

# Repression of Dissent

November 2023



A Sinhala Buddhist Nationalist group in Colombo organized a protest in front of the British High Commission of Sri Lanka, calling the Channel 4 documentary a conspiracy. Courtesy: Daily Mirror

# INFORM

Human Rights Documentation Centre

[www.inform.lk](http://www.inform.lk)

Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka in 2023.

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### **About the report**

Repression of Dissent is the periodical human rights update series published by the INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre in Sri Lanka. These reports provide some general trends and details of some significant incidents related to the repression of dissent in Sri Lanka, mainly based on the information reported in mainstream and social media. They include information on incidents such as arrests, threats, intimidation, investigations against human rights defenders (HRDs) and potential threats such as new repressive laws, policy decisions etc., which may hurt freedom of expression, assembly, association and dissent.

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

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# 1. Executive Summary

**Context:** 2024 national budget was presented to the Parliament and taxes were increased. Police arrested four top health officials including a director of Ministry of Health, concerning a scam involving medical supplies. Meanwhile, the Election Commission confirmed holding the next Presidential Election between September - October 2024. A top Police official Deshabandu Tennakoon, currently facing multiple legal cases and accusations relating to human rights violations was appointed as the Acting Inspector General of Police. Accusations against him include torture of detainees, negligence of duties relating to the Easter Sunday bomb attack, and attack to peaceful protesters in Galleface etc. Two custodial deaths were reported in Northern and Eastern Provinces. A 13-year-old child, a 26-year-old young man died at the detention facilities, with signs of torture. Maaveerar Naal (the Great Heroes Day), an annual event to remember the Tamil martyrs who lost their lives during the civil war, was commemorated in multiple towns in the North and East. The protest organised by Tamil farmers in Mylathamadu, Batticaloa against the encroachment of their grazing lands by people from other districts continued throughout the month. The Magistrate ordered the eviction of 13 recent settlers in the disputed state-owned land. A protest was organized demanding the removal of the Sri Lankan military from a former LTTE cemetery in Mullaitivu, Fisherfolk cooperative communities held a press briefing opposing the proposed Fisheries Act that will allow foreign vessels to engage in fishing in Sri Lankan waters, bringing serious challenges to the small-scale fishing communities.

**Case updates:** The Supreme Court (SC) declared certain regulations gazetted under Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) two years ago, as null and void as they violated the Fundamental Rights. These regulations expanded the powers of the controversial PTA that has been historically used for arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defenders, ethnic minorities and others. The SC gave another landmark judgement that the public trust and equality before law had been violated by several leading politicians and several top state officials involved with the former government by leading the country's economy to a crisis. The SC ruled that the Online Safety Bill can be passed by a simple majority subjected to 31 amendments, otherwise require a special majority in the parliament. The SC decided that political commentator Mohammad Ramzy Razeek's arrest and subsequent incarceration in April 2020 under ICCPR Act violated his fundamental rights. The Colombo Magistrate Court ordered the Police to report to the court the progress of the investigation into the alleged incident in which a group including a former minister, Marvin Silva, broke into the state-owned Television Corporation and assaulted a group of employees there 16 years ago. Issuing a statement, the Ministry of Defence has denied and denounced the claims made by UK based TV channel Channel 4 of orchestrating the Easter Attacks by Sri Lankan politicians and the military. In September, Channel 4 aired a documentary that included claims by a former government aide, that a top intelligence official met with members of the terrorist group that carried out the bomb attacks as part of an alleged plot to help former Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to win the election by creating a national security crisis in the country. The former head of the investigation into the Easter Sunday attacks has spoken out for the first time, claiming that political intervention hampered the police inquiry. Former Deputy Inspector General of Police Ravi Seneviratne claimed his team was removed from the case when Rajapaksa seized office six months after the attacks. Seneviratne said that his lead

investigator was fired without reason "immediately after the new government was elected". The parents of 11 youngsters whom a group of navy personnel allegedly abducted held a demonstration in front of the Supreme Court, demanding justice for their missing children. They stated that the Attorney General's Department's failure to address this matter had impeded justice for more than 15 years. The AG's Department had withdrawn the indictment they filed against a key suspect. The Second phase of the excavation of the Kokkuthuduvai mass grave was carried out in late November, while a total of 40 individual human skeletons were found during both phases. The next excavation phase is planned to be held on 1st March 2024.

Former president Mahinda Rajapaksa's elder son and Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) MP Namal Rajapaksa, along with five others, have been acquitted in the Gowers Corporation money laundering case by the Colombo High Court.

The main suspect who threatened Janaka Rathnayake with death and tried to extort money from the former chairman of the Public Utilities Commission has been arrested. The Police Media Unit said that the suspect was arrested by the Colombo Crime Division.

**Repression of Media and Journalists:** Terrorism Investigation Department has summoned the editorial board member and journalist of the Jaffna based Uthayan newspaper Dileep Amuthan, in relation to an article that was published in 2020 on Maaveerar Naal. Kurunegala based Provincial Journalist Dineth Kumara working for state operated Rupavahini Corporation was severely assaulted and arrested by the officers of the Bingiriya Police station. A group of local and foreign journalists have been stopped at a checkpoint over two hours and recorded their personal details, including their identity card issued by the Government Information department, their home addresses and their workplace addresses.

**Repression of Freedom of Assembly:** Santhiveil police arrested 6 Jaffna University students who supported the Mylathamadu livestock farmers protest when they were travelling back to Jaffna once the protest finished. The police obstructed a protest organized by medical students of the University of Sabaragamuwa and arrested 21 students.

The police dispersed the protest and arrested six protesters who staged a protest in Horagasmulla, Gamapha, against increasing the electricity tariffs. Colombo Fort Magistrate issued an injunction preventing a protest organized against the increased electricity tariff approaching the Presidential Secretariat, President's House and the Ministry of Finance premises.

Several incidents were reported from Eastern Province where Police obstructed the Maaveerar Naal commemoration. The broken headstones in a LTTE graveyard that were initially destroyed by the state after the end of the armed conflict had been crushed into small pieces by unknown individuals, as local youth arranged the broken parts for a remembrance event. Police obstructed and stopped Tamil civilians from attending the Maaveerar Commemoration held at the cemetery where the deceased Tamil buried during the civil war. In another incident, Police forcefully entered and removed the decoration of the Batticaloa commemoration of Maaveerar Naal. Valaichenai Police demolished the monument that was created to commemorate Maaveerar Naal on 27<sup>th</sup> November. The police said they have destroyed it according to a court order. Sambur police stopped a group of Tamil individuals who were on their way to attend the Maaveerar Naal Commemoration at Mutur, near Sambur police station. Valachchenai Police arrested 6 residents and confiscated their speakers, the generator used to organise the event.

