

Human Rights Situation in Sri Lanka

August 2025



Protest in Batticaloa marking the International Day of the Enforced Disappearances, where demonstrators called on the international community to refer Sri Lanka to the ICC over alleged genocide against the Tamil people. Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

Human Rights Situation in Sri Lanka in August 2025.

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1. Executive Summary

Repressive Laws: A coalition of concerned citizens, political activists, and civil society organisations has issued a letter to the Minister of Justice and National Integration, demanding transparency and accountability regarding the promised repeal of the PTA. Responding to these concerns, the government has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to abolishing the PTA.

Freedom of the Press: The international human rights community has raised concerns over the allegation of mistreatment of Tamil journalist and human rights defender Kanapathipillai Kumanan. Eight international human rights and media rights organizations have urged the government to immediately end the harassment of Kumanan and withdraw the summons issued by the Counter Terrorism Investigation Department (CTID) of the Police.

Pushback against LGBTQI+ Rights: Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, has recently drawn public attention for voicing homophobic and anti-LGBTQI+ sentiments. He stated that foreign and local actors are promoting homosexuality in Sri Lanka and enabling gender changes for minors, as part of a broader effort to amend marriage laws to accommodate same-sex unions. Anti-LGBTQ+ groups, such as Mawwarunge Peramuna (Mother's Movement), have begun misleading schools and communities with defamatory campaigns, equating LGBTQI+ identities with paedophilia.

Mass Graves: The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has stressed the need for victim-centred, rights-compliant investigations following international standards, including the Minnesota Protocol. The ICJ emphasises that these exhumations must not be mere forensic exercises but should uncover the full chain of responsibility, preserve evidence, and uphold the rights of victims and their families. Sri Lanka currently lacks a specialised national framework for mass grave investigations, and past efforts at Chemmani, Mannar, and other sites have failed to deliver justice. The ICJ has called for full compliance with international standards, engagement of independent international forensic experts, provision of psychosocial and legal support for families, rigorous documentation of evidence, implementation of the 2018 law on enforced disappearances, establishment of an independent office to investigate state-perpetrated crimes, and public disclosure of past and current findings. Continued UN Human Rights Council monitoring is also recommended to ensure accountability.

Forcibly Disappeared: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that “the structural conditions that led to past violations persist.” Tens of thousands of victims, many last seen in military custody, remain unaccounted for. Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said, “The families of the disappeared continue to face threats, including for engaging with the UN, while prospects for justice in Sri Lanka are as remote as ever”.

The Association of Relatives of the Enforced Disappeared organised a major protest on the International Day of the Enforced Disappeared—calling for international justice. The North and East Enforced Disappeared Persons Association criticised UN representatives for imposing internal mechanisms instead of conducting international investigations.

Land Rights: In Trincomalee, farmers protested against the seizure of approximately 800 acres of agricultural land allocated to private solar power companies. The confiscation has jeopardized the livelihoods of 352 families, approximately 5,000 people.

Tamil Political Prisoners: Relatives of former political prisoner and Vavuniya District President of the Fighters' Welfare Association, Anandavarman, also known as Aravindan, have alleged that he remains imprisoned despite being granted bail.

Misconduct of Security Forces:

The death of 32-year-old Ethirmanasingham (Athiramaannasingam) Kapilraj, whose body was recovered from the Muthaiyankattu irrigation tank. His body bore multiple injuries, indicating a severe beating prior to death. Relatives, witnesses, and Tamil political leaders allege that Kapilraj was summoned to the Army camp, assaulted, and killed by Army personnel. The Ottisuttan (Oddusuddan) Police initially failed to respond to the family's complaint but later became involved after the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Human Rights Commission were informed. Amid local anger, police eventually arrested three soldiers, who were remanded until 19 August pending further investigation.

