

# Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka

October 2014



Police uses water cannons and tear gas against University students marching towards the Parliament on 24 October 2014 (Vikalpa photo)

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## Issues Covered

- A. **Death Threats, Harassment, Intimidation of those seen as against the Government**
- B. **Violations of Freedom of Expression**
- C. **Violations of Freedom of Assembly**
- D. **Threats Against those Alleged to be Giving Evidence to UN Investigation**
- E. **Obstacles to Freedom of Movement of those who may give critical comments about the Government**
- F. **Repression of Student Activists**
- G. **Repression of Opposition Political Parties**

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

## Summary:

As the deadline for submissions for the UN Human Rights Council appointed investigation into alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law approached, a Tamil person in the North was arrested and several others were searched and compelled to hide, for attempting to cooperate with the UN investigation. The Presidentially appointed Governor of the Northern Province sought “clarification” into why an outspoken Tamil Councilor of the Northern Provincial Council had asked for an extension of the deadline for submissions for the UN investigation. Media reported that the government has launched an investigation into the Tamil National Alliance’s (TNA) alleged “plot to provide unsubstantiated information to UN war crimes investigators” and that emails to the investigation team would be monitored. Well-known human rights defenders were labeled as terrorist sympathizers by a Sinhalese newspaper, accused of sending information to the UN investigation team and supporting the revival of the LTTE. The President of the Vavuniya Citizens Committee in the North was assaulted and had to be hospitalized after he was involved in a protest campaign to free a Tamil woman HRD detained without charges since March 2014.

A group of opposition parliamentarians and two journalists were attacked by a mob when they visited the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) Security Training Institute at Slave Island on a fact-finding mission. There were harassments and obstacles to an event on journalism organized by Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL), with the senior staff, their family members, resource persons and participants receiving threatening phone calls and SMS messages. The Military harassed a monthly Tamil newspaper which stands for the right to self-determination, demanding that the printers alert them before printing the paper. A distributor of the paper was interrogated at a Military camp and later assaulted. A senior Tamil journalist and press freedom activist in Jaffna was also subjected to interrogation. An injunction was issued against a strike by railway employees while Trade Union leaders and protesting fisher folks were attacked physically. A poster was put up discrediting human rights defenders involved in organizing an annual remembrance for disappeared persons and one of their houses was stoned the night before the event. Student activists involved in protests were attacked at least three times in three separate places and incidents, causing injuries to many students. The Minister for Higher Education discredited students again, referring to them as “flies” and 12 students were arrested in relation to the Minister’s visit to a university.

Freedom of movement was curtailed against those who were considered as persons who could pass critical comments against the government. On two separate occasions, a wife and a mother of a Tamil man, who was killed for allegedly being involved in attempting to revive the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), were prevented from going abroad, although they possessed valid visas and had no formal court orders restricting overseas travel. Foreign passport holders were barred from travelling to most parts of the war-ravaged Northern Province without permission of the Ministry of Defense, and a UN official was turned back when going for an event related to the World Food Day.

The Police, Military and the Government were directly implicated in many of the incidents, while other incidents were perpetrated by “unidentified persons / groups” who appeared to have links to the Defense establishment. Based on media reports, the Government and Police have not taken decisive actions to arrest and prosecute those responsible for any of the incidents.

## Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka - October 2014: List of Incidents

	Incident Date	Incident Place (District)	Incident Description	Source
<b>A. Death Threats, Harassment, Intimidation and Restrictions of those seen as against the Government</b>				
1.	12 <sup>th</sup> October	-	HRDs labeled as terrorist supporters by the "Rivira" Sinhala language newspaper	<a href="http://www.rivira.lk/epaper/sunday/2014/10/12/index.html#15/z">http://www.rivira.lk/epaper/sunday/2014/10/12/index.html#15/z</a> (In Sinhala)
2.	8 <sup>th</sup> October	Nedunkerny (Vavuniya district)	President of the Vavuniya Citizens Committee assaulted	<a href="http://freejeyakumary.wordpress.com/2014/10/09/president-of-the-vavuniya-citizens-committee-attacked-for-organising-jeyakumary-protest/">http://freejeyakumary.wordpress.com/2014/10/09/president-of-the-vavuniya-citizens-committee-attacked-for-organising-jeyakumary-protest/</a>
<b>B. Violations of Freedom of Expression</b>				
3.	15 <sup>th</sup> October	Colombo district	Death threats against a number of journalists	<a href="http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/fmm-challenges-the-government-to-bring-culprits-to-book/#more-20709">http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/fmm-challenges-the-government-to-bring-culprits-to-book/#more-20709</a>
4.	14 <sup>th</sup> October	Colombo district	Death threats to senior journalist and his family	<a href="http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/death-threats-to-senior-journalist-and-his-family-from-so-called-patriotic-force/">http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/death-threats-to-senior-journalist-and-his-family-from-so-called-patriotic-force/</a>
5.	14 <sup>th</sup> & 15 <sup>th</sup> October	Colombo district	Death threats to staff and families of Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL)	<a href="http://www.tisrilanka.org/?p=12277">http://www.tisrilanka.org/?p=12277</a>
6.	3 <sup>rd</sup> week October	Jaffna district	Tamil monthly in the north harassed	<a href="http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&amp;artid=37449">http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&amp;artid=37449</a>
7.	1 <sup>st</sup> October	Jaffna district	Senior journalist in Jaffna questioned	<a href="http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&amp;artid=37400">http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&amp;artid=37400</a>
<b>C. Violations of Freedom of Assembly</b>				
8.	25 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> October	Kussala (Gampaha district)	Assault on Trade Union leaders to discourage Union work	<a href="http://lankafocusnews.com/?p=30536">http://lankafocusnews.com/?p=30536</a> (In Sinhala)
9.	9 <sup>th</sup> October	Fort (Colombo district)	Injunction issued against Railway Trade Unions on strike	<a href="http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&amp;page=article-details&amp;code_title=111850">http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&amp;page=article-details&amp;code_title=111850</a>