While many police stations in the North and East requested court orders to ban Maaveerar Naal Commemorations, only several courts issued such orders banning the events. Police also prohibited the use of the karthigai poo - the Tamil national flower - at Maaveerar Naal commemorations in Mullaitivu.

**Legal and Policy Actions:** A Gazette notification declaring postal service as essential service was issued, in the context of postal services employees have initiated trade union action. Essential service declarations are generally used to crack down and threaten workers who engage in trade union action. With immediate effect, the postal department has cancelled the leave of all the postal employees on November 8, 9, and 10. This action was taken when postal employees initiated a protest against selling the Nuwaraeliya and Kandy postal offices. Another gazette was issued declaring that all the services connected to the supply of electricity and supply and distribution of petroleum products and fuel made an essential service.

The monthly gazette was issued for all forces to follow the public security ordinance, providing the powers for the armed forces to intervene in civilian affairs.

The National Peace Council has issued a statement concerning the new Office for National Unity and Reconciliation Act. They have expressed concerns about the power that has been given to the ONUR to oversee and facilitate peace and reconciliation programs conducted by local organizations, including community-based organizations.

**Other incidents:** The leader of the Democracy Party, N. Nagules, was arrested while attending a Maaveerar Naal event, and remanded until December 7<sup>th</sup>. The Lawyers Collective has issued a statement calling for a response regarding allegations made by the former sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe, regarding some alleged favours by a judge regarding Sri Lanka Cricket Board interim Committee. A tense situation arose in Parliament when a group of SLPP MPs impeded Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa's queries about the Supreme Court verdict that holds the Rajapaksas accountable for Sri Lanka's economic collapse.

## 2. Context

**Budget 2024:** While Sri Lanka was expected to meet certain economic targets and indicators by December 2023, to receive the second instalment of the loan provided under the IMF extended fund facility,<sup>1 2</sup> President Wickramasinghe presented the next year's annual government budget to the Parliament. Value Added Tax (VAT) was increased from 15% to 18%, and 97 items out of 138 goods were removed from VAT exemptions. Other measures to collect income tax were also introduced. The government said it expects inflation to increase by 2.5%.<sup>3 4</sup> Taking these measures could be much challenging to the government as national elections are planned to happen in the coming year.



Local government elections have been delayed for almost two years. A political party protesting in front of the National Election Commission in June 2023, Colombo Sri Lanka. Courtesy: [Newswire](#)

**State Corruption:** The Criminal Investigations Department of Police arrested four top health officials including the Ministry of Health Medical Supplies Division Director Dr. Kapila Wickramanayake, concerning a scam involving the supply of substandard human immunoglobulin IV vials to government hospitals. Though it was initially said that the vials were imported from India, later it was found that they had been produced in Sri Lanka.<sup>5 6 7</sup> The General Secretary of the Ceylon Teachers Union (CTU) stated that the Secretary to the Ministry of Education had sent 3,308 letters to principals of national schools asking them to admit students outside established protocols.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking-news/Budget-2024-Govt-hard-pressed-between-IMF-and-demand-for-public-relief/108-271134>

<sup>2</sup> <https://economynext.com/imf-second-tranche-by-december-sri-lanka-minister-140480/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/CfdkUq81XeyTd4wahvgb>

<sup>4</sup> <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-2024-budget-proposes-tough-actions-to-boost-income-taxes-139694/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2023/11/06/immunoglobulin-cid-records-statement-from-health-secretary/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://lankanewsweb.net/archives/45518/blood-from-nbts-linked-to-substandard-immunoglobulin-production/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ft.lk/news/Four-top-health-officials-arrested-over-immunoglobulin-scam/56-755429>

<sup>8</sup> [https://island.lk/union-boss-reveals-how-education-ministry-secretary-violated-law-to-please-panjandrums/#google\\_vignette](https://island.lk/union-boss-reveals-how-education-ministry-secretary-violated-law-to-please-panjandrums/#google_vignette)

**Election:** Local government elections initially scheduled to be held in March 2022 were postponed multiple times, as the government refused to release necessary funds citing Sri Lanka's economic crisis, despite the court orders. President Wickramasinghe speaking at the parliament said that the delayed local government elections will be held in 2025, while both the Parliamentary election and the Presidential Election will be held in 2024. Unless the President dissolves, the current Parliament's tenure ends in 2025. Meanwhile, the Election Commission confirmed holding the next Presidential Election between September - October 2024.<sup>9</sup> While EC has sought 30 billion LKR of funds for the election expenses,<sup>10</sup> only one-third of the requested funds have been allocated by the government.<sup>11</sup>

**Appointment of IGP:** On 17th November, the Parliamentary Constitutional Council (CC) refused to approve another service extension granted to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Wickramaratne. This was the fourth service extension given to IGP Wickramaratne. Despite CC's refusal in the previous month as well, Wickramaratne continued in his role as IGP until the end of this month.<sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup> On 20th November, the Bar Association issued a statement saying that it may consider legal action against the granting of service extensions to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) without the Constitutional Council's (CC) approval.<sup>14</sup> On 29th November, Senior DIG Deshabandu Tennakoon in charge of Western Province currently facing multiple legal cases and accusations relating to human rights violations including torture of detainees, negligence of duties relating to the Easter Sunday bomb attack, attack to peaceful protesters in Galleface, and undue influences made concerning the case on cash found at the President's house by the protesters, was appointed as the Acting IGP. Archbishop of Colombo Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith stated that Tennakoon's appointment as the acting IGP was an insult to the victims of the Easter Sunday Bomb Attack.<sup>15</sup>