2. Repressive Laws

The government moves forward with plans to repeal the long-criticised Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). A coalition of concerned citizens, political activists, and civil society organisations has issued a strongly worded letter to Minister of Justice and National Integration, Harshana Nanayakkara, demanding transparency and accountability regarding the promised repeal of the PTA. The group, which met with Ministry officials to submit their formal recommendations for repealing the PTA, expressed alarm over recent developments suggesting that the government may bypass its commitment to public consultation. At that meeting, the Minister assured attendees that a comprehensive *White Paper* would be circulated prior to any legislative action, outlining the rationale for repealing the PTA and the government's intent regarding any replacement law, and that sufficient time would be provided for public engagement.



A group of civil society and political activists handed over a letter addressed to the Minister of Justice, demanding transparency and accountability regarding the promised repeal of the PTA. Image Courtesy: The Life Traveller [\[Youtube Video\]](#)

However, Foreign Affairs Minister Vijitha Herath announced in parliament that a draft Bill to repeal the PTA would be published in the Government Gazette in early September—without any mention of the promised *White Paper* or public consultation process. The coalition is now calling for urgent clarification from Minister Nanayakkara before the gazette publication proceeds. The letter also highlighted troubling statistics shared by the government with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: 49 arrests under the PTA between January and 23 May 2025 and 38 arrests under the PTA throughout 2024. Activists argue that these figures reflect the continued misuse of a law widely acknowledged—even by government officials—as draconian and outdated. Their demands include repealing the PTA as a standalone legislative act, halting publication of any new anti-terror Bill until the promised *White Paper* is released and publicly debated, imposing an immediate moratorium on PTA enforcement until repeal, expediting justice for current PTA detainees through legal and political means including Presidential Pardons and withdrawal of unsupported charges, and

providing reparations to those detained but not convicted under the PTA, including formal apologies, compensation, healthcare, and livelihood support, with families of individuals who died in custody to be acknowledged and compensated (Sri Lanka Brief, 2025).

Responding to these concerns, the government has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to abolishing the PTA. “There is no debate. The PTA will be repealed,” Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath stated firmly, emphasizing that the decision is rooted in Sri Lanka’s own policy framework—not external pressure from international bodies like the United Nations or its Human Rights Council. A special legal committee, led by President’s Counsel Rienzie Arsekularatne, has been convened to finalise the necessary legal amendments. While the PTA is being repealed, the government is simultaneously drafting a new, robust legal framework aimed at tackling organised crime and drug trafficking. This move is intended to fill the gap left by the PTA’s removal and ensure national security is maintained without compromising civil liberties (Ada Derana, 2025; Farzan, 2025; Jayawardana, 2025; Perera & Siriwardana, 2025; The Island, 2025).

3. Freedom of the Press

The international human rights community has raised concerns over the allegation of mistreatment of Tamil journalist and human rights defender Kanapathipillai Kumanan. Eight international human rights and media rights organizations have urged the government to immediately end the harassment of Kumanan and withdraw the summons issued by the Counter Terrorism Investigation Department (CTID) of the Police. The groups include the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), CIVICUS, Front Line Defenders (FLD), Free Press Unlimited (FPU), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), International Press Institute (IPI), and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) (Front Line Defenders, 2025).



Kumanan and his lawyer walking into the Counter Terrorism Division (CTID) office located inside the occupying Alampil Police Station, in Mullaitivu Northern Province. Photo courtesy: Tamil Guardian

Kumanan is the president of the *Mullaitivu Press Club* and a photojournalist documenting violations against Tamil civilians by security forces in Sri Lanka's heavily militarised North and East. He was summoned by the CTID to appear for an inquiry on 17 August. The official summons did not state a reason, although Kumanan was informed by telephone that it was connected to his social media posts. This move is widely believed to be a reprisal for his reporting, particularly on human rights issues and the mass grave excavations in Chemmani. His photographs and updates on the excavations have been widely shared by advocacy groups and news outlets (Front Line Defenders, 2025; Tamilwin, 2025; The Island, 2025).

Since the end of the armed conflict in May 2009, Kumanan has been reporting on enforced disappearances, military land acquisition, environmental crimes, and the campaigns of survivor communities seeking justice for wartime violations. Previously Kumanan and his family faced threats in 2024, probably to silence his reporting (Front Line Defenders, 2025).

