

Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka

1st - 31st May 2020



Remembrance events were held in Mullivaikkal and other areas in the North and East amidst severe government restrictions. People lit flames and laid flowers to remember their relatives and community members who lost during the last phase of war 11 years ago. Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

INFORM

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Repression of Dissent in Sri Lanka in May 2020.

Published in June 2020.

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Colombo, Sri Lanka

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

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1. Executive Summary

There were 72 incidents reported during this month of May, reporting more than two incidents per a day. This was a significant increase when compared with the previous months. Another significant difference was 32% of incidents reported from North and East. 14 incidents (19% of total incidents) were reported only from the Jaffna district. In the cases, where information on ethnicity was applicable and available, over 60% of the victims were Tamils. Similarly when gender was considered, 87% were males. Highest number of victims by profession was state officials. Secondly it was politicians and their party members. When the alleged party was considered, the military and police were responsible for the highest number of incidents (37%). Second highest number of perpetrators was politicians (18%).

Over 20,000 were arrested for curfew related offenses during this month, increasing total number of arrests over 66,000 since 20th March. This led to the overcrowded prisons. Also economic problems increased due to almost two months long curfew which restricted work and economic activities in the COVID19 situation. On 21st May, 3 women died and 9 others injured due to stampede in Maligawatte, when a wealthy businessman distributed money to the poor people in the area. On 5th May, the President's Secretary P.B. Jayasundara requested state employees to donate the entire or a portion of their salary for the month of May, in a bid to reduce the budget deficit. Though this was voluntary request, at least in several cases salary was curtailed without the consent of the employees, and a trade union filed a court case against salary curtailment. The opposition politicians were questioned and investigations were launched against them over alleged false statements they have made in relation COVID19 situation. However, it seemed that pro-government parties enjoyed immunity despite of them having made such false statements and hate speech comments against minorities. The President started having monthly meetings with the Buddhist monks. On 22nd May, during the meeting of the "Buddhist Advisory Council" held at the Presidential Secretariat, he promised that a Presidential Task Force will be appointed under the Defense Ministry to conduct a comprehensive survey of archaeological sites in the East and to take measures to preserve them. This was criticized by land rights activists for allegedly attempting acquisition of lands of people without adhering to transparent procedures, or providing scientific justification of archaeological claims. Also, several incidents of assaults on civilians by military and Police were reported in North and Eastern Provinces and in the Kalutara district.

In the North people commemorated Mullivaikkal day grieving about their lost loved ones during the last phase of war, while GoSL celebrated war victory at "National War Heroes Day". The president threatened to leave global bodies if they demand for accountability on alleged war crimes. 177 military officers including Priyanka Fernando convicted by a UK court for threatening Tamil protesters were promoted on this day. President issued a gazette calling for armed forces same as the previous months.

In the North and Eastern Provinces, a number of memorial events faced severe restriction claiming COVID19 situation. Jaffna magistrate issued an order against 11 TNPF leaders of TNPF forcing them to self-quarantine the day before the Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day. However, after hearing a successful appeal, the Jaffna magistrate lifted the quarantine order against them. On 18th May, police halted another Mullivaikkal remembrance event organized by ITAK at their office in Batticaloa presenting a court order. In many cases participants of Mullivaikkal remembrance events were threatened of arrest, and their details were noted down by the Police. Many of these were small gatherings which followed COVID19 health precautions. Contrarily, in Colombo and in NuwaraEliya districts, the funeral of a late cabinet minister was carried out violating the COVID19 health regulations and gathering masses of people along with the patronage of the government. Two persons in Puttalam were arrested for lighting lamps remembering the dead during the war. This was the only such case outside the North and East.

A former MP of the ruling party called a fact check NGO of being “a secret American conspirator.” Several claims were made by pro-government newspapers and ruling party politicians that investigations have been launched into two petitions allegedly signed by civil society and sent to UN. Police and NGO secretariat stated that they have launched investigations into NGOs that have been registered during the last regime, without following the due process. On 31st May, a former MP of NFF criticized a workshop conducted for election officers by NGOs, and demanded an investigation to find out details of which NGOs are involved, details of participants etc.