10.	21 <sup>st</sup> October	Maligawatte (Colombo district)	Protesting fisherfolk pelted with stones	<a href="http://www.ceylontoday.lk/51-75961-news-detail-fishers-protesting-eu-ban-pelted-with-stones.html">http://www.ceylontoday.lk/51-75961-news-detail-fishers-protesting-eu-ban-pelted-with-stones.html</a>
11.	25 <sup>th</sup> October	Gampaha district	Posters pasted against 'Remembrance of the Disappeared'	<a href="http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/posters-pasted-against-remembrance-of-the-disappeared-to-be-held-tomorrow/">http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/posters-pasted-against-remembrance-of-the-disappeared-to-be-held-tomorrow/</a>
12.	26 <sup>th</sup> of October	Negombo (Gampaha district)	HRD's house stoned	<a href="http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/disappearances-in-sri-lanka-our-message-to-govt-by-brito-fernando/">http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/disappearances-in-sri-lanka-our-message-to-govt-by-brito-fernando/</a>

#### D. Threats against those Alleged to be Giving Evidence to the UN Investigation

13.	27 <sup>th</sup> October	Mulankavil (Kilinochchi district)	TID arrests Tamil man for allegedly helping Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights' Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL)	<a href="http://www.colombomirror.com/?p=715">http://www.colombomirror.com/?p=715</a>
14.	31 <sup>st</sup> October	Jaffna (Jaffna district)	Governor seeks clarification on NPC councilor's request to OISL	<a href="http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&amp;page=article-details&amp;code_title=113229">http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&amp;page=article-details&amp;code_title=113229</a>
15.	25 <sup>th</sup> October	-	Investigation launched into TNA providing information to OISL	<a href="http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&amp;page=article-details&amp;code_title=113229">http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&amp;page=article-details&amp;code_title=113229</a>
16.	30 <sup>th</sup> October	-	Ministry of Defense tries to monitor e-mails to OISL	<a href="http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&amp;artid=37456">http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&amp;artid=37456</a>
17.	30 <sup>th</sup> October	Vanni (Killinochchi and Mullativu districts)	Military asks internet and photocopy servers to alert them about submissions to OISL	<a href="http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&amp;artid=37456">http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&amp;artid=37456</a>