**Custodial Deaths:** Two custodial deaths were reported in Northern and Eastern Provinces. A 13-year-old boy named Ananthadevan Darsanth, from Kokuvil in Batticaloa in Eastern Province was arrested on suspicion of theft and found dead in the reformatory school, where he was detained. Multiple injuries have been observed in the child's body, according to the post-mortem report, and his family believes that he died due to torture by the police.<sup>16</sup> 26-year-old Nagarasa Alex from Vaddukoddai in Jaffna district in the Northern Province arrested on suspicion of theft, was also died due to Police torture. A post-mortem examination revealed Alex had sustained "multiple injuries" including "abrasions and contusions" on the "trunk, both upper limbs and both lower limbs." A video statement given by Alex before his death at the hospital said that he was waterboarded, hung with ropes tied to his elbows, covered his head with a bag filled with petrol, and forced to drink alcohol.<sup>17</sup> Four police officers in Vaddukoddai Police Station were arrested and remanded until the 4th of December on suspicion of the

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/mcWdRSYtu5f1MGskpvnC>

<sup>10</sup> <https://island.lk/ec-seeks-rs-30-bn-for-polls-next-year/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.news.lk/news/political-current-affairs/item/35906-a-budget-of-rs-10-billion-has-been-allocated-for-the-election-state-minister-ranjith-siyambalapitiya>

<sup>12</sup> <https://mawbima.lk/2023/11/20/the-constitutional-assembly-says-no-to-the-extension-of-the-inspector-generals-service-for-the-second-time/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ft.lk/news/Constitutional-Council-refuses-to-approve-third-extension-for-IGP/56-754186>

<sup>14</sup> <https://srilankabrief.org/basl-says-that-the-sri-lanka-without-legally-appointed-igp/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.dailymirror.lk/worldnews/breaking-news/Appointment-of-Deshabandu-Tennekoon-as-IGP-is-an-insult-to-Easter-Sunday-Bomb-victims-Cardinal/108-272276>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/my-son-was-murdered-outrage-tamil-child-reportedly-tortured-death>

<sup>17</sup> <https://srilankabrief.org/jaffna-sri-lanka-tamil-youth-nagarasa-alex-26-tortured-by-police-dies/>



killing, by the order of the Jaffna magistrate.<sup>18</sup> The case received wide publicity locally,<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> and few responses internationally.<sup>21</sup> <sup>22</sup>



Protest demanding justice for Alex who died due to torture by the Police. courtesy: [LankaFiles](#)

**Other issues in North and East:** Maaveerar Naal (the Great Heroes Day) was commemorated by Tamil people holding various events in Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi,<sup>23</sup> Mannar,<sup>24</sup> Vavuniya,<sup>25</sup> Jaffna,<sup>26</sup> <sup>27</sup> Batticaloa<sup>28</sup> and other areas in the North and East, remembering the Tamil martyrs who lost their lives during the civil war. The 16th anniversary of the Ayyankulam massacre in Mullaitivu where 6 students and 2 healthcare workers had been killed by a claymore attack in November 2007 was also remembered in a commemorative event held in Mullaitivu.<sup>29</sup> The protest organised by Tamil farmers in Batticaloa against the encroachment of their grazing lands by people from other districts continued throughout the month. On 13th November, the Eravur Circuit Magistrate in Batticaloa district ordered the eviction of 13 recent settlers unable to prove their residence in the disputed state-owned land.<sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> A protest was organized demanding the removal of the Sri Lankan military from a former LTTE cemetery in Mullaitivu, in the Northern Province.<sup>32</sup>

**Legal and policy changes:** Fisherfolk cooperative communities held a press briefing opposing the proposed Fisheries Act that will allow foreign vessels to engage in fishing in Sri Lankan waters, bringing serious challenges to the small-scale fishing communities.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>18</sup> යාපනය-වඩුක්කෝඩෙයි පොලීස් නිලධාරීන් 4ක් විමර්ශන

<sup>19</sup> <https://twitter.com/ambikasat/status/1726925247662968982>

<sup>20</sup> <https://twitter.com/Sugashkanu/status/1731264952453988659>

<sup>21</sup> <https://twitter.com/SwissAmbLKA/status/1727154535901311378>

<sup>22</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-12-05/debates/78830BE8-D5BA-4EE8-A9DE-47AC5978A3B9/SriLankanTamilsAndHumanRights>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/pictures-thousands-kanagapuram-remember-their-maaveerar>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/pictures-tamils-gather-across-mannar-mark-maaveerar-naal>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/thousands-gather-near-destroyed-ltte-cemetery-vavuniya-maaveerar-naal>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/memorial-dedicated-24379-maaveerar-unveiled-jaffna>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/university-students-commemorate-maaveerar-naal-jaffna-vavuniya-and-batticaloa>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/maaveerar-naal-commemorated-maavadi-thuyilum-illam-batticaloa>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/ayyankulam-massacre-remembered-16-years>

<sup>30</sup> <https://lankafiles.medium.com/sinhala-encroachers-in-mylathamadu-ordered-to-vacate-occupied-grazing-land-61b9b2607857>

<sup>31</sup> <https://twitter.com/kumanan93/status/1723986840678461709>

<sup>32</sup> <https://twitter.com/kumanan93/status/1723309616300212294>

<sup>33</sup> <https://twitter.com/vikalpavoices/status/1727237129405874239> ;

<https://www.sundaytimes.lk/231203/news/fishermen-across-the-country-fear-new-fisheries-act-will-sink-their-livelihoods-540969.html>

## 3. Case Updates

### 3.1. SC Case: De-radicalization from holding violent extremist religious ideology Regulations No. 01 of 2021

On November 13, 2023, the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka declared [the Prevention of Terrorism \(De-radicalization from holding violent extremist religious ideology\) Regulations No. 1 of 2021](#) violated the Fundamental Rights ensured by the Sri Lankan constitution, hearing a fundamental rights petition by Centre for Policy Alternatives and several activists. The regulations gazetted two years ago in March 2021, attempted to allow up to two years of detention without trial for causing “religious, racial, or communal disharmony” under the pretext of ‘rehabilitation.’ These regulations expanded the powers of the controversial Prevention of Terrorism Act that has been historically used for arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defenders, ethnic minorities and others. The Court held that the Regulations violated the Freedom of thought, conscience and religion, equal protection of the law and Freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention, punishment etc. ensured by the Constitution, declared the scheme under the regulations as null and void, and the State was also directed to pay each Petitioner Rs. 25,000/- as costs.<sup>34 35</sup>

### 3.2. Rajapaksa brothers and top officials in the former government were found guilty of the country’s economic Crisis



*Last year, various protests were organised calling for the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his relatives in government. March 2022, Colombo. Image: Ishara S. Kodikara/AFP/Getty Images*