International groups have called on Sri Lankan authorities, including the Minister of Public Security, the Police Chief, and the Ministry of Defence, to ensure journalists and human rights defenders can operate in a safe environment, free from intimidation. They also urged the United Nations and member states to closely monitor ongoing violations, and recommended the renewal of the OHCHR's Sri Lanka Accountability Project and monitoring mandate at the UN Human Rights Council's 60th session (Front Line Defenders, 2025). UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders Mary Lawlor has expressed concern over the interrogation of Kumanan, noting that targeting journalists for reporting on protests, land rights, and Tamil community issues undermines legitimate journalism and human rights defense. Lawlor called for international attention to the ongoing harassment of Tamil media workers, who remain vulnerable to intimidation, surveillance, and reprisals from security forces (Tamil Guardian, 2025).

Kumanan has since recorded a statement with the police regarding these allegations. Following the interrogation, he stated:

"Yesterday, I was interrogated by the Sri Lanka Police Counter Terrorism Investigation Division (CTID) for six hours and 45 minutes. The questioning covered my journalism and photography work, social media activities, financial activities, phone records, and overseas visits. I am deeply grateful for the unwavering solidarity, support, and love I have received. Your encouragement strengthens my resolve to continue fact-based reporting and to carry forward my work in the days ahead" (Tamil Guardian, 2025; The Island, 2025).

His lawyer described the interrogation as an 'extreme investigation,' emphasizing that officers reviewed Kumanan's bank transfers, communications, and journalistic work without following due legal process. They also highlighted a double standard in which Southern Sinhala authors referencing the LTTE face no repercussions, while Tamil journalists are criminalised for similar content (Tamil Guardian, 2025; The Island, 2025).

Reports indicate that media access to local government meetings is being restricted. In Jaffna, a journalist was forcibly removed from a Chavakachcheri Urban Council session on orders of the mayor, a move allegedly intended to prevent coverage of council proceedings (Tamilwin, 2025). Similarly, in Batticaloa-Manmunai South, the Kaluthawela Pradeshiya Sabha banned media attendance during sessions, a decision condemned by members as a violation of democratic rights and press freedom (Tamilwin, 2024).

In response to these ongoing violations, a protest was held on 22 August in front of the Sri Lankan Parliament. Organised by the Media Employees Trade Union Federation and the Young Journalists Association, the protest condemned the government's repression of Tamil journalists and highlighted the interrogation of Kumanan. Many journalists, civil activists, lawyers, and political figures participated, emphasizing the widespread concern over press freedom and human rights in the country (Tamilwin, 2025).

4. Pushback against LGBTQI+ Rights

Archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, has recently drawn public attention for claiming that foreign and local actors are promoting homosexuality in Sri Lanka and enabling gender changes for minors, as part of a broader effort to amend marriage laws to accommodate same-sex unions. Speaking at a ceremony in Colombo, where the honorary title of *Agga Maha Pandita* was conferred on the Deputy Chancellor of Ruhuna University, Most Venerable Dr. Akuretiye Nanda Thero, the Cardinal alleged that young men and women are being recruited into programs supported by foreign organisations and facilitated by local professionals. He stated that psychologists issue certificates allowing children to change their gender identity, which could then be used to obtain new birth certificates and eventually enter into same-sex marriages, claiming that the Ministry of Health plays a role in issuing the necessary medical documents (Ada Derana, 2025; The Island, 2025; Yohan Perera, 2025).



Cardinal Ranjith speaking at the event. Photo courtesy: Ada Derana [video]

The Cardinal warned of 'secret moves' to alter the country's marriage laws and described these efforts as a threat to traditional values. He further claimed homosexuality as a lifestyle that misleads youth and endangers the institution of marriage. Also suggested that certain political parties and leaders are complicit in promoting this agenda. While emphasizing that transgender people should be treated with respect, he argued that presenting these matters as a lifestyle could disrupt social norms and the future of the country (Ada Derana, 2025).