#### E. Obstacles to Freedom of Movement of those who may give critical comments about the government

18.	11 <sup>th</sup> October	Several districts in the North	Foreigners banned from travelling to former war zone without approval	<a href="http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141012/news/travel-restrictions-as-president-visits-north-122354.html">http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141012/news/travel-restrictions-as-president-visits-north-122354.html</a>  <a href="http://www.defence.lk/news.asp?fname=Foreign_Passport_holders_traveling_to_the_North_2014_1030_02">http://www.defence.lk/news.asp?fname=Foreign_Passport_holders_traveling_to_the_North_2014_1030_02</a>
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19.	8 <sup>th</sup> October	Kilinochchi	Top FAO official and hundreds of others turned away at Omanthai	<a href="http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/top-fao-official-hundreds-of-others-turned-away-at-omanthai-123252.html">http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/top-fao-official-hundreds-of-others-turned-away-at-omanthai-123252.html</a>
20.	5 <sup>th</sup> October	Katunayake (Gampaha district)	Wife of slain 'suspect' prevented from leaving Sri Lanka	<a href="http://tamilguardian.com/article.asp?articleid=12460">http://tamilguardian.com/article.asp?articleid=12460</a>
21.	21 <sup>st</sup> October	Katunayake (Gampaha district)	Former detainee (a Tamil mother) prevented leaving Sri Lanka at the airport	<a href="http://www.dailymirror.lk/54629/theiveegan-s-mother-prevented-from-leaving-sl">http://www.dailymirror.lk/54629/theiveegan-s-mother-prevented-from-leaving-sl</a>  <a href="http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&amp;page=article-details&amp;code_title=112577">http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&amp;page=article-details&amp;code_title=112577</a>
<b>F. Repression of Student Activists</b>				
22.	10 <sup>th</sup> October	Pambahinna junction (Rathnapura district)	Sabaragamuwa University students' fast attacked, 20 injured	<a href="http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/satyagraha-attackers-still-at-large-while-students-go-on-own-rampage-123091.html">http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/satyagraha-attackers-still-at-large-while-students-go-on-own-rampage-123091.html</a>
23.	6 <sup>th</sup> October	Rathnapura district	12 students arrested; Higher Education Minister compares students to flies	<a href="http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/satyagraha-attackers-still-at-large-while-students-go-on-own-rampage-123091.html">http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/satyagraha-attackers-still-at-large-while-students-go-on-own-rampage-123091.html</a>
24.	1 <sup>st</sup> October	Homagama (Colombo district)	Fasting student monks attacked	<a href="http://www.lankaviews.com/sn/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=21848:2014-10-02-21-31-42&amp;catid=100:2014-06-19-06-05-56&amp;Itemid=151">http://www.lankaviews.com/sn/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=21848:2014-10-02-21-31-42&amp;catid=100:2014-06-19-06-05-56&amp;Itemid=151</a> (Sinhala)  <a href="http://www.lankaviews.com/sn/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=21806:2014-09-25-09-33-04&amp;catid=69:2009-08-07-09-41-10&amp;Itemid=130">http://www.lankaviews.com/sn/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=21806:2014-09-25-09-33-04&amp;catid=69:2009-08-07-09-41-10&amp;Itemid=130</a> (Sinhala)

25.	21 <sup>st</sup> October	Colombo district	20 University students injured in a police attack	<a href="http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA37/013/2014/en/77d973b8-c8e9-4b48-8fdd-117dae225789/asa370132014en.pdf">http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA37/013/2014/en/77d973b8-c8e9-4b48-8fdd-117dae225789/asa370132014en.pdf</a>
<b>H. Repression of Opposition Political Parties</b>				
26.	21 <sup>st</sup> October	Colombo district	Opposition MPs and two journalists attacked	<a href="http://www.dailymirror.lk/54673/journalists-among-unp-fact-finders-injured#sthash.9ZHt4zva.GqMaW99v.dpuf">http://www.dailymirror.lk/54673/journalists-among-unp-fact-finders-injured#sthash.9ZHt4zva.GqMaW99v.dpuf</a>
27.	18 <sup>th</sup> October	Earlalai (Jaffna district)	Northern Provincial Counselor questioned	<a href="http://www.colombomirror.com/?p=502">http://www.colombomirror.com/?p=502</a>



## A. Death Threats, Harassment, Intimidation and Restrictions of those seen as Against the Government

### 1. HRDs labeled as Terrorist supporters

In an article under the heading 'How Gopi's wife who tried to jump abroad with Swiss support was captured at Katunayaka', Sinhala language newspaper "Rivira" on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2014 labeled a prominent Human Rights Defenders (HRD) as Tiger (LTTE) supporter. The article mentioned prominent HRD Ruki Fernando as a sympathizer of the LTTE, accusing him of providing accommodation to alleged LTTE leader Gopi. The article speculated that Ruki Fernando was collecting evidence to be provided to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights' Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL). Another prominent HRD, Fr. Emmanuel Sebamalai of Mannar, was also labeled as a Tiger sympathizer in the same article. The article alleged that Fr. Sebamalai paid LKR 200,000 to Maveer families<sup>1</sup> to come to Colombo and give evidence on war crimes. Another HRD labeled as an LTTE supporter is Ms. Balendran Jeyakumari. Jeyakumari is also the mother of a disappeared Tamil youth and had been campaigning for truth and justice. She has been detained since the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 without any charges being filed.

<http://www.rivira.lk/epaper/sunday/2014/10/12/index.html#15/z> - in Sinhala (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 2. President of the Vavuniya Citizens Committee assaulted

Mr. G. Thevaraja, President of the Vavuniya Citizens Committee (VCC), was attacked at around 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October. He had gone to his shop soon after presiding in an afternoon meeting with the VCC to discuss the "#FreeJeyakumary" campaign protest scheduled on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October in Vavuniya (This was to free Balendran Jeyakumary, a woman HRD who has been detained without charges since the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2014). He was assaulted by 4 persons in civilian clothing who rode two motorbikes and attacked him with iron rods. He was reported to have received fewer injuries on his head as he was wearing a helmet - which was damaged from the impact of the beatings. While beating him, his attackers threatened in broken Tamil (non-native speaker), "*You are going to organise a campaign for Jeykumari. If you do not stop that, we will kill you!*" The incident happened between the Nedunkemy Army Camp and Police Station. He was rushed to the Nedunkerny hospital and was later transferred to the Vavuniya hospital to receive treatment.

<http://freejeyakumary.wordpress.com/2014/10/09/president-of-the-vavuniya-citizens-committee-attacked-for-organising-jeyakumary-protest/> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

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<sup>1</sup> name used for families of LTTE cadres who had died in action



Mr. G. Thevaraja at the hospital. (Photo: #FreeJeyakumary)

## B. Violations of Freedom of Expression

### 3. Death threats against a number of journalists

Several death threats were issued to journalist participants, organizers and their families at an event held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October in Colombo to award certificates of a journalism training programme conducted by Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) by a group called the Patriotic Force. Journalists Mr. Janoor Kichilan and Mr. Amadoru Amarajeewa were among those who received death threats. Organizer Mr. Shan Wijethunga and Ravaya consultant editor Mr. Victor Ivan, resource persons of the event, also received threatening SMS messages. The Free Media Movement (FMM) claimed that the “Patriotic Force” is another puppet group which is protected by the intelligence agencies. The statement was reinforced by journalist Mr. Amadoru Amarajeewa who stated that the mobile phones used to make the threatening telephone calls belonged to intelligence officers.

<http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/fmm-challenges-the-government-to-bring-culprits-to-book/#more-20709> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 4. Death threats to senior journalist and his family

An unknown gang called the ‘Patriotic Force’ threatened to kill senior journalist and former editor Jayasiri Jayasekara and his family for his role in an investigative journalism training course conducted by the Transparency International, Sri Lanka (TISL). In his complaint to the Inspector General of Police, Jayasekara

provided the time of the incident and the phone numbers of the threatening phone calls he received. However, no action has been taken so far. The would-be killers repeatedly called his mobile phone and threatened to kill his wife and children after he did not adhere to their warnings.

In his official complaint to the Inspector General of Police, Jeyasekara stated, “As these threats have posed a serious risk to my profession and my life I urge you to take steps to protect my life. At the same time I urge you to initiate a proper investigation and to take legal action against those who threatened to kill me.”

<http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/death-threats-to-senior-journalist-and-his-family-from-so-called-patriotic-force/> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 5. Death threats to staff & families of Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL)

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, threatening SMS messages were sent to several staff members of Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) who were involved in the TISL programme to award certificates to trained journalists. The SMS was also received by more than 50% of the invited participants. Family members of senior staff of TISL also received threatening SMS and calls. The event was scheduled to take place at a Colombo Hotel in Colombo 05 on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014. However, continued threats led TISL to cancel the reservation and move to another venue to conduct the event. Two TISL staff members who had been stationed at the hotel to facilitate the participants moving to the new location had observed more than 15 onlookers in plain clothes hanging around. There were suspicions that the onlookers were intelligence officers. One of the onlookers riding a motor cycle threw a piece of paper towards the front door of the hotel that carried a threatening message. Reliable sources informed TISL that they have photographed the TISL staff members who were at the Colombo hotel from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October and they had tried to get more details about them. Three persons came to the hotel at noon after the two staff members left. They said unidentified persons attempted to get more details about the TISL staff members from hotel staff.

<http://www.tisrilanka.org/?p=12277> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)



## 6. Tamil monthly in the North harassed

Newspaper agents at Kungchar-kadai in Point Pedro (Jaffna district) claim that they were subjected to repeated harassments for distributing the monthly paper, Ithu-Nam-Theasam. Similar complaints were reportedly received from Irupaalai and Achchezhu in the Jaffna district. Additionally Sri Lankan military officers visiting the printing presses in Jaffna are reported to have instructed the printer owners to alert them before printing the paper. In the third week of October, a distributor of the paper was attacked at Uruththirapuram in Ki'linochchi district. The assault happened right after the distributor was interrogated at the military camp in Uruththirapuram, and squad that followed him assaulted him and dumped the papers into a reservoir. According to "Tamilnet", the monthly paper registered as a newspaper in Sri Lanka, stands firm on the principles of the right to self-determination of Eezham Tamils and is edited by independent writer and popular columnist A. Jothilingam.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=37449> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

## 7. Senior journalist in Jaffna questioned

Senior Journalist and media activist Thayaraparan Ratnam was subjected to interrogation by a Special Criminal Investigation Division in Kankasanthurei (KKS) in the Jaffna district. The harassments started after journalists and media activists attended media workshops held in Colombo and other places. The CID investigators questioned Mr Thayaparan, who is associated with Jaffna Press Club (JPC), on his interactions with international media watchdogs and training programmes with journalists from the South that took place at the Sri Lanka Press Institute (SLPI) in Colombo.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=37400> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

## C. Violations of Freedom of Assembly

### 8. Assault on Trade Union leaders to discourage Union work

"It is clear that our Trade Union (TU) leaders are being suppressed systematically", the Free Trade Zone and General Employees Services Union (FTZ & GESU) complained to the Inspector General of Police in a letter. The letter cited two recent incidents of assault against branch secretaries of a newly formed TU at the Free Trade Zone factory A.T.G. Ceylon Private Limited.

Mr. Dinesh Rangana Simal, branch secretary of the FTZ & GESU at the A.T.G. Ceylon Private Limited, was assaulted while he was on his way to work on 25 October. On the same day, Mr. T.M. Ranjith Wijekoon, another branch secretary of the FTZ & GESU working at the same factory, was stopped by a gang on his way to the TU office, who attempted to beat him with iron poles. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of October, a picketing campaign was held at the Avaiyawatta Junction, Katunayaka to protest the said assaults.

<http://lankafocusnews.com/?p=30536> - in Sinhala (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)



FTZ workers protest attacks on Trade Union activists. (Photo: LankaFocusNews)

LankaFocusNews

### 9. Injunction issued against Railway trade unions on strike

The (Colombo) Fort District Court was reported to have issued an injunction order on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October that the Railway Professional Trade Union Alliance (PTUA) must stop its strike. Although about 380 passenger trains usually operate throughout the country daily, only 80 trains were running with the help of pro-government trade union members during the strike.

[http://www.island.lk/index.php?page\\_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code\\_title=111850](http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=111850) (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 10. Protesting fisherfolk pelted with stones

Around 300 fisherfolk, who gathered to protest opposite the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Ministry at Maligawatte, Colombo, were pelted with stones, allegedly by the Ministry. Three of the injured fisherfolk were hospitalized. They were protesting against the European Union's (EU) decision to ban imports of Sri Lankan fish and Chinese vessels fishing in Sri Lanka's territorial waters.

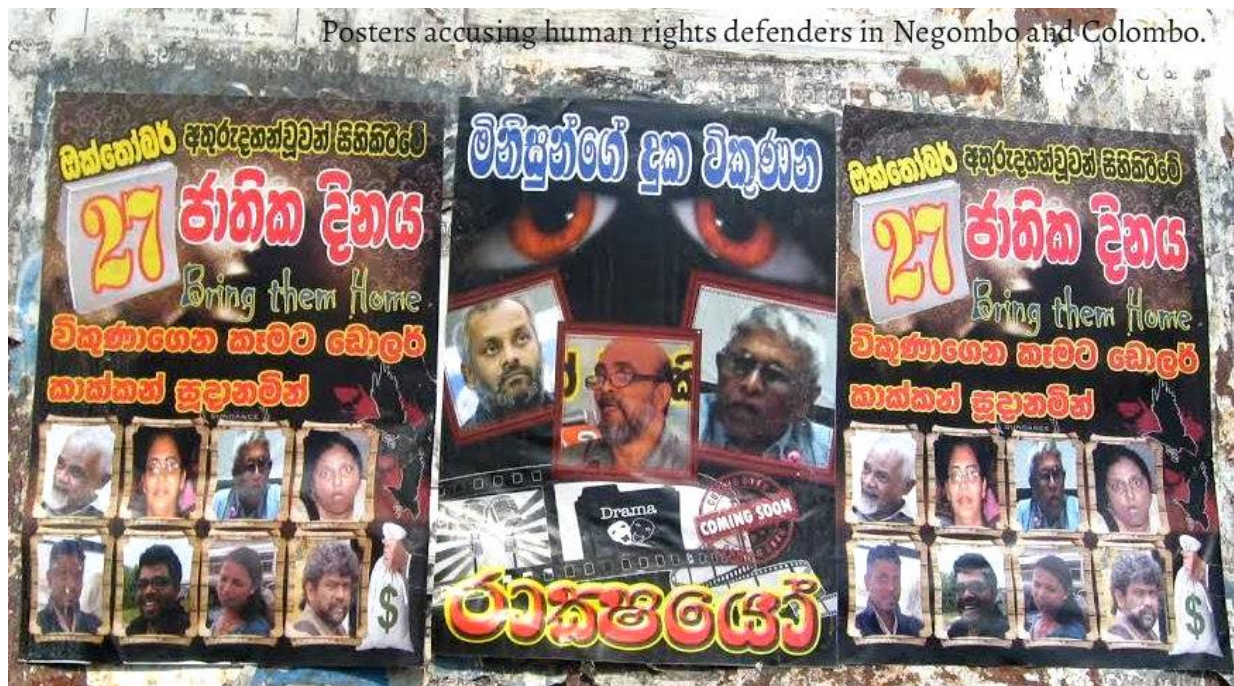
<http://www.ceylontoday.lk/51-75961-news-detail-fishers-protesting-eu-ban-pelted-with-stones.html> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 11. Posters pasted against 'Remembrance of the Disappeared'

Two posters were pasted in the Negombo area and in Colombo, on the night of the 25<sup>th</sup> of October claiming that organizers and resources persons of the Remembrance of the Disappeared in Negombo were selling the disappeared for dollars. The posters included photos of Mr. Victor Ivan, Consultant Editor of the Sinhalese newspaper "Ravaya" and keynote speaker at the event, prominent human rights defender Dr. (Ms.) Nimalka

Fernando, Brito Fernando, President of the Families of Disappeared, who were organizing the event. There were also photographs of other activists, an artist and journalists who were supporters of the event, and several staff members of the human rights group “Right to Life”, who had been involved in the organization of the event. Posters were also pasted near the houses of the HRDs who were included in the posters.

<http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/posters-pasted-against-remembrance-of-the-disappeared-to-be-held-tomorrow/> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)



## 12. HRD's house stoned

"In my 24 years history against disappearances, for the first time my house was stoned, only two stones, in yesterday's (26th Oct) night. All these things are done to stop the public discussion and unity being built between mothers in the North and South in the common fight against the disappearances." said Mr. Brito Fernando, president of the Families of the Disappeared (FOD).

The incident occurred the night before the annual Commemoration of the Disappeared in Sri Lanka scheduled for the 27<sup>th</sup> of October and organized by the FOD. Prior to the stoning of Fernando's house, posters labeling human rights defenders, including Fernando, as traitors and devils were posted in front of their houses.

<http://srilankabrief.org/2014/10/disappearances-in-sri-lanka-our-message-to-govt-by-brito-fernando/> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

## D. Threats against Giving Evidence to UN Investigation

### 13. TID arrests Tamil man for allegedly helping OISL

The Terrorists Investigation Division (TID) of the Sri Lankan Police is reported to have ordered police to arrest a 58-year old Tamil man in Kilinochchi for distributing forms intended to be circulated among the witnesses of the ongoing OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL). Sri Lankan Police claimed that the TID arrested him at Mulankavil in Kilinochchi while he was distributing UNHRC witness forms. He was reported as having been brought to the TID headquarters in Colombo for further investigation.

*“Sinnathamby Krishnarajah from Sivapuram, Iranchi in Kilinochchi is badly affected by the brutal war. One of his young daughters was killed due to shelling during the final phase of the war, thus becoming potential witness to the ongoing UN inquiry. The TID has arrested him for allegedly carrying witness forms of the OHCHR. The UNHRC should intervene immediately to ensure his safety and security and get him released,”* TNA spokesman and Jaffna District Parliamentarian Suresh K. Premachandran stated.

<http://www.colombomirror.com/?p=715> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 14. Governor seeks clarification on NPC councilor’s request to OISL



Ananthy Sasitharan (Photo: Aljazeera)

Northern Governor retired Maj. Gen. G. A Chandrasiri has sought a clarification from Province Chairman C.V. K. Sivagnanam as to whether Northern Provincial Council member, Ananthy Sasitharan requested the Geneva-based Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to allot more time for them to collect information (Sasitharan’s husband was a prominent LTTE cadre, Elilan).

[http://www.island.lk/index.php?page\\_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code\\_title=113229](http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=113229) (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 15. Investigation launched into TNA providing information to OISL

The government has launched an investigation into an alleged plot by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) to provide unsubstantiated information to UN war crimes investigators and is going to question Vavuniya-based senior TNA official Alva Pulle Vijendrakumar alias Sun Master, The Island newspaper reported. Vijendrakumar was asked to verify the alleged involvement of two politicians, one of them a Member of Parliament. The Island quoted a senior investigating officer, *“The police searched Vijendrakumar’s residence consequent to the recovery of 25 blank UN war crimes complaint forms from Sinnathamby Krishnarasa, a civilian who had received LTTE training. We took Krishnarasa into custody on October 25 at Mulankavil in the*

Vanni. Under interrogation, the suspect claimed that he received the blank forms from Vijendrakumar on the afternoon of Oct 22 in Vavuniya.”

[http://www.island.lk/index.php?page\\_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code\\_title=113229](http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=113229) (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

#### **16. Ministry of Defense tries to monitor emails to OISL**

According to the “Tamilnet” website, Intelligence officers attached to the Sri Lankan Defense Ministry have given secret instructions to internet providers in Colombo to covertly scan emails addressed to OHCHR Investigations on Sri Lanka (OISL) and have deployed simple network packet sniffing techniques to make copies of messages that are addressed to the OISL.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=37456> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

#### **17. Military asks internet and photocopy serves to alert them about submissions to OISL**

“Tamilnet” also reported that internet café and photocopy operators were instructed by the Sri Lankan military intelligence in Vanni to alert them of anyone scanning or copying affidavit forms for submissions to OISL.