The Supreme Court on 14th November gave a landmark judgement that the public trust and Right to Equality before law under the Constitution had been violated by leading the country's economy to a crisis due to the lack of proper management of the economy by former President

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.supremecourt.lk/images/documents/sc\\_fr\\_91\\_2021.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.lk/images/documents/sc_fr_91_2021.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.cpalanka.org/supreme-court-decision-in-sc-fr-91-2023-challenging-the-prevention-of-terrorism-de-radicalization-from-holding-violent-extremist-religious-ideology-regulations-no-01-of-2021/>

Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, former Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa, former Governors of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka Professor W.D. Laxman and Ajith Nivard Cabral, former Secretary of the Treasury S.R. Atigala, former President's Secretary Dr P.B. Jayasundara and Central Bank of Sri Lanka Finance Board Member Samantha Kumarasinghe.<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, the court ordered the respondents to pay one hundred and fifty thousand rupees as legal fees to the petitioners.<sup>37</sup>

The case was heard before a senior five-member bench consisting of Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya, President's Counsel B.P. Aluvihare, President's Counsel Priyantha Jayawardene, President's Counsel Vijith K. Malalgoda and President's Counsel Murdu NB Fernando. The court decision was split 4-1, with President's Counsel Priyantha Jayawardene dissenting.

As no compensation was sought except seeking the relief of the court for the cause of public good, the court was not inclined to award any compensation to the respondents other than the expenses incurred by the petitioners.

The petitions submitted by TISL, along with other petitioners Chandra Jayaratne, Jehan Kanagaratne and Julian Bowling say that the herein-named respondents are directly responsible for Sri Lanka's foreign debt becoming unsustainable, foreign debt default and Sri Lanka's economy collapsing. The petition sought to hold the respective respondents accountable for the illegal, arbitrary, wrongful acts or omissions which led to the current economic crisis.

It was contended by the petitioners that the fundamental rights of citizens to equality, freedom of expression and right to information enshrined in the Constitution have been violated by the acts or omissions of the respondents. It further stated that the actions and inactions of the respondents have created shortages of food, medicine, fuel and gas in the country, affecting the entire population like never before.

The petition pointed out that the main factors that led to the economic crisis were the reduction in government revenue due to tax concessions, the failure to roll back tax concessions, the decision to continue paying sovereign debt without any restructuring and the refusal to seek assistance from the International Monetary Fund. S.A. Belling, Chintaka Fernando, Sayuri Liyansuriya and Manisha Dissanayake along with President's Counsel Chandaka Jayasundara appeared for petitioners.

### **3.3. Channel 4 Documentary on Easter Sunday Bombings**

In a statement, the Ministry of Defense has vehemently denounced the accusations made by Channel 4 of orchestrating the Easter Attacks. The Ministry of Defense states unambiguously that Channel 4 would be held fully responsible for any unforeseen actions or consequences resulting from their unsubstantiated, hostile, and inadequately researched statements in the video documentary.

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<sup>36</sup> [https://www.supremecourt.lk/images/documents/sc\\_fr\\_195\\_and\\_212\\_2022.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.lk/images/documents/sc_fr_195_and_212_2022.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Two fundamental rights petitions were filed by (A) Dr. Athulasiri Samarakoon and two others, and (B) Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) and three others in the Supreme Court around June, 2022, against those responsible for Sri Lanka's current economic crisis. First petition named 42 respondents, while the latter named 15 respondents.



A Sinhala Buddhist Nationalist group in Colombo organized a protest in front of the British High Commission of Sri Lanka, calling the Channel 4 documentary a conspiracy. Courtesy: Daily Mirror

In September, the UK's Channel 4 aired claims by a former government aide, Azad Maulana, that a top intelligence official met with members of the terrorist group National Thowheed Jam'ath (NTJ) as part of an alleged plot to help former Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa win government by creating a national security crisis from the attacks.<sup>38</sup> The former head of the investigation into the Easter Sunday attacks has spoken out for the first time, claiming that political intervention hampered the police inquiry. Former Deputy Inspector General of Police Ravi Seneviratne claimed his team was removed from the case when Rajapaksa seized office six months after the attacks. Seneviratne told ABC Investigations that his lead investigator was fired without reason "immediately after the new government was elected — at the time, not even a prime minister or cabinet had been appointed". He stated that 22 more policemen were removed from the inquiry in the months that followed, "but I was not given any reason for any of those transfers"<sup>39</sup>. The incoming government also prohibited more than 700 Criminal Investigation Department officials under Seneviratne's leadership from travelling abroad. According to Ravi Seneviratne, this was intended to intimidate police who could probe Rajapaksa government friends. "Because of this action, many officers were terrified. Some cops even requested transfers because they did not want to work there anymore." Police charged more than 90 people in connection with the Easter Sunday attacks, but Mr Seneviratne stated that investigators encountered hurdles when they discovered "some intelligence officers had links with the Muslim group".

The Ministry's statement also stated that in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks, the Sri Lankan government, its law enforcement agencies, security forces, and international

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.dailymirror.lk/print/front-page/Former-government-sabotaged-Easter-Sunday-attacks-probe-retired-Senior-DIG-alleges/238-271473>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.dailymirror.lk/print/front-page/Former-government-sabotaged-Easter-Sunday-attacks-probe-retired-Senior-DIG-alleges/238-271473>

investigation agencies launched extensive investigations and that these investigations, both local and international, have consistently pointed to ISIS-affiliated individuals led by Zahran Hashim as the architects of this horrifying tragedy. The Ministry of Defence points out that a recent documentary produced in collaboration with British Channel 4 television boldly shifts the blame for the Easter Sunday attack onto Military Intelligence and Major General Suresh Sallay, the current Director General of Sri Lanka's State Intelligence Services.<sup>40</sup>

The Ministry of Defence strongly denies the accusation of orchestrating the attack and supporting the bombers against a senior military official who has served for 36 years.

Retired Senior DIG Ravi Seneviratne has shed new light on claims that the former Sri Lankan government may have colluded with a terrorist group for political gain, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people, including Australians, in the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings.

### **3.4. Parents of missing youth allegedly abducted by military protest in front of the Supreme Court**

On November 29, the parents of 11 youngsters whom a group of navy personnel allegedly abducted held a demonstration in front of the Supreme Court, demanding justice for their missing children. A mother of an abducted youngster stated that the Attorney General's Department's failure to address this matter had impeded justice for more than 15 years. She alleged that, rather than assisting the victims, the AG's Department favours the former Navy Commander, Admiral of the Fleet Wasantha Karannagoda, who is one of the defendants in the case. She further stated that they have all of the evidence to prove who abducted their children, including vehicle numbers in which their children were taken away.