However, legal and social analysts have debunked many of the Cardinal's claims as factually inaccurate and legally unsound. Sri Lanka's LGBTQ+ activists are primarily advocating for the decriminalisation of consensual same-sex relations between adults, not marriage equality, and the Supreme Court's Special Determination No. 13/2023 affirmed that this aligns with constitutional protections and does not threaten public morality or security (Vishmika, 2025). Moreover, minors are not eligible for legal gender transition/affirmation under the Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) process, which applies only to adults over 18 following assessment by licensed psychiatrists, and does not require surgery. The GRC is an

administrative procedure to align legal documents with gender identity, not a program to change children's genders (Vishmika, 2025).

Anti-LGBTQ+ extremist groups, such as *Mawwarunge Peramuna* (Mother's Movement), have begun misleading schools and communities with defamatory campaigns, equating LGBTIQ+ identities with paedophilia, and religious leaders echoing the very same narratives are likely amplify such harmful actions (Vishmika, 2025).

While religious freedom is protected, it cannot be used to deny the fundamental rights of others. Sri Lanka's colonial-era criminal code, still criminalising consenting same-sex relations between adults, is widely regarded as outdated and unjust, and even the Vatican under Pope Francis has called for compassion and non-discrimination toward LGBTQ+ individuals (Daily FT, 2025). Religious leaders have a role in spiritual guidance but not in enforcing moral codes as law, particularly when such codes marginalise or criminalise citizens (Daily FT, 2025; Vishmika, 2025).



Image: Members of the Mothers Movement, an anti-LGBTIQ group, protest in front of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) in June 2025, condemning the HRCSL's call to decriminalize same-sex relationships and claiming it violates the rights of the majority.

5. Mass Graves

The Executive Director of the Missing Persons Office, Attorney-at-Law, Thathparan, has appealed for assistance in identifying the evidence found in the Kokku Thoduvai human burial pit in the Mullaitivu District. He further stated that the investigation into the human grave in the Kokkuthoduvai area of the Mullaitivu district, Case No. AR/804/23, is being conducted before the Mullaitivu Magistrate. Preliminary archaeological analysis suggests that the burial site may date from the 1994-1996 period.

It is part of the Office of Missing Persons' broader efforts to locate missing and disappeared individuals. The OMP is monitoring the investigation into the mass grave in accordance with its obligations under Section 12(b) of the Office of Missing Persons (Establishment, Management and Functioning) Act, No. 14 of 2016. The Mullaitivu Magistrate has requested the Office of Missing Persons to assist in determining the identity of human remains in the mass grave. The Missing Persons Office believes that members of the public, both in Sri Lanka and abroad, may have important information regarding this case. The public will be able to verify information and identities regarding items discovered and identified during burial excavations. The Office of Missing Persons can obtain evidence from family members or close friends of the deceased at the Kokku Thoduvai human burial site, describing possible identification of the remains in the burial site, including their features, clothing, and any previous injuries. Based on the information provided, trained officers from the Office of Missing Persons will interview potential relatives and potential witnesses who may have important information related to the case. Under the Office Act, the OMP is obliged to ensure confidentiality (Section 12 (e) (v)) and to ensure the safety of witnesses and family members (Sections 13(1) (e) and 18). OMP is also aware of the potential for emotional distress through these interviews, and psychological services will also be provided.

The Chemmani mass grave in Jaffna has become one of the most significant mass grave sites in the country, which is also a stark reminder of the country's unresolved trauma caused by the decades-long post-independant civil war.

The excavations have been carried out in multiple phases, with the first phase lasting nine days and the second phase authorized for forty-five days. By the thirty-fifth day of excavation in this second phase, 158 bone fragments had been recovered and 169 skeletal remains identified, including those of children and infants. On August 26–27, 2025, sixteen skeletal remains were unearthed in a single day, marking the highest number of discoveries in one day to date. Two additional skeletons of children under eighteen were recently found, bringing the total number of skeletal remains recovered to 166 as of late August 2025 (Newswire, 2025; Tamilwin, 2025).

Recovered skeletal remains and associated items are kept in custody for forensic examination, and scanning operations using ground-penetrating radar are ongoing to identify potential additional graves. Strict court protocols govern public display of evidence, prioritizing relatives of the disappeared, restricting participation to individuals over twenty-one, and prohibiting recording or handling of exhibits to ensure the dignity of proceedings (Ada Derana, 2025; Tamilwin, 2025).