Private sector Media were not allowed to cover the “National war heroes’ day” event, citing COVID19 regulations. However they were allowed to cover larger gatherings such as the funeral of late minister. One journalist was threatened by villagers for photographing a mosque without informing the community members. On 29th May, Police attempted to seize a laptop used by an exiled journalist. Another journalist was threatened by a politician after reporting irregularities in the distribution of government allowance for vulnerable persons in COVID19 situation. Two were arrested for publishing a video claiming that group of people staying at a temple unable to return their homes due to lockdown do not have access to basic facilities. An inquiry was held against a former minister for allegedly insulting Buddhism. A confidential secretary of a government company was arrested and granted bail for allegedly leaking a letter warning of a terrorist attack – which defense ministry stated that had no truth. A Tamil politician faced online and offline hate speech after allegedly criticizing LTTE. Another person faced hate speech for criticizing covid19 quarantine process. Government called for the censorship of term Eelam published in a travel quiz of a UK newspaper. The same term was temporarily censored in instagram platform. Contrarily, the term Eelam includes in the name of a pro-government Tamil political party and it is published in government websites.

A lawyer appearing on behalf of the victims, in the 11 youth abduction case against military was threatened online and lodged a complaint in the CID. The house of the lawyer who appeared in defence of the TNPF leaders who were forced to send to quarantine process ahead a Mullivaikkal memorial event was attacked.

Police launched investigations into a protest conducted by the opposition UNP politicians. An article written by political editor of Sunday Times titled the photo of former UN high commissioner Nanvaneethan Pillai as “Sheep in Tiger Clothing- in a Saree reflecting colours of LTTE flag.” Mrs. Pillai has been critical of abuses of LTTE in the past.

Election commissioner Hoole was subjected to severe criticism and hate speech and called “a conspirator”, “a supporter of separatist forces”, “an utter fool or a suicide bomber” by pro-government politicians and nationalist newspapers. An investigative article published by a website claimed that a senior police officer was transferred after refusing to fabricate charges against a former Police officer who handled key investigations. A statement issued by PHI association claimed that an organizer of the funeral of late cabinet minister has threatened the Director General of Health services. A divisional secretary stated that he will withdraw from certain duties due to undue influences from a politician. There were few incidents that health workers were assaulted when they carried out their duties. There were also several incidents that forest officers, and Police officers facing threats and assaults when they tried to arrest suspects. A state official was assaulted by an unknown group when he was preparing the list of beneficiaries for 5000 LKR allowance.*

A father of a 14 year autistic child subjected to Police assault was threatened not to take legal actions. A family of COVID-19 suspected death was allegedly threatened by authorities not make the information public.

2. Methodology

This report provides some general trends and details of some significant incidents related to the repression of dissent in Sri Lanka in the month of May.

This report was prepared mainly based on the information reported in mainstream and social media, however in few cases information was gathered from direct interviews, or discussions INFORM staff had with activists, witnesses and survivors. Incidents of repression mentioned in this report include arrests, threats, intimidation, investigations against human rights defenders (HRDs) etc. and potential threats such as new repressive laws, appointments, policy decisions etc., which may have a negative impact on freedom of expression, assembly, association and dissent in the future.

In this report, “dissent” is broadly defined to include acts of protest, resistance, defiance, challenge against, question or attempt to record rights violations, social injustice at the hands of state or non-state apparatus, including police, armed forces, religious groups, and politicians among others. “Repression” is defined as any attempt by the above state or non-state actors to suppress the acts of dissent. Any rhetoric decrying human rights has also been considered as repression of dissent because of its potential to erode rights. We have also included government officials who had faced reprisals when trying to do their duties.