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=37456> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### **E. Obstacles to Freedom of Movement of those who may give critical comments about the government**

#### **18. Foreigners barred from travelling to former war zone without approval**

The Government of Sri Lanka has banned foreigners from travelling to its former war zone in the Tamil-majority Northern Province without prior approval from the Ministry of Defense. *“Prior permission for the foreigners to visit North will be implemented and foreigners or relevant organizations have to write to Defense Ministry for approval,”* the government's information department said in a statement. The banned areas include three of the five districts in the Northern Province and parts of another two districts as well. According to the Army's Media Director, the restrictions were issued in the view that some foreign passport holders were acting in a manner that posed a detrimental threat to national security. The announcement was released during the period when President Mahinda Rajapaksa travelled to the north for a three-day visit. The travel ban forced hundreds of visitors to call off their proposed visits to the North and cancel their hotel bookings, while others were turned away at the Omanthai checkpoint. Those visiting the north for funerals, weddings, religious events and official matters were all blocked at the Omanthai checkpoint without any prior warning.

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141012/news/travel-restrictions-as-president-visits-north-122354.html> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

[http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=Foreign\\_Passport\\_holders\\_traveling\\_to\\_the\\_North\\_20141030\\_02](http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=Foreign_Passport_holders_traveling_to_the_North_20141030_02) (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)





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 ஊடக மையம் - பாதுகாப்பு மற்றும் நகர அபிவிருத்தி அமைச்சு  
 MEDIA CENTRE - MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

අංක 152, ගාලු මාර්ග, කොළඹ 03, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව. இல:152, காலி வீதி, கொழும்பு - 03, இலங்கை. No : 152, Galle Road, Colombo - 03, Sri Lanka  
 Tel : +94112439757 Fax : +94112439737 E-mail : spokesman@defence.lk, media.mod.ud@gmail.com

### PRESS RELEASE

Whilst welcoming and appreciating positive assistance rendered by Friendly Countries, International Organizations as well as Non Governmental Organizations in peace building and development, it is the duty of the Ministry of Defence and Urban Development to take appropriate measures to prevent negative interventions, particularly in the Northern Province.

Conscious of its duty towards maintaining national security and creating necessary conditions for national processes, the Ministry of Defence and Urban Development requests foreign nationals to obtain prior approval when they intend travelling to the north. It is also informed that the objectives and purposes of the projects or other reasons for which they intend to travel are also be clearly indicated.

Foreign nationals intending to travel to Northern Province can obtain approval by sending written requests to the following address/fax:

Secretary, Ministry of Defence and Urban Development  
 (Attention Military Liaison Officer)  
 15/5, Baladaksha Mawatha  
 Colombo 03.  
 Fax: +94112328109

**P R WANIGASOORIYA USP**  
 Brigadier  
 Director

15 October 2014

### **19. Top FAO official and hundreds of others turned away at Omanthai**

A top United Nations official was turned away at the Omanthai checkpoint as the Defense Ministry enforced the requirement that foreign passport holders need prior approval to travel to the north. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Country Representative, Beth Crawford, was on her way to Kilinochchi on Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October when she was refused entry. Northern Province Agriculture Minister P. lyngaranesan said he was also invited for the event for which the FAO Country Representative was invited to mark World Food Day. He was told however, that Ms. Crawford had not been given permission to proceed beyond Omanthai.

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/top-fao-official-hundreds-of-others-turned-away-at-omanthai-123252.html> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

## 20. Wife of slain 'suspect' prevented from leaving Sri Lanka

The wife of slain suspected LTTE member Selvanayagam Kajeepan was prevented from leaving Sri Lanka by officials at Colombo airport, according to media reports. Mrs. Kajeepan Sarmila had intended to travel to Switzerland for a relative's wedding and was in possession of a valid Swiss visa. At the time of the incident, officials from the Swiss embassy arrived at the airport and requested Sri Lankan immigration officials to release her. However, the officials said an investigation was on-going in relation to her husband and she would not be allowed to leave the country. In March 2014, Mrs. Sarmila had been arrested and questioned by the Terrorist Investigation Department (TID) of the Sri Lankan Police, but she was never charged and was subsequently released. There have been no reports that she has been issued any court orders restricting overseas travel. Selvanayagam Kajeepan, also known as Gopi, was killed along with two other Tamils after the Sri Lankan military launched a manhunt against them, claiming that they were attempting to revive the LTTE.

<http://tamilguardian.com/article.asp?articleid=12460> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

## 21. Former detainee (a Tamil Mother) Prevented Leaving Sri Lanka at the Airport

57-year old Tamil mother Sundaralingam Rajithamalar was prevented from leaving the country at the Katunayaka airport. A former detainee, Rajithamalar's son Suntharalingam Gajatheeban, alias Theiveegan was killed by the military in an alleged fake encounter in April 2014 in the Vanni jungles. Mrs. Rajithamalar was arrested by the Terrorist Investigation Department soon after her son's death and later released after questioning. She is reported to have had a six-year Canadian visa stamped on her passport. A government official said Rajithamalar could not be allowed to leave the country as authorities were still investigating Gajatheeban's involvement in an attempt to revive the LTTE. However, there doesn't appear to be any court order restricting her overseas travel.