The Protest held by the Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearances – North and East in Jaffna, commemorating the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances on 30th August. Courtesy: [@kumanan93](https://www.instagram.com/kumanan93)

The Chemmani mass grave is the second largest discovered in Sri Lanka, with the Mannar 'Sathosa' mass grave, containing 376 skeletons, considered the largest. Other significant sites include a mass grave near Matale Hospital with 155 skeletons, the Colombo Port area with at least 88 skeletons, the Thiruketheeswaram, Mannar grave with 82 skeletons, and the Kokkuthoduvai site with 52 skeletons (Newswire, 2025; Tamil Guardian, 2025).

Given the scale and sensitivity of the excavations, international oversight has been urged. Organisations such as the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) stress the need for victim-centred, rights-compliant investigations following international standards, including the Minnesota Protocol. The ICJ emphasises that these exhumations must not be mere forensic exercises but should uncover the full chain of responsibility, preserve evidence, and uphold the rights of victims and their families. Sri Lanka currently lacks a specialised national framework for mass grave investigations, and past efforts at Chemmani, Mannar, and other sites have failed to deliver justice (The Island, 2025).

The ICJ has called for full compliance with international standards, engagement of independent international forensic experts, provision of psychosocial and legal support for families, rigorous documentation of evidence, implementation of the 2018 law on enforced disappearances, establishment of an independent office to investigate state-perpetrated crimes, and public disclosure of past and current findings. Continued UN Human Rights Council monitoring is also recommended to ensure accountability (The Island, 2025).

The Chemmani mass grave first drew national attention in 1998 following the confession of former soldier Somaratne Rajapakse, who implicated himself in the rape and murder of

Krishanthi Kumaraswamy and claimed that nearly 600 bodies of disappeared persons were buried at Chemmani. The site remains a symbol of alleged state-perpetrated atrocities against Tamils during military operations in the 1990s, which saw the disappearance of young men and women from areas such as Mandaithivu, Allaipitiya, and Mankumban (Tamilwin, 2025).

“There is already space for a fair investigation. If we need international technical help, say for identifying skeletal remains or conducting advanced forensic testing, that’s something that we can discuss. But, apart from that, there’s no need for another type of intervention, because we are giving our full support.”

Deputy Minister of National Integration Muneer Mulafter

The government has acknowledged the potential need for international technical assistance to examine skeletal remains but has not yet formally requested it. Local authorities emphasise that while forensic support may be needed, no broader international intervention is required at present (Samaraweera, 2025). Meanwhile, the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) has proposed reforms to strengthen forensic capacity, establish independent DNA facilities, standardise excavation procedures, provide psychosocial support, and adopt victim-centred approaches to ensure credible investigations and accountability (The Island, 2025).

6. Forcibly Disappeared

On August 13, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that “the structural conditions that led to past violations persist.” Tens of thousands of victims, many last seen in military custody, remain unaccounted for. Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said, “The families of the disappeared continue to face threats, including for engaging with the UN, while prospects for justice in Sri Lanka are as remote as ever” (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

Despite President Dissanayake’s pledge to adopt more rights-respecting policies, the police and intelligence agencies in the Tamil-majority Northern and Eastern Provinces continue to monitor and intimidate victims’ families and human rights defenders. A mother whose son was forcibly disappeared in 2008 reported being questioned for three hours by Terrorism Investigation Division officers about her engagement with the UN Accountability Project. She described increased surveillance by the Criminal Investigation Department, including approaches to her children for information. Authorities continue to use counterterrorism powers to detain minority community members arbitrarily and harass NGO administrators over funding, which the IMF has criticised for restricting civil society scrutiny (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

Human Rights Watch has called on the government to publicly direct security agencies to end harassment of victims’ families, declare a moratorium on the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and invite international experts to assist in excavating the Chemmani mass grave. The UN Human Rights Council has been urged to renew the Accountability Project and ongoing monitoring for two more years (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

In this context, the *Association of Relatives of the Enforced Disappeared* organised a major protest on September 30—the International Day of the Enforced Disappeared—calling for international justice. The rally took place in Jaffna’s Kittup Park and in Batticaloa to demand accountability for enforced disappearances and mass graves. President Manuwal Udayachandra emphasised the decades-long struggle of families seeking answers and justice, noting that hundreds of skeletons have been recovered from the Chenmani mass grave while many relatives remain missing (Tamilwin, 2025).

The *North and East Enforced Disappeared Persons Association* criticised UN representatives for imposing internal mechanisms instead of conducting international investigations and called on all sectors of society—religious leaders, students, NGOs, and political parties—to join the rally. Local government officials in Batticaloa have also expressed support, highlighting that Tamils have received no domestic justice for enforced disappearances or the other war crimes (Tamil Guardian, 2025; Tamilwin, 2025).

7. Land Rights



The protest demanding the removal of military camps in Point Pedro, Jaffna. Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

A protest was held demanding the removal of military camps in Point Pedro, Jaffna. Led by Douglas Paul, Chairman of the *Pedro City Council*, the protest carried the theme “*Let's Protect the City of Pedro*” and proceeded to the Pedro Divisional Secretariat where a petition was submitted (Tamil Guardian, 2025; Tamilwin, 2025).

The Mayor of Vavuniya Municipal Council, S. Kandipan, condemned the widespread militarisation in the North and East. He noted the extensive appropriation of civilian lands by the military for camps, commercial projects, and luxury resorts, and stressed that militarisation has become normalised in the North and East, affecting everyday life, livelihoods, and economic activity (Tamil Guardian, 2025).

In Trincomalee, farmers in Muthu Nagar protested against the seizure of approximately 800 acres of agricultural land allocated to private solar power companies. The confiscation has jeopardized the livelihoods of 352 families, approximately 5,000 people (Tamilwin, 2025).

During a protest in front of the Trincomalee District Secretariat, farmers demanding the return of their lands were reportedly attacked by police and special task force personnel. One farmer described being dragged and thrown onto a motorcycle and hospitalized as a result of the confrontation. Social activists and politicians, including Trincomalee District Parliamentarian Imran Mahroop and National People's Power MP Roshan Akmeemana, condemned the attack and emphasised that the government's failure to return these lands constitutes a breach of promises made to local residents (Tamilwin, 2025).

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Overseas Employment Arun Hemachandra stated in a media briefing that lands not subject to court orders or legal disputes would be made available for agricultural use, and approximately 10% of the land allocated to solar power companies is unavailable only due to court orders. The Deputy Minister urged the public not to be misled by misinformation suggesting that the issue remains unresolved (Tamilwin, 2025).

The farmers' protests continued in front of the Presidential Secretariat, demanding that agricultural lands and forest areas in Trincomalee not be distributed to private companies, including Indian firms. Activists, including Wasantha Mudalige and Lahiru Weerasekara, engaged in heated discussions with police, demanding accountability and direct engagement with the President's office (Hari TV, 2025; Newswire, 2025).

A limited shutdown occurred following the alleged killing of 32-year-old Edirmanasingam Kabilraj by the army in Mullaitivu. The shutdown was called by the Illankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK), and saw closures of shops and halt of bus transport across Vavuniya, Batticaloa, and parts of Mullaitivu, although Jaffna saw partial participation. Former MP M.A. Sumanthiran described the hartal as a symbolic protest to demand the removal of military camps from Tamil-majority areas, citing their encroachment into schools, civic buildings, and private lands (Tamil Guardian, 2025).

8. Tamil Political Prisoners

Relatives of former political prisoner and Vavuniya District President of the *Fighters' Welfare Association*, Anandavarman, also known as Aravindan, have alleged that he remains imprisoned despite being granted bail. Aravindan has been detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for over a year after being summoned by the Terrorism Investigation Division to provide a statement regarding a Facebook post in March 2024, which allegedly promoted the LTTE. Although he was reportedly released on bail in July 2024, he was immediately re-detained due to other cases filed against him. Another case scheduled for 25 July was heard on 5 August 2025, during which he remained incarcerated without release. Relatives have urged political leaders and authorities to intervene and secure his release. (Tamilwin, 2025).



Freedom water collection campaign calling for the release of the Tamil political prisoners held under the PTA. Image courtesy: [Tamil Guardian](#)

Meanwhile, calls for the release of Tamil political prisoners held under PTA were amplified in Araly during a symbolic “*Freedom Water Collection*” event at the *Muthamizh People's Community Centre*. Organised by the *Voice of the Voiceless* movement. Participants included activist M. Komagan, students from the University of Jaffna, members of the ‘*Siragugal*’ group, and local residents (Tamil Guardian, 2025).

9. Misconduct of Security Forces



Police examining the body of Ethirmanasingham Kapilraj found dead after allegedly being assaulted by army soldiers. Image Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

A violent incident at the Muthaiyankattukulam Left Bank Army Camp in Mullaitivu triggered widespread outrage. The case centers on the death of 32-year-old Ethirmanasingham (Athiramaannasingam) Kapilraj, a father of a seven-month-old child, whose body was recovered from the Muthaiyankattu irrigation tank. His body bore multiple injuries, indicating a severe beating prior to death. Relatives, witnesses, and Tamil political leaders allege that Kapilraj was asked to come to the Army camp, assaulted, and killed by Army personnel (Tamilwin, 2025; World Socialist Web Site, 2025).

The Sri Lankan Army Headquarters has denied all allegations, stating instead that troops had thwarted an attempt by a group of persons to enter an Army camp, apprehending one intruder while the others fled. The Army said three soldiers had been arrested, one for assaulting youths and two for allegedly cooperating with intruders, but emphasised that no one was arrested in connection with Kapilraj's death. Police spokesman ASP F.U. Wootler confirmed that authorities were monitoring the situation, warning that protests should not disrupt civil life. (The Island, 2025).

The Ottisuttan (Oddusuddan) Police initially failed to respond to the family's complaint but later became involved after the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Human Rights Commission were informed. Amid local anger, police eventually arrested three soldiers, who were remanded until 19 August pending further investigation. A postmortem examination at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital returned an open verdict, indicating that further investigation is needed to determine the cause of death (Tamilwin, 2025; The Island, 2025).

The killing prompted protests and calls for a hartal (general strike) across Northern and Eastern provinces. The Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) led the action, supported by several Tamil and Muslim political parties including the Tamil Progressive Alliance (TPA),

Tamil National Alliance (TNA), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), and Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC) (Daily FT, 2025; Daily Mirror, 2025; The Island, 2025).

Meanwhile, in the Eastern district of Ampara, tensions rose for a different reason. Residents of Weeramunai accused the Sammanthurai Police of aiding and abetting government department activities that undermined the local community's identity. Some members of the Sammanthurai Pradeshiya Sabha had reportedly blocked the installation of a nameplate in the Weeramunai area at a junction on the main road owned by the Ampara-Kalmunai Road Development Authority. The Road Development Authority had taken steps to install the nameplate, but Pradeshiya Sabha members disrupted the process. When Police arrived, local people alleged that officers acted in favor of the Pradeshiya Sabha members. Civil society activists in Ampara condemned what they described as continuous efforts to destroy Weeramunai's identity (Tamilwin, 2025).

Parliament removed Inspector-General of Police (IGP) T.M.W. Deshabandu Tennakoon on 5 August following a Committee of Inquiry that found him guilty on 19 out of 23 charges of gross abuse of power and serious misuse of authority. A motion signed by 115 Members of Parliament led to the appointment of the inquiry committee, which delivered its report in July, resulting in Tennakoon's removal by a majority of 177 votes, with no votes against and one abstention. (Parliament of Sri Lanka, 2025).

Shortly thereafter, Tennakoon was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department in connection with the 9 May 2022 attacks on Aragalaya protesters at Galle Face, where ruling-party supporters assaulted demonstrators near Temple Trees. The CID arrested him from his residence in Mirihana after his anticipatory bail application was rejected (The Island, 2025).

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