3. Overview of general human rights situation

A large number of civilians were arrested for curfew violations since 20th March. Out of more than 66,000 persons arrested for curfew violations since March 20th, more than 23,000 persons were arrested during the month of May. On 26th May Police Media spokesperson stated that Police have filed lawsuits against 20,926 persons, and courts have punished 8170 persons¹. Additionally, 912 persons were arrested for violating quarantine regulations such as not wearing face masks during the period from 26th May to 29th May². Curfew was relaxed step by step on 11th May in all districts except in Colombo, on 26th May it was relaxed island wide except during the night. While prisons struggled with the space to accommodate the large numbers of remand prisoners, more than 300 inmates imprisoned for minor offences were pardoned on Vesak Poya day* as usually done each year³.

Date	No. of persons arrested since March 20	No. of vehicles taken to custody since March 20	Number arrested since May 2
2nd May	43,459	11,246	-
11th May	51,552	13,350	8,093 persons and 2,104 vehicles
30th May	66,835	18,831	23,376 persons and 7,585 vehicles

Table 1: Persons arrested for violated curfew laws

Police media spokesperson stated that an inmate died when he attempted to escape from Mahara Prison⁴ and 9 others were arrested for allegedly attempting to escape from the prison on 3rd June⁵. On 2nd June, the parents of the inmate who died complained to the HRCSL that the inmate Kavindu Tisera (27 years old) died as a result of torture. Lawyer Senaka Perera of Committee for Protecting Rights of Prisoners' (CPRP) stated that Tisera has not eaten anything for a few days according to the autopsy conducted, and it is difficult to believe that a person who had not eaten for days tried to escape the jail in this manner.⁶

The two months long curfew had a strong negative impact on the country's economy, and also created loss of employment and livelihood to many. The government was criticized for printing more currency⁷, and the fall of prices in the Colombo Stock Exchange market⁸.

On 5th May, the President's Secretary P.B. Jayasundara requested state employees to donate the entire or a portion of their salary for the month of May, in a bid to reduce the budget deficit. The request was subjected to various criticisms from opposition politicians, public and trade unions. Even though the letter mentioned it was a 'personal request', the letter was written using the official letterhead of the Presidential Secretariat. Though this was made as a voluntary donation, Trade Unions accused that in some cases the salaries were curtailed without the consent of the employees. On 24th of May, President of Ceylon Teachers' Union Priyantha Fernando stated that they are going to file a lawsuit

¹ ඇදවිය කැඩු 20,926 කට නඩු Lankadeepa. published 26th May. Last accessed 4th June 2020.

² නිරෝධායන නීති කැඩී 912ක් අත්අඩංගුවට. Dinamina. Published 30th May 2020. Last accessed 8th June 2020.

³ (1) කළුතර බන්ධනාගාරයේ රැඳවියෝ 18 ක් නිදහස ලබනි, (2) වැලිකඩ බන්ධනාගාරයේ රැඳවියෝ 223 ක් නිදහස ලබනි, (3) හාල්ලේ - බුස්ස බන්ධනාගාරවල සිටි සිරකරුවන් 12 කට නිදහස (4) යාපනය බන්ධනාගාරයේ රැඳවියෝ 5 ක් නිදහස ලබනි (5) කුරුවිට බන්ධනාගාරයේ රැඳවියන් 28කට සමාව (6) වෙසක් පෝදා මහර රැඳවියෝ 21 ක් නිදහස ලබනි Lankadeepa. published 7th May 2020. Last accessed 5th June 2020.

⁴ මහර බන්ධනාගාරයෙන් පලායාමට තැත් කළ රැඳවියකු තාප්පයෙන් වැටී මරාමැරුණි Lankadeepa. published 3rd May 2020. Last accessed 8th June 2020.

⁵ මහර බන්ධනාගාරයෙන් පලා යන්න හැදෑරූ 9 ක් අත්අඩංගුවට Lankadeepa. published 3rd May 2020. Last accessed 8th June 2020.

⁶ බන්ධනාගාරයේදී පුනාට ගහලා මැරුවා - මානව හිමිකම් කොමිෂමට පැමිණිල්ලක් republished from Anidda newspaper . published 4th June 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020. [original link](#) last accessed 5th June 2020.

⁷ Under fire Sri Lanka central bank defends money printing. Economy Next. published 24th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁸ The Colombo Stock Market closes within few minutes of trading. Newsfirst. published 11th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

against the Ministry of Education officials for curtailing their one day's salary, despite they have explicitly requested not to do so.⁹ All Ceylon General Ports Employees Union, also submitted a letter asking to withdraw the circular to curtail one day's salary¹⁰. Also it was reported that the Secretary of the Ministry of Education of the Sabaragamuwa Province and the Chief Secretary of the Eastern Province have written letters to deduct one day's salary.^{11 12} However, the Ministry of Defense stated that security personnel are exempted from donating day's salary.¹³



A stampede in Maligawatte killed three women. Photo Courtesy: newsradio.lk

The poor were especially vulnerable during this period. On 21st May, 3 women died and 9 others injured due to stampede in Maligawatte, when a wealthy businessman distributed money to the poor people in the area. Police arrested 6 persons in connection with the incident.¹⁴ Many temporary workers¹⁵ and others lost their employment and sources of income.¹⁶ Also, the cost of living increased. Though the government attempted to control the prices of essential items such as rice using the military since February^{17 18}, during this month, the government agreed to increase the prices in discussion with the business persons.^{19 20 21} 5000 LKR allowance which was questioned for its politicization was also stopped by the government blaming and misinterpreting the Election commission's statement which questioned promotion of political parties and candidates during its distribution²².

⁹ වැටුපෙන් මුදල් අය කරගන්නැයි ලංකා ගුරු සංගමය නඩු කියන්න යයි. Lankadeepa. Published 24th May. Last accessed 15th June.
¹⁰ වරාය සේවකයින්ගෙන් දිනක වැටුප ලබාගැනීමට නිකුත් කර ඇති චක්රලේඛය ඉවත් කරගන්න Unions.lk. Published 11th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
¹¹ නැගෙනහිර පළාත් රාජ්‍ය සේවකයන්ගේ දිනක වැටුප බලහත්කාරයෙන් කපාගැනීමට යයි – රෝසජ් ස්ටාලින්. Sri Lanka Brief. Published 11th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
¹² Request to forego month's salary: TUs contemplate legal action. The Morning. Published 14th May. Last accessed 5th June 2020.
¹³ Security Personnel won't have to donate one day's salary. Newsfirst. Published 17th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
¹⁴ Suspects in connection with the maligawatta stampede remanded. Newsfirst. Published 22nd May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
¹⁵ daily wage workers, contract employees, and manpower workers
¹⁶ Job losses in Private sector islandwide protest campaign launched. The Morning. Published 3rd June. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
¹⁷ Gota ordered military to intervene in buying paddy harvest from farmers. Sri Lanka Brief. Published 1st Feb. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
¹⁸ Sri Lanka Army intervenes to bring down high rice prices. LankaNewsweb. Published 13th Feb. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
¹⁹ මෝල් ආණ්ඩුව අද රු 12 සිට හාල් මිල වැඩි කරයි ! Published 27th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
²⁰ Compromise reached with rice mill owners. Sunday Observer. Published 31st May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
²¹ Government Revised the MRP for rice for the third time since April. Published 28th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.
²² Government stops Rs. 5,000 payment; blames Elections Commission. Economy Next. published 30th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

Parliamentary election was the focus after lifting the curfew. On 13th May, the Ministry of Health (MoH) presented possible risk mitigation guidelines to the Election Commission (EC). Seven Fundamental Rights (FR) petitions were filed against the President's refusal to reconvene the Parliament and having the date of Parliamentary General Election amidst COVID19 pandemic. These petitions were rejected on 2nd June.

SLPP politicians in the ruling party accused one of the Election Commissioners, Ratnajeevan Hoole for being 'partial' and 'biased'. He was an ardent critic against Sinhala nationalism, militarization and other issues. For example in April, referring to a forthcoming meeting with the army commander Shavendra Silva who was appointed as the head of COVID19 prevention task force to discuss about the next election date, Hoole reminding Silva's alleged history of war crimes noted that "as a Tamil, I am scared of arguing with him on 20 April when we meet" and questioned why military leaders were chosen as such consultants to discuss such matters²³. In May, Hoole has accompanied his daughter to the office of EC after she returned from the UK and completed the government quarantine process in Colombo for 2 weeks. Subsequently, the Police launched an investigation into why he brought his daughter into EC. Divaina newspaper newspaper called him of "either being fool or a suicide bomber" referring to this incident. Several SLPP politicians demanded actions taken against him. Hoole also said that his vehicle was strangely checked at each military checkpoint from Puttalam to Jaffna despite of military knowing his vehicle number²⁴.

Another contradiction in May: the month the war ended in 2009, was remembrance events in the North and East and celebrations of war victory by GoSL in the Western province. "National War Heroes day" was held on 19th of May with the participation of the President and other politicians. The President stated that he would not hesitate to leave international bodies "if they continuously make baseless allegations against war heroes." He also promoted 177 military officers despite election laws not allowing promotions during the election period. Various events organized by Tamils to war dead, popularly known as "Mullivaikkal remembrances" faced restrictions, which are detailed in a separate section.

Contrarily, in Colombo and in NuwaraEliya districts, the funeral of a late cabinet minister was carried out violating the COVID19 health regulations and gathering masses of people along with the patronage of the government. While events organized by Tamils in North and East were severely restricted citing COVID19 situation, the protests organized in Colombo and other areas in general did not face such repression except a protest organized by opposition politicians. Protests were held against not providing garment workers with 5000 LKR allowance²⁵, against an attack on a politician in Mihintale²⁶, against Colombo Mayor's decision to relocate dogs²⁷, on fertilizer shortage of farmers²⁸, improper garbage disposal,²⁹ a labour strike against providing half salary³⁰, against sacking the temporary workers³¹ a protest against the health official linked infamous Shafi case³² and attacks on government

²³ [Alarming Goings On At The Election Commission](#). Colombo Telegraph. Published 18th April. Last accessed 15th June 2020

²⁴ [Hoole's Car Searched At Every Checkpoint; Pro-Gota Newspaper Makes False Claims About Daughter's Quarantine](#). Colombo Telegraph. Published 20th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

²⁵ [Workers in Biyagama North protest mechanism for granting 5,000 rupee allowance](#). Newsfirst. published 3rd May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

²⁶ [Protest against the attack on Mihintale PS member](#). Newsfirst. published 30th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

²⁷ [Let them be free](#).

²⁸ [Kekirawa farmers protest against fertilizer shortage](#). Daily Mirror. published 30th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

²⁹ [කිරිකුලේ කසළ කන්දට එරෙහිව එල්ලවූ විරෝධය](#). Hiru News. 31st May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

³⁰ [වැටුපෙන් අඩක් දෙනවාට විරුද්ධව ඇහලම් කම්හලක වැඩවර්ජනයක](#). Lankadeepa. 11th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

³¹ [පුත්තලමේ සේවක පිරිසක් විරෝධතාවයක](#). Lankadeepa. 15th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

³² [කුරුණෑගල ශික්ෂණ රෝහලේ අධ්‍යක්ෂකට එරෙහිව විරෝධතා](#). Lankadeepa. 13th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

officers and a journalist and other issues. These protests were peacefully held and no obstructions or reprisals were reported.



Funeral of late minister Thondaman held with gathering of large crowds with the patronage of the government, while smaller events and protests were banned due to prevailing COVID19 health situation. Photo Courtesy: Newswire.lk

Several inquiries were held against few opposition party politicians for their alleged fake statements. On May 29th, Sarath Fonseka former MP gave a statement at the CID about an alleged statement he had made two months ago during a press conference on 16th March about 3 COVID19 deaths, when none of the deaths were officially reported by the time³³. When a journalist questioned the reliability of what he told, he had asked the journalists not to publish the news until he verifies the information. On the same day, after knowing it was fake news, Fonseka's secretary has called each journalist and informed them that the news was fake, and has therefore requested not to publish it. He had recorded these calls. On 18th March, he had organized a separate media conference in which he had corrected the news. Despite these corrections, CID conducted an inquiry against him. Former MP Rajitha Senarathna was questioned over an alleged statement that he had made on 17th of March claiming that a group of students in a school in Colombo were infected with COVID19³⁴. When Senarathna was

³³ (1) සරත් ෆොන්සේකාගෙන් පැයක ප්රකාශයක් (2) සරත් ෆොන්සේකාගෙන් පැයක ප්රකාශයක් Lankadeepa. Published 29th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

³⁴ රාජිතගෙන් දඬුන් පැය 4 ක් ප්රශ්න කරයි. Lankadeepa. . Published 28th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

questioned, he was under the detention for controversial ‘white van media briefing’³⁵ for which he was previously arrested on 27th Dec 2019 and released in three days and arrested again on 13th March based on an order issued by Colombo High Court³⁶. On 19th May, former MP Ranjan Ramanayake was questioned by the CID for keeping the B Reports of legal cases of disappeared journalist Pradeep Ekneligoda and murdered rugby player Waseem Thajudeen³⁷. Additionally, Former MP Mangala Samaraweera was questioned over authorizing to provide transportation to around 12,500 internally displaced Muslim voters in the Puttalam District to travel to Northern Province for casting votes during last election³⁸.

There were several cyber-attacks on few websites and main telecommunication servers in Sri Lanka by a group identified as Tamil Eelam Cyber Force. On 17th May, five Sri Lankan websites including a media website came under a cyber-attack³⁹. On 23rd May, several Sri Lanka Telecom servers got attacked using the Sodinokibi, Ransomware⁴⁰. Again, on 30th May, similar cyberattacks were experienced by the official websites of the Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils & Local Government and the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau (SLFEB). However, the government claimed no data breach occurred during these cyber-attacks⁴¹.

Same as the previous month, there were several incidents where the Police and military have assaulted civilians. Tamil Guardian reported that Navy sailors assaulted at least two Tamil farmers in Vadamarachchi East⁴². A young man named Pasupathy Anusan, a 22-year old was hospitalized following a gun attack by army soldiers, that left him with several gunshot wounds. At the time of attack, he was travelling by his motorbike at 1am. In preliminary investigations, army soldiers have informed the police that they were carrying out a search for a masked assailant who had attacked an army soldier with stones⁴³. A Police constable was arrested for assaulting two persons who did not wear facemasks in North Kalutara area in Kalutara District⁴⁴. A child with autism disorder was assaulted by Police officers in Dharga town, in Kalutara district⁴⁵.

The President started having a monthly meeting with a group of Buddhist monks who advise him on political matters. No similar meetings were done with members of other religions. On 22nd May, during the meeting of the “Buddhist Advisory Council” held at the Presidential Secretariat, he promised that a Presidential Task Force will be appointed under the Defense Secretary to conduct a comprehensive survey of archaeological sites in the East and to take measures to preserve them.⁴⁶ A week before, the military visited the Deegawapiya Buddhist temple and Muhudu Maha Vihara Buddhist temple in Eastern province,⁴⁷ and looked into cases of alleged encroachment into archaeological lands belonging to these Buddhist temples.⁴⁸

³⁵ Two persons who made white van claims at Rajitha’s media briefing arrested. <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/59609/two-persons-who-made-white-van-claims-at-rajithas-media-briefing-arrested> Ada Derana. . Published 14th Dec 2019. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

³⁶ [Rajitha remanded till May 27](#). Daily News. Published 13th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

³⁷ [CCD quizzes Ranjan on document files](#). Sri Lanka Mirror. Published 20th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

³⁸ [Former Finance Minister Mangala questioned by the CID](#). Newswire. Published 14th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

³⁹ [Probe into hacking of websites](#). Daily News. Published 18th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁴⁰ Prasad Welikumbura. [Tweet](#). published 25th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁴¹ [2 government websites hacked](#). Newswire. published 30th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁴² [Sri Lankan Navy assaults Tamil farmers in Jaffna](#). Tamil Guardian. published 21st May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁴³ [Tamil youth shot and hospitalized by army soldiers](#). Tamil Guardian. published 15th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁴⁴ [ලේස් මාස්ක් නැති අයට පහර දුන් කොස්තාපල් විමර්ශි](#). Mawbima. published 12th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁴⁵ see other incidents section for a detailed description.

⁴⁶ [President Task force to protect Archeological sites](#). Official Website of the President. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁴⁷ [Secy Defence, CDS, IGP & High-Level Security Delegation Fly to Deegawapiya & Muhudu Maha Vihara for Fact-Finding](#). Official website of the Sri Lanka army. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁴⁸ [Security Delegation Evaluates Encroachment Issues at Pottuvil Muhudu Maha Viharaya](#). Official website of the Sri Lanka army. Last accessed 15th June 2020.



President promised to appoint a Presidential Task Force under the Defence Secretary to conduct a comprehensive survey of archaeological sites at the second meeting held with the Buddhist Advisory Council. Photo Courtesy: Official twitter account of the President of Sri Lanka.

On 20th May, the People’s Alliance for Right to Land (PARL) issued a statement on “recent developments in Pottuvil Muhudu Maha Viharaya: misuse of land acquisition laws and the military”. In their statement PARL stated that it was reported attempts are being made for the “legal acquisition of these lands as an archaeological site without adhering to transparent procedures, providing scientific justification of archaeological claims, and consulting with affected communities”. They further requested that “any developments must also take account of the fact that land issues in this area have a complex history, and its people have long standing grievances that require sensitive and meaningful solutions.”⁴⁹ Also, it was revealed that proper EIA assessments have not been conducted in relation to the controversial Beach Nourishment Project started being implemented by the government in April during COVID19 pandemic.⁵⁰ Environmental Justice Centre accused that 2800 acres of Diwulanawila villu belonging to ‘Jalagalum Nimna’ National Park has been encroached by a group of persons with the support of a politician in the area⁵¹.

On 30th May, Ministry of Health (MoH) issued guidelines on how to conduct public meetings⁵². The MoH instructions detailed how to maintain social distancing and other health precautions and the organizers of meetings were expected to receive prior approval from the MoH and other relevant government authorities in the area.

⁴⁹ [Full statement issued by PARL network](#) Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁵⁰ [Importance of Environmental Impact Assessments and the turmoil in our coasts](#) Daily FT. published 13th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020. [Tragedy of Mount Lavinia Beach](#) authors. Pattiaratchi, Nadiya Azmy and Asha de Vos . published June 2020. Last accessed 15 June 2020.

⁵¹ [ඇදිරි නීතියට මුවාවී වැලිකන්දේ ඉඩම් කොල්ලකනවා](#). Lankadeepa. Published 10th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁵² [Instructions for selected public activities](#) Ministry of Health official website. published 28th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

4. Major incidents and trends related to dissent

4.1 Repression of Civil Activists and organizations

This emerged as a new trend in this month in a manner not seen during previous months of the year. A ruling party politician accused an NGO for politically biased and being a “Secret American conspiracy” operated through opposition party. Several pro-government newspapers and politicians accused that NGOs have submitted petitions to IMF and other organizations asking not provide funds to the government. Also newspapers reported that Police have started investigations regarding these petitions. On 30th May Former state Minister and MP Lakshman Yapa speaking to the media at the SLPP party Head Office stated that "enemy forces are still working against the government" referring to the alleged letter sent to the World Bank and IMF by Sri Lankan activists. Meanwhile CID of Police and NGO secretariat said they have initiated investigations into NGOs that have been registered during the term of the previous regime without following the due procedures. