access to social media to give the information of the impending power cuts. The social media ban was lifted in the evening of the same day.²⁶ The Human Right Commission Sri Lanka has thoroughly criticised the decision and summoned the telecom regulator, Defence Secretary, Media and Information Secretary over the social media ban.²⁷

²² Media Freedom Rights Monitoring report. April 2022. Free Media Movement.

²³ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/03/sri-lanka-bans-access-to-social-media/>

²⁴ <https://ifex.org/sri-lanka-free-media-movement-condemns-repressive-actions-of-the-government/>

²⁵ http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22A/Apr03_1648944998CH.php

²⁶ <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/81595/sri-lanka-to-remove-ban-on-social-media>

²⁷ <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-social-media-ban-removed-92464/>

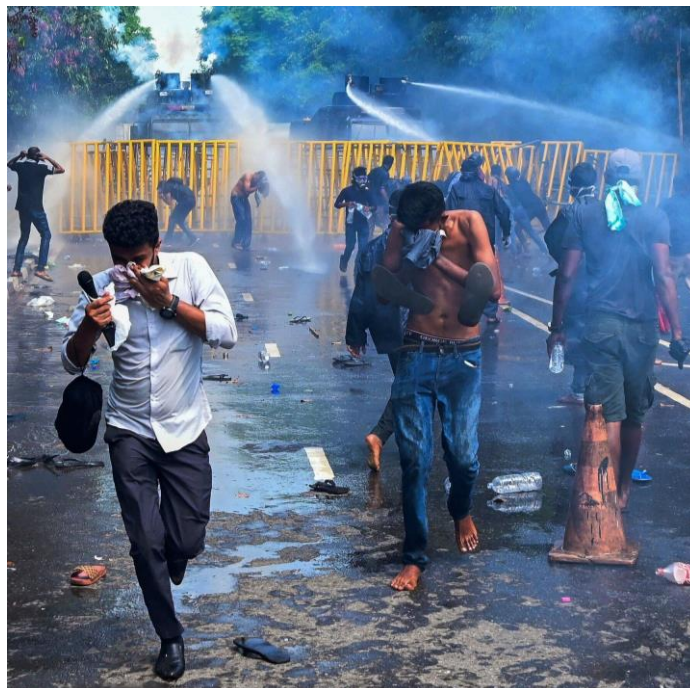
5. Repression of Freedom of Assembly

Order banning gathering at public places: Government issued a gazette order banning gathering at public places and seashore from 2nd April 2022 evening to 4th April 2022. As a result, he as President by virtue of the powers vested in him under Section 16 of the Public Security Ordinance (Chapter 40), has directed that no person shall be on any public road, railway, public park, public recreation ground or other public ground or the seashore in such areas, from 18.00 hour of April 02nd, 2022 to 06.00 hour of April 04th, 2022, except under the authority of a written permit granted by the Secretary, Ministry of Defence or Secretary, Ministry of Public Security or Inspector-General of Police or any officer authorised by them.²⁸

State of public Emergency Declared: President Gotabaya Rajapaksa declared a State of public emergency as protests against his administration grew. A Gazette Extraordinary has been published declaring a public emergency with effect from 1st of April.²⁹

Police Fire tear gas over the protestors near the parliament:

Inter University Student Federation has conducted a protest against the economic crisis in Sri Lanka on 8th April 2022. When the protestors marched towards the parliament, pushing off the barricades, police started to fire tear gas and water to the protestors. Protestors marched from Kelaniya to Battaramulla.³⁰



*Police fired tear gas and water to the protestors who were protesting near the Parliament.
Photo Courtesy: The New York Times*

²⁸ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/02/ban-on-gatherings-at-public-places-seashore/>

²⁹ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/01/state-of-public-emergency-declared/>

³⁰ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/08/police-fire-tear-gas-on-protesting-students-2/>

Police has fired tear gas to the peradeniya University student protest:

Students of University of Peradeniya despite the curfew and emergency law have organised a protest demanding solutions to the current economic crisis and other issues such as not paying Mahapola scholarship to the students on time.³¹ University students accompanied their university lecturers and marched the protest from university to the Kandy town. By the Galaha junction police have obstructed the protest by setting up the barricades. When students started to push off the barricades, a tense situation arose and police started to fire tear gas and water at the protestors. Following the tense situation students sat down on the road as a mark of protest. Peradeniya Teaching Hospital staff also joined and supported the protest.³²



*Police put barriers and brought the water cannon truck to obstruct the Peradeniya University Student Protest.
Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian.*

In the Rambukkana protest one man died and more than 10 people injured:

On 19th April 2022, residents of Rambukkana area protested against the fuel shortage and increasing price of the fuel, blocking the Kandy - Colombo main road and burned tyres there, while they also blocked the railway track for around 15 hours. Police have attacked the protestors with tear gas and then they have opened fire at the protestors killing one person and 11 injured. Police alleged that shooting was done as a group of protestors attempted to set fire to a fuel bowser. The Police curfew was imposed in the area following the incident.^{33 34}

Police remove the anti government protest site 'GotaGoGama' in Galle:

Police removed the tents set up opposite the Galle Bus Stand by anti government protesters on 17th April 2022. The area where tents are set up refers to the *Gota Go Gama branch in Galle*. Without any

³¹ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/03/police-fire-tear-gas-on-peradeniya-protest/>

³² <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/04/03/tear-gas-water-cannons-to-disperse-student-protest-in-peradeniya/>

³³ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/19/clashes-epolice-protesters-in-rambukko/>

³⁴ <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/sri-lanka-economic-crisis-curfew-imposed-in-rambukkana-as-police-clash-with-protesters-2902417>

complaint or court order police have removed the tents. After lawyers intervened tents were restored.³⁵



Replacing the removed tent at Gota Go Village galle Branch. Photo courtesy: News Wire.

Police fired tear gas at the protestors near the SLPP party office in Kalutara.:

A group of protestors near the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna, Minister of Parliament Rothia Abeygunawardhana public meeting office were attacked with tear gas on 04th April 2022. Police have fired tear gas to disperse the protestors who were demanding to provide domestic gas.³⁶

Police use water cannons and tear gas to disperse the protestors gathered around the Prime Minister's private residence in Tangalle:

On 04th April, police used tear gas to disperse the protest in front of the Prime Minister's Carlton residence in Tangalle. The police also used roadblocks to prevent protestors from reaching Carlton residence.³⁷ The roadblocks were set up by the police blocking the Colombo - Kataragama main road. There was a tense situation as the protestors tried to break through the roadblocks to enter the Carlton house and then police fired tear gas. Carlton house is where the current president Gotabaya Rajapaksha and his brother current Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksha were born.³⁸

Pro-Government supporters attempted to interrupt the candlelight vigil by anti-government protestors

Pro-government protestors attempted to interrupt the anti-government candlelight vigil against the Police brutality held at Independence Square on 25th April 2022. The anti-government protestors claimed that the group of pro-government supporters confronted the candlelight vigil participants, demanding them not to enter the Independence Square. The police were called off for the protection

³⁵ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/17/galle-gotagogama-removed-tents-are-back-after-lawyers-intervene/>
<https://www.newscutter.lk/sri-lanka-news/police-remove-tents-put-up-by-protestors-in-galle-17042022-31413/>

³⁶ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/04/police-fire-tear-gas-to-protestors-near-kalutara-party-office-of-slpp-mp-rohitha-abeygunawardena/>

³⁷ https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/Tear-gas-and-water-cannons-used-to-disperse-protestors-near-MR-s-hometown-in-Tangalle/108-234462

³⁸ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/04/police-use-water-cannons-tear-gas-to-disperse-protestors-near-tangalle-pms-house>

of the candlelight vigil participants. Candlelight vigil and pro-government protest both happened in the Independence Square,³⁹



Candlelight vigil staged at Independence Square: Photo Courtesy: Colombo Gazette.

The Police requested court for an order against demonstrations opposite Temple Trees:

The police have requested from the Colombo Magistrate Court an order against the staged protest conducted opposite to the PM's official residence- Temple Trees on 25th April 2022.⁴⁰ Speaking at the Colombo magistrate court, the police claimed that the protestors' demonstration is inconvenient to the free movement of the public. The Additional Magistrate denied the request of the police saying that if the protestors were behaving in a manner causing public nuisance, police already have the powers to take necessary actions. Also the magistrate pointed out that order couldn't be issued without naming specific protesters.⁴¹

Rideedimaliyadda Pradeshiya Saba Chairperson has assaulted a protester:

Rideemaliyadda Traders Association and Three Wheelers Association organised an anti government protest on 28th April 2022. There has been a tense situation after a group of mobs led by Rideemaliyadda Pradeshiya Sabha chairperson Nishantha Jayasundara had assaulted an anti-government protester. The incident occurred when one of the protesters went to question Pradeshiya Sabha chairperson after the protest ended. A tense situation arose following the incident, as the protesters surrounded the Rideemaliyadda Pradeshiya Sabha office premises, demanding to arrest the chairperson. Two protesters subjected to physical attack have been hospitalised at Rideemaliyadda Uraniya Regional Hospital. The chairperson who has been stuck at the office premises has been saved by the Police.⁴²

³⁹ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/25/gota-supporters-attempt-to-disrupt-independence-square-vigil/>

⁴⁰ <https://colombogazette.com/2022/04/25/police-fail-to-secure-court-order-against-protests-near-temple-trees/>

⁴¹ https://www.dailymirror.lk/front_page/Police-request-to-remove-protesters-outside-Temple-Trees-rejected/238-235715

⁴² <https://lankatruth.com/si/?p=133146>

Colombo Fort Police requests Colombo Magistrate Court to issue a court order halting the anti government protest in front of the Fort Railway station:

The Colombo Fort Police Station has requested from the Colombo Magistrate Court to issue an order halting the protests scheduled to be conducted in front of the Fort Railway Station on 24th April 2022 by the Inter University Student federation and Inter University Bhikku Federation on 23rd April 2022. The Colombo Additional Magistrate T. Prabhakaran has refused to process such an order saying he could not issue any orders to prevent a protest from taking place in the future and directed the police to use their police powers if the protesters engaged in a manner that would harass the public or damage state property. The Fort police informed the magistrate that they have received intelligence information that there is a risk of protestors forcibly entering leading government institutions and official residences in the area and requested the court to issue this order to prevent it. ⁴³

The banners of the assassinated, disappeared and tortured Journalists placed in GotaGoGama protest area in Galleface are removed by officials: *Removed portraits of the disappeared, assassinated and tortured journalists. Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian & Sandya Ekneligoda Twitter*



On 28th April 2022 the banners placed on the fence of the President Secretariat office were removed by the security officers. These banners showed disappeared, tortured and assassinated journalists during previous Rajapakse regime. The Journalists who were at the protest site claimed that these banners were removed at night on 28th of April 2022. The International Media Unit which was placed in the protest site at Galleface called off a press conference and claimed they will thoroughly condemn the act and will replace the banners.

⁴³ http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22A/Apr23_1650731161CH.php

Police physically assaulted a protester protested in front of Temple Trees:

The tense situation occurred on 29th April 2022 when police attempted to remove the banners and posters that had been placed on the Police bus that was continuously parked blocking the pavement to enter the Temple trees. The one protester was injured and hospitalized. The anti government protesters near the temple trees claimed that a Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) was present when the incident occurred. The police have forcefully parked the buses and trucks blocking the pavement in front of Temple trees where protestors were protesting. Group of Lawyers lodged a complaint to Colpety police about parked police buses and trucks that blocked the pavement and loudly playing recordings of Buddhist pirith causing inconvenience to the public.⁴⁴



Police buses are parked on the pavement of the temple trees. Photo Courtesy: Daily Mirror

Arrested Anuradha Bandara for running the facebook Group "Go Home Gota":

On 02nd April 2022, the Social media activist and Administrator of the Facebook page "Go Home Gota" was initially abducted at his home in Gampola in Kandy District of Central province and later it was informed that he has been arrested by the Modara Police in Colombo District of Western Province. He was abducted by a group of men who claimed that they were police. After the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka intervened, the Crimes Division of the Modara Police had confirmed that Anuruddha Bandara was in their custody. Police have informed that he will be charged under section 120 of the Sri Lankan Penal Code, which makes it an offence to incite or attempt to incite feelings of disaffection to the State. Anuradha was granted bail on the next day.^{45 46}

⁴⁴ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/29/tense-situation-between-police-protesters-near-temple-trees-one-injured/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/activist-arrested-running-go-home-gota-facebook-page>

⁴⁶ http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22A/Apr29_1651255915CH.php



*Social Media Activist Anurudha Bandara with his Lawyers at Modara Police Station.
Photo Courtesy: News First.*

Former athlete received the verbal threats from the fellow group of employees at Ceylon Petroleum Corporation where he is currently employed:



Sugath Thilakarathna attended the protest conducted by the athletes in Sri Lanka. Photo Courtesy: Ceylon Today.