It was reported that earlier, the AG's Department filed indictments against navy officers who were allegedly involved in this incident. But later, the AG's Department had withdrawn the indictment they filed against Karannagoda.<sup>41</sup> She further added that the Government and the AG's Department must do them justice and that a conclusion on this issue should be seen by all parents whose children have been abducted.

Those youths were allegedly abducted for ransom by a gang of navy officers, allegedly led by Hettiarachchi Mudiyansele Chandana Prasad Hettiarachchi alias Navy Sampath. The children had allegedly been held at naval facilities in Colombo and Trincomalee between 2008 and 2009.

Of the 11 missing persons, five were allegedly taken into custody on 17 September 2008 by navy personnel, along with a black Tata Indica. Police have identified them as Rajiv Naganathan, Pradeep Vishvanathan, Mohammed Sajith, Thilakeswaram Ramalingam, and Jamaldeen Dilan. Those involved in the operation were believed to have been accompanied by a navy informant named Mohammed Ali Anwar alias Hadjiar of Karagampitiya, Dehiwela. Subsequently, the 28-year-old informant, too, had allegedly disappeared and is listed among the 11 missing. The remaining five persons are Kasthuriarachchilage John Reid, Amalan Leon and his son Roshan Leon, Anthony Kasthuriarachchi, and Kanagaraja Jeganathan.

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2023/09/09/mod-issues-statement-on-channel4-documentary/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/Npn4GA0p5bS5nebuM0ng>

### **3.5. Kokkuthuduvai mass grave**

The Second phase of the excavation of the Kokkuthuduvai mass grave was carried out in late November, while a total of 40 individual human skeletons were found during both phases. The next excavation phase is planned to be held on 1st March 2024.<sup>42</sup>

### **3.6. The Colombo High Courts acquitted MP Namal Rajapaksa of a money laundering case**

Former president Mahinda Rajapaksa's elder son and Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) MP Namal Rajapaksa, along with five others, have been acquitted in the Gowers Corporation money laundering case.<sup>43</sup> The Colombo High Court cleared them of the accusations brought under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. The case claimed that they were involved in money laundering worth Rs. 30 million via Gowers Corporate Services (Pvt) Limited, which supplied coordinating services to Sri Lankan Airlines. Namal Rajapaksa and five directors of the company were charged with 11 counts of money laundering between 2013 and 2014.

The investigations began after a complaint by Wasantha Samarasinghe, Convener of Voice Against Corruption, who claimed that Rajapaksa had purchased shares of a company called Hello Corp and established Gowers Corporate Services (Pvt) Limited, allegedly using Rs. 125 million earned through illegal means.<sup>44</sup>

### **3.7. The Supreme Court's determination on the Online Safety Bill**

The Supreme Court ruled that the government requires a special majority to pass the Online Safety Bill in its current form. According to that decision, sections 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13,14, 15,16,17,18,19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26,27,28,29, 30,31, 32, 36, 37, 42, 45, 53 and 56 can be approved as mentioned in the Bill, if passed by a special majority of two third including the absent Members of the Parliament, according to the provisions mentioned in Article 84(2) of the Constitution.<sup>45</sup>

According to the amendments proposed by the Supreme Court in its decision, if the said articles are amended at the committee stage, this bill can be passed by a simple majority. The Supreme Court said that other provisions of the Bill are in line with the Constitution.<sup>46</sup>

### **3.8. The arrest of Ramzy Razeek violated his Fundamental rights**

The Supreme Court decided that political commentator Mohammad Ramzy Razeek's arrest and subsequent incarceration in April 2020 under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Act violated his fundamental rights.<sup>47</sup>

Razeek was detained following a social media post on his own Facebook account concerning misunderstandings about Muslims during the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court ruled that the respondents infringed Razeek's fundamental rights guaranteed by Articles 12(1), 13(1), 13(2), and 14(1)(a) of the Constitution and ordered them to compensate him.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://twitter.com/ShanmugamThava2/status/1729770876868960634>

<sup>43</sup> <https://english.fastnews.lk/52482>

<sup>44</sup> <https://lankanewsweb.net/archives/45315/namal-acquitted-from-gowers-corporation-money-laundering-case/>  
<sup>45</sup> <https://www.newswire.lk/2023/11/15/factum-special-perspective-online-safety-bill-supreme-court-ruling-and-alternatives/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://island.lk/sc-2-3-majority-needed-for-passage-of-online-safety-bill-in-its-present-form/>

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.supremecourt.lk/images/documents/sc\\_fr\\_135\\_2020.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.lk/images/documents/sc_fr_135_2020.pdf)

Following this ruling, the first respondent, the OIC of the Computer and Forensic Training Unit of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) B.M.S.K. Senaratne, and the second respondent, Director of the Criminal Investigation Department, Senior Superintendent of Police W. Thilakaratne was directed to compensate the petitioner with a sum of Rs. 30,000 each from their funds.

### **3.9. The court asks for progress in the case of Marvin's assault by breaking into 'Rupavahini'**

The Additional Magistrate of Colombo ordered the Criminal Investigation Department to report to the court the progress of the investigation into the alleged incident in which a group including a former minister, Marvin Silva, broke into the Television Corporation and assaulted a group of employees there 16 years ago.

The case was heard based on a complaint made to the Criminal Investigation Department by T.M.G. Chandrasekare, the news director of the Television Corporation at the time.

### **3.10. Six suspects from four different provinces arrested for threatening the former commissioner of PUCSL**

Ratnayake had lodged a complaint with the Kirulapone Police Station, alleging that he had received a phone call from an individual who had claimed to have received a contract to assassinate him and had therefore demanded Rs. 1.5 million to spare his life.