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/54629/theiveegan-s-mother-prevented-from-leaving-sl> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

[http://www.island.lk/index.php?page\\_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code\\_title=112577](http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=112577) (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

## F. Repression of Student Activists

### 22. Sabaragamuwa University students' fast attacked, 20 injured



After the attack: Students of Kelaniya University and Rajarata University hold protests. (Photo: SundayTimes)

On the night of the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, students of the University of Sabaragamuwa participating in a satyagraha campaign at the Pambahinna Junction on the Badulla-Colombo road were attacked by masked mobsters armed with petrol bombs and wooden cudgels. More than 20 students were injured and 13 were admitted to the Pambahinna rural hospital following the attack. Six were later transferred to Balangoda Base hospital. Students had launched the satyagraha in protest of the abolition of university student unions in state-run universities. The satyagraha was also organized in protest of the suspension of students in various incidents and the non-implementation of Human Rights Commission recommendations.

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/satyagraha-attackers-still-at-large-while-students-go-on-own-rampage-123091.html> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 23. 12 students arrested; Higher Education Minister compares students to flies

In a speech at the University of Sabaragamuwa on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, Minister for Higher Education S.B. Dissanayake compared the students who launched the satyagraha to flies and said he was not afraid of them. Meanwhile 12 students were arrested for blocking Minister Disanayaka's vehicle on his way to the University.

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/141019/news/satyagraha-attackers-still-at-large-while-students-go-on-own-rampage-123091.html> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

#### 24. Fasting student monks attacked



Student monks of Buddhist and Pali University, who were engaged in a protesting fast, were attacked by an unidentified group. The attackers threw used engine oil on some of the students monks. The fast had been ongoing for more than two weeks. A protest was held in Homagama against the attack. The fast was based on 10 demands to improve education facilities and standards.

[http://www.lankaviews.com/sn/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=21848:2014-10-02-21-31-42&catid=100:2014-06-19-06-05-56&Itemid=151](http://www.lankaviews.com/sn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21848:2014-10-02-21-31-42&catid=100:2014-06-19-06-05-56&Itemid=151) (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

[http://www.lankaviews.com/sn/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=21806:2014-09-25-09-33-04&catid=69:2009-08-07-09-41-10&Itemid=130](http://www.lankaviews.com/sn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21806:2014-09-25-09-33-04&catid=69:2009-08-07-09-41-10&Itemid=130) (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

#### 25. 20 University students injured in police attack



On the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, police fired teargas canisters into a crowd of university students protesting near Sri Lanka's Parliament building, reportedly injuring 20 students, 12 of whom were hospitalized. Water cannons were also used to disperse the crowd. A student group claimed the injuries were caused deliberately by police who fired the teargas canisters directly at the students. According to eye witnesses, the teargas was fired at demonstrators from several directions, surrounding them and cutting off escape routes. Students who had trouble breathing tried to retreat but were met with another round of teargas fired into the centre of the crowd. Police reportedly fired teargas at the sidelines as well, trapping students who had attempted to take cover among some trees. Although reports and video evidence suggest that the protests

were peaceful, Police said that allowing students to march towards Parliament when it was in session would have posed a security threat.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA37/013/2014/en/77d973b8-c8e9-4b48-8fdd-117dae225789/asa370132014en.pdf> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

## G. Repression of Opposition Political Parties

### 26. Opposition MPs and two journalists attacked

A group of United National Party (UNP) Parliamentarians were attacked by a mob when they visited the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) Security Training Institute at Slave Island on a fact finding mission. UNP MPs who took part in the fact finding mission were Ravi Karunanayake, R. Yogarajan, Ajith P. Perera and Nalin Bandara Jayamaha. Mr. Perera said two journalists were also injured when stones were hurled at the MPs while they were leaving the premises. Mr. Perera said the MPs saw government employees and government property being used to make propaganda material for the Presidential election which is expected to be held in early 2015.

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/54673/journalists-among-unp-fact-finders-injured#sthash.9ZHt4zva.GqMaW99v.dpuf> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)

### 27. Northern Provincial Councilor questioned

Several Sri Lankan soldiers questioned an active member of the Northern Provincial Council, Balachandran Kajatheepan on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October. *“Three soldiers in military uniform came to my house in Earlalai and questioned me about the personal details of my family. They said they have received orders from the top to question me. One of them said that he was officer in-charge of the Vasavilan army camp,”* Kajatheepan from the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) was reported to have told the media. According to him the soldiers did not behave in a threatening manner, but it was very evident that, *“they want to give a message or a kind of warning to the effect that I am under watch.”*



Balachandran Kajatheepan (Facebook photo)

<http://www.colombomirror.com/?p=502> (last accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2014)