Former Olympian and Asian Games Gold medallist Sugath Thilakaratne, who is currently an employee in the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation received verbal threats from a group of employees of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation after he attended the anti government protest.⁴⁷ He lodged a complaint at Wellampitiya police station regarding the incident on 9th April 2022. Police have recorded the statements from the Ceylon Petroleum employees who allegedly threatened Thilakarathna. Thilakarathna further stated that this group of people has threatened him to not raise his voice against

⁴⁷ <https://ceylontoday.lk/2022/04/18/olympian-sugath-threatened-for-attending-protest/>

the Government and not to involve the 'Go Home Gota' campaign. He claimed that those who threatened him constitute supporters of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna.⁴⁸

Parliamentarian Rasaminckam received a court order prohibiting him from participating in anti-government protests:

Kaluwanchikudy Magistrate Court has issued an order to Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MP Shanakiyan Rasamainckam to refrain from attending the anti government protests. The court prohibited him from engaging in any demonstrations that obstruct a road, a part of a road, obstruct the public, or lead to the damage of public property.⁴⁹ MP Rasamanickam said that the police had handed over the court order to the MP on 28th April 2022, that he couldn't participate in the protests from 29th for two weeks. MP Rasamanickam pointed out that it is not clear what was the basis of the court order as most of the people in the country are engaged in protests.⁵⁰



Police handed over the court order to the MP Rasamanikkam. Photo Courtesy: Newswire

The Batticaloa Magistrate Court banned the commemoration of the Tamil hunger strike.

The Batticaloa Magistrate court has banned the commemoration event that was planned to mark the death of Annai Poopathy, the woman who went on a hunger strike against the atrocities committed by Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) and died. The Tamil National People's Front (TNPF) received the notice from the Batticaloa Magistrate Court informing the party that all commemorative events that it planned would be banned. This ban was ordered on 18th April 2022.⁵¹

⁴⁸ <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/81595/sri-lanka-to-remove-ban-on-social-media>

⁴⁹ <https://ceylontoday.lk/2022/04/28/court-order-issued-against-tna-mp-rasamanickam/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/28/court-order-against-mp-shanakiyan/>

⁵¹ <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/sri-lankan-court-blocks-remembrance-events-commemorate-tamil-hunger-striker>

Police fired tear gas against the protesters near several ruling government Ministers:

On 4th April 2022 people started to protest near the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna Parliamentarian state Minister Roshan Ranasinghe's private residence. Allegedly, the Police have used tear gas to disperse the protesters attempting to enter the house. Police had also fired tear gas to disperse another protest held near the Parliamentarian Gamini Lokuge's private residence in Piliyandala. Also police used tear gas at protesters who were protesting near the residence of former Health Minister and Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna Minister of Parliament Keheliya Rambukwella.⁵²

A senior police officer assaulted the bus worker protested against the fuel price increase:

A bus driver has parked his bus and blocked the Anuradhapura Kandy Main road in a protest against the fuel hike. The video footage shows that a senior Deputy Inspector General has physically assaulted the bus driver and ordered him to arrest him.⁵³

⁵² <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/81624/police-fire-tear-gas-at-protesters-near-residences-of-several-mps>

⁵³ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/02/senior-police-officer-assaults-bus-worker-protesting-for-fuel/>

6. Other incidents

Police arrests and takes legal action against police officer who had participated at a anti government protest:

On 14th April 2022 Police sergeant, W. M. Amaradasa who came to the protest area at Galleface in Colombo, joined the anti-government protest while wearing his official uniform. Fort Police in Colombo arrested him alleging that attending the protest in uniform was an offence.⁵⁴ He was produced before the court on 15th April 2022 and granted bail. On 14th April 2022, Sri Lanka police announced that they will take necessary disciplinary and legal actions against the Police officer. W. M. Amaradasa who had joined the Sri Lanka Police in 1989, had been stationed at the Siripagama Police Station under special duties when the incident occurred.⁵⁵

Army Commander requests IGP to launch an inquiry against the Police officers who stopped the masked army personnel travelling on unregistered motor bicycles during a protest:

On 5th April 2022, six armed military personnel travelling on unregistered motorbikes attempted to disrupt and intimidate the peaceful protest held near the Parliament roundabout. The police officers who were stationed to guard the entrance of the parliament to prevent the protesters from entering the parliament premises stopped these army riders who were wearing facemasks and riding motorcycles with no vehicle registration numbers, while also carrying weapons. While the army commander issued a statement demanding an inquiry into the matter, police in a statement said they will conduct an impartial inquiry regarding the incident.^{56 57}



Police officers stopped and questioned the masked military men intimidating the protestors.

Photo Courtesy: Newswire.

⁵⁴ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/14/police-officer-joining-protest-statement-from-polie/>

⁵⁵ <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/81841/police-officer-who-joined-galle-face-protest-produced-before-court>

⁵⁶ <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/05/masked-men-in-unregistered-bikes-are-from-army-inquiry-against-police-officers/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.themorning.lk/combat-riders-have-number-plates-on-the-side-army/>