The main suspect who threatened Janaka Rathnayake with death and tried to extort money from the former chairman of the Public Utilities Commission has been arrested. The Police Media Unit said that the suspect was arrested by the Colombo Crime Division. At the time of arrest, the suspect had 12 grams of crystal methamphetamine (which is commonly known as 'Ice') in his possession, the police said.<sup>48</sup>

Two suspects were arrested for aiding and abetting the suspect and providing the main suspect accommodation facilities to abscond the Police in Pelwehera, Dambulla.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://mawbima.lk/2023/11/12/the-main-suspect-who-threatened-to-kill-janaka-rathnayake-was-arrested/>

## 4. List of Incidents

4.1. Repression of Media and Journalist				
No	Date	District	Description	Sources
01	2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	Jaffna	Terrorism Investigation Department has summoned the editorial board member and journalist of the Uthayan newspaper Dileep Amuthan. He was summoned to inquire about an article that was published in 2020 on Maaveerar Naal. Also, TID questioned him about an article that included a photo and quote about the LTTE leader on 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2020. In 2020 police filed a case under PTA weeks after the so-called article was published.	<a href="#">Sri Lanka interrogated a Tamil journalist over article from three years ago.</a> Tamil Guardian Published on 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec 2023.
02	30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Kurunegala	Journalist Dineth Kumara, state-operated Rupavahini correspondent in Udubaddawa, Kurunegala severely assaulted and arrested by the officers related to Bingiriya Police station. He faced this assault while he was filming on the main road near Bingiriya police station. Police beat and arrested him even though he produced his media channel ID. He was produced before the Hettipola Magistrate and on 1st December he was given bail.	<a href="#">A journalist who was reporting was brutally attacked</a> Ravana Lanka news Published on 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024 <a href="#">ජාතික රූපවාහිනියේ මාධ්‍යවේදියා ජාතික ආරක්ෂාවට තර්ජනයක් වූණා ද?</a> BBC News Sinhala Published on 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024
03	9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Batticaloa	A group of local and foreign journalists were stopped at a checkpoint over two hours and recorded their details, including their identity card issued by the Government Information department, their home address and their workplace address. Journalists contacted the Karadiyanaru police station which is responsible for the checkpoint to give them authorisation to visit the area but the police station has rejected it saying there is a problem. They have tried to contact the DIG of Eastern Province, but they haven't received any reply from the DIG. Regarding the matter, a prejudiced journalist wrote a letter to the IGP saying to prevent such a violation in future.	<a href="#">Journalists prevented to report on Tamil-Sinhalese land dispute</a> Published on 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024 <a href="#">Ruki Fernando</a> Twitter Published on 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024 <a href="#">Group of journalists writes to IGP over wrongful restraint and rights violations.</a> Published on 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024



04	14 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Galle	Two SLPP members of Elpitiya local council attacked a regional journalist Danuja Sampath who went to cover the Elpitiya provincial council meeting. Journalist Dhanuja Sampath faced this attack. The two council members had pulled the journalist and damaged his camera. Journalist Danuja has complained about the incident to the Elpitiya police station. He faced this attack while he was recording an argument that occurred during the council meeting between the chairperson and vice chairperson, who had attacked the journalist.	<a href="#">ඇල්පිටිය ජීරා. සහාය වාර්තා කරන්න ගිය මාධ්‍යවේදියකුට මන්ත්රීන් දෙදෙනෙක් පහර දීලා.</a> Mawbima.Publishe d on 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessedLast accessed 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
<b>4.2. Repression of Freedom of Assembly</b>				
05	5 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Batticaloa	Santhiveil police arrested 6 Jaffna University students who supported the Mylathamadu livestock farmers protest. They were arrested after the police intercepted their vehicle as they were travelling back to Jaffna once the protest finished. They were produced before the Eravur Magistrate court on the same day they were arrested. They have granted bail. Police stated students were arrested based on an illegal gathering.	<a href="#">Six Tamils students arrested in Mayilathamadu for 'unlawful assembly' released on bail</a> Tamil Guardian Published in November 2023. Last accessed 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec 2023. <a href="#">Kumanan</a> Twitter Published on 5 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024
06	1 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Gampaha	The police dispersed the protest and arrested six protesters who staged a protest in Horagasmulla, Gampha - Divulapitya main road. The protest was organized to resist the increased tariffs on electricity. Among the arrested were the secretary of the Electricity Consumers Association, Sanjeewa Dammika and Balangoda Kasappa Thero. The arrested protesters were later released on bail.	<a href="#">Police crackdown on protest against electricity tariffs</a> Colombo Next Published on 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024
07	9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Colombo	A protest organised by medical students of the University of Sabaragamuwa was obstructed by the police and arrested 21 students. Police dispersed the student protesters using water and tear gas near Maradana Railway Station when student protesters attempted to march towards the Health Ministry.	<a href="#">විරෝධතාවයක් අතරතුර වෛද්‍ය පීඨ සිසුන් පිරිසක් අත්අඩංගුවට.</a> Colombo Times Published on 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024
08	01 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Colombo	Colombo Magistrate has issued an injunction preventing protestors from walking down towards the organist against the increased electricity tariffs.	<a href="#">Court issues order against electricity tariff protests in Colombo.</a> Ada Derana

			The order was issued preventing protesters from entering several roads in Colombo. The order was issued by the Magistrate Thilina Gamage preventing protesters from entering the Presidential Secretariat, President House and the Ministry of Finance. This order was issued as per the request of the Slave Island Police.	Published 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2023. Last accessed 20 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023
09	25 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Eastern Province	The broken headstones of an LTTE cemetery 'Vahari Thuyilum Illam' which were decorated by local youth along with red and yellow flags for the commemoration of Maaveerar Naal had been vandalised by unknown individuals. These headstones that were made in the 1990s by LTTE were destroyed by the state after the end of the armed conflict.	<a href="#">Crackdown and destruction in the East ahead of Maaveerar Naal.</a> Tamil Guardian Published 25 <sup>th</sup> Nov. last accessed 20 <sup>th</sup> December
10	23 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Batticaloa	Valaichenai Police demolished the monument that was created to commemorate Maaveerar Naal on 27 <sup>th</sup> November. The police said they had destroyed it according to a court order. It was built up using the remaining rubble tombstones, bulldozed previously.	<a href="#">Valaichenai police demolish Maaveerar memorial.</a> Tamil Guardian Published on 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec 2023.
				
11	28 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Trincomalee	Sambur police stopped a group of Tamil individuals on their way to the Maaveerar Naal Commemoration. The police stopped them at Muthur, near Sambur police station. The police compelled them to retreat and attempted to intimidate those who resisted getting into the police vehicle as forced by the police. In defiance, they lit a bonfire where they stood, fuelling it with the sarees and clothes that they had, and decorated the ground with flowers and garlands.	<a href="#">Kumanan</a> twitter Published on 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec 2023
12	28 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Batticaloa	Valachchenai Police arrested 6 residents and confiscated their speakers, the generator used to organise the event to mark the Great Heroes Day. The event was planned to	<a href="https://twitter.com/DSLanka/status/17294162482056479">https://twitter.com/DSLanka/status/17294162482056479</a> 98 Published on 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

			be held at Tharavai Great Heroes Cemetery which was demolished by the Sri Lanka Army in 2009.	Last accessed 29 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023
13	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Trincomalee	Police obstructed and stopped Tamil civilians from attending the Maveerar Commemoration held at the cemetery where the deceased Tamil was buried during the civil war.	<a href="#">Twitter</a> Kumanan Published on 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 29 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023
14	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Batticaloa	Police stormed and forcefully removed the decorations of a Maaveerar Naal commemoration held at Tharavai Thuyilum Illam LTTE cemetery in Batticaloa. The police raided the place, seized the sound system and speakers, disconnected the electricity supply, and arrested at least 4 persons. This cemetery had previously been destroyed and bulldozed by the military following the military defeat of LTTE. Even though the event organisers inquired if there was any court order, the Police failed to present any such.	<a href="#">Sri Lankan riot police storm Maaveerar Naal commemorations in Batticaloa, four Tamils arrested.</a> Tamil Guardian Published on 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024  <a href="#">Vikipala</a> Twitter Published on 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed Last accessed 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
15	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Colombo	Police dispersed a fast unto-death campaign in front of the Ministry of Higher Education premises in Colombo, organized by non-academic staff trade unions of government schools. They demanded solutions to workplace discrimination they faced which included not giving them school term holidays, not allowing them to leave once school finishes along with other employees, not having a promotion scheme, and not having a national policy governing them. On the 20th of November, they agreed to halt their protest temporarily, agreeing to a promise made by the Minister of Education to solve their issues within a week. As the minister's promise failed, they began the campaign again on 27th November. The Police forcefully removed their banner, and ordered the protesters to leave the place. As the trade unionists did not comply with the order, the Police forcefully removed them.	<a href="#">අනාධිපති වෘත්තීය සමිති උපවාසය පොලීසිය විසුරුවා හරි.</a> Mawbima. Published 28th Nov 2023. Last accessed 7th Feb 2024.  <a href="#">තොරක් නැති ජරණ වැලක තීරවුණ පාසල් අනාධිපති සේවකයන්ගෙන් රනු එළියක්.</a> Mawbima. Published 23rd Nov 2023. Last accessed 7th Feb 2024.
16	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Ampara	Police prevented dozens of Tamils, including a member of parliament, from commemorating Maaveerar Naal at the Kanchikkudiyaru Thuyilum Illam, an LTTE cemetery in Ampara. The	<a href="#">Tamil Guardian</a> Twitter. Published 28th Nov 2023. Last accessed 7th Feb 2024.  <a href="#">Blocked by police.</a>

			participants of the event lit the lamps at roadsides, in memory of Tamil martyrs who lost their lives during the war. Tamil National People's Front (TNPf) leader Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam was among those who were present.	<a href="#">Tamils forced to commemorate Maaveerar Naal on Amparai roadside</a> Tamil Guardian. Published on 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
17	24 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Jaffna	Police officers collected the personal details of the ones who were at Uduthurai Thuyilum Illam as they were preparing for Maaveerar Naal. The magistrate court in the area has granted permission for Maaveerar Naal commemorations to take place.	<a href="#">police harass Tamils at Uduthurai Thuyilum Illam over Maaveerar Naal preparations.</a> Tamil Guardian. Published on 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
18	24 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Mullaitivu	The Mullaitivu Magistrate Court issued an order prohibiting all remembrance events dedicated to fallen LTTE members, ahead of Maaveer Naal Day, based on a request made by the Mullaitivu police. Following the issuance of the order, a remembrance event in Mullaitivu was reportedly disrupted after the police presented the court order to attendees. The court order was issued against several activists and individuals including leaders and members of the Mullivaikkal Rural Development Society (West and East), Tamil National Alliance (TNA) representative, Muthukumar Vasanthan, from the Puthumaaththalan area, Former Northern Provincial Councillor, Durairasa Ravikaran, and his associates, and Social activist, Peter Ilanchezian, and his associates from the Manalkudiyiruppu area.	<a href="#">Mullaitivu court prohibits Maaveerar Naal remembrance.</a> Tamil Guardian. Published on 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
19	23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	Trincomalee	The Muttur magistrate court issued a prohibition order against 17 individuals, including Tamil National People's Front (TNPf) leader and MP, Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam, and TNPf MP Selvarajah Kajendran, prohibiting them from conducting Maaveerar Naal commemoration events in Trincomalee, based on a complaint made by the Sambur police, as fallen Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fighters were being commemorated at the Sambur Alankulam Maaveerar Thuyilum Illam in Muttur area.	<a href="#">Muttur Magistrate Court issues prohibition order against Tamil MPs involved in Maaveerar Naal commemorations.</a> Tamil Guardian. Published on 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024

20	25 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Jaffna	Several police stations in Jaffna have filed petitions against the commemoration of Maaveerar in Jaffna. Accordingly, petitions were filed at Magistrate Courts in Valvettithurai, Jaffna and the district court in Mallakam.	<a href="#">Sri Lankan police seek ban on Maaveerar Naal commemorations in Jaffna</a> Tamil Guardian. Published on 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed _14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 <a href="#">Sri Lankan police attempt to ban Maaveerar Naal commemorations</a> Tamil Guardian. Published on 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed _14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
21	20 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Jaffna	<p>Mallakam Magistrate Court has rejected several petitions filed by Sri Lankan police to ban Maaveerar Naal commemorations in Jaffna this week.</p> <p>Petitions filed by Manipay, Palaly, Tellipalai and Achuveli police were all dismissed by Mallakam Magistrate Court today.</p> <p>Manipay police had filed a petition claiming that the date on which Eelam Tamils around the world honour those who died in the liberation struggle, was glorification of terrorism.</p>	<a href="#">Mallakam Magistrate Court rejects petitions filed by Sri Lankan police to ban Maaveerar Naal commemorations</a> Tamil Guardian. Published on 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed _14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
22	26 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Jaffna	<p>Sri Lankan police have prohibited the use of the <i>karthigai poo</i> - the Tamil national flower - at Maaveerar Naal commemorations in Mullaitivu.</p> <p>It was claimed by the police that the <i>karthigai poo</i> is an "LTTE symbol" but the former Northern Provincial Council member Thurairasa Ravikaran highlighted that these are the same flowers that are used for worship at the temple.</p>	<a href="#">Sri Lankan police prohibit use of Tamil national flower at Maaveerar Naal</a> Tamil Guardian Published on 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed <u>14</u> <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
<b>4.3. Legal and Policy Actions</b>				
23	26 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Colombo	The President's office asked the Attorney General to check that cabinet decisions can be questioned under the parliament privilege. This was asked due to the complaints made by the	<a href="#">කැබිනට් තීරණ ගැන වරප්රසාද ප්රශ්න නැගිය හැකිද? - Lankadeepa Online</a> Lankadeepa online Published

			many government MPs regarding some MPs during the budget debate challenging the cabinet decision.	on 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed <a href="#">14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024</a>
24	8 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Colombo	Gazette issued postal service as essential service. Making any public service an essential service under the Public Service Act to crack down the trade union action. Postal services employees have initiated trade union action against the giving of the Nuwara Eliya and Kandy Postal office buildings to the Urban Development Authority. INFORM has repeatedly reported that issuing the gazette notice on essential public services is a tactic of the Government to suppress the Trade Union Action.	<a href="#">නැවැත්වීමේ වැඩසටහන වෙනුවෙන් අති විශේෂ ගැසට් නිවේදනයක් නිකුත් කරයි.</a> Colombo Times Published on 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024
25	4 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Colombo	With immediate effect, the postal department has cancelled the leave of all the postal employees on November 8, 9, and 10. This action was taken when postal employees initiated a protest against the selling of the Nuwara Eliya and Kandy postal offices. The Postmaster General announced that any post office would be closed, but the Nuwara Eliya and Kandy post office buildings were given to the Urban Development Authority to allow a more effective investment opportunity.	<a href="#">postal workers are on strike despite the cancellation of holidays.</a> Published on November 2023. Last accessed 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec 2023.
26	21 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Colombo	The monthly gazette was issued for all forces to follow the public security ordinance. The gazette notification provides the powers for the armed forces to intervene in civilian affairs. The Sri Lankan government has been issuing similar monthly gazettes for several years now, indicating the continuing trend of militarization and shrinking civic space.	<a href="#">The Gazette</a> No, 2363/49 Published on 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024.
27	17 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Colombo	Special gazette was issued declaring that all the services connected to the supply of electricity and supply or distribution of petroleum products and fuel made an essential service.	<a href="#">The Gazette</a> no: 2358/66 Published on 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec 2023.
28	11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Colombo	The National Peace Council has started the new Office for National Unity and Reconciliation Act. They have expressed concerns about the power that has been given to the ONUR to	<a href="#">The Office for National Unity and Reconciliation Bill discussed at the Sectoral Oversight Committee.</a>

			oversee and facilitate peace and reconciliation programs conducted by local organisations organizations, including community-based organisations organizations.	Parliament of Sri Lanka. Published on 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024. <a href="#">Achieving National Unity and Reconciliation requires Multi Partisan Consultations and Acceptance.</a> Published on 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024. <a href="#">රනිල් රාජපක්ෂ සහ ඇමැතියකුගේ තනි කැමැත්තට සිවිල් සමාජ ක්‍රියා පාලනය කිරීමට පහතක්.</a> .Published on 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
29	24 <sup>th</sup> Nov	N/A	The Inspector General of Police (IGP) and the Director of the Terrorist Investigation Division (TID) gave an undertaking to the Court of Appeal that legal action under the Criminal Procedure Code would be taken against the individuals commemorating Maaveerar Naal Day. This statement was made when the CoA heard a petition filed by a retired intelligence officer of the Sri Lanka Army, seeking legal action against those commemorating Maaveerar Naal Day in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.	<a href="#">Legal action against 'Mahaviru Day' celebrants - IGP &amp; TID chief give an undertaking.</a> Ada Derana. Published on 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
30	22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	Colombo	President Ranil Wickremasinghe raised the stakes in his dispute with the Constitutional Council, which opposes his nominations for IGP and Supreme Court. He advocates for a legislative select committee on the Constitutional Council. The opposition rejects the argument that the Constitutional Council should be part of the executive.	<a href="#">Ranga Srilal</a> Twitter. Published on 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 <a href="#">HANSARD</a> page 107 Published on 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024
<b>4.4. Other incidents</b>				
31	25 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Batticaloa	The Vice President of the Crusaders for Democracy party, N. Nagules, was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) for providing meals to the families of fallen LTTE cadres and	<a href="#">Vice President of Tamil political party arrested under PTA for providing meals to Maaveerar families.</a>

			<p>remanded until December 7th. He was arrested while attending a Maaveerar Naal event in the area.</p> <p>Speaking about the arrest in Parliament, Tamil National Alliance MP R. Shanakiyan said, <i>"This is a serious, serious problem."</i> If memorialization is not allowed in the North and East, there is no reconciliation. The TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] will not work!"</p>	<p>Published on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024</p> <p><a href="#">Crackdown and destruction in the East ahead of Maaveerar Naal.</a> Tamil Guardian Published on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024.</p>
32		Colombo	<p>The Lawyers Collective has issued a statement calling for a response regarding allegations made by the former sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe. The former sports minister has claimed that a recent interim order was issued preventing the interim committee appointed for the Sri Lanka Cricket Board by the Court of Appeal judge Bandula Karunarthne was closely working with the Sri Lanka Cricket Board. Based on the Minister's statement Lawyers Collective issued the letter suggesting some changes to keep the judiciary system independent and integrity.</p>	<p><a href="#">Sports Minister launches scathing attack on Judiciary inside Parliament.</a> Published on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024</p> <p><a href="#">Lawyer's Collective Calls for Due Process and Investigation of Allegations of Corruption or Abuse of Judicial Office.</a> Published on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024</p> <p><a href="#">Stay order on Interim Comm.: Sports Min. reveals judicial conflict of interest.</a> Published on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024</p>
33	21 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Colombo	<p>A tense situation arose in Parliament when a group of SLPP MPs impeded Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa's queries about the Supreme Court verdict that holds the Rajapaksas accountable for Sri Lanka's economic collapse.</p>	<p><a href="#">News Wire</a> Published on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023. Last accessed 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024</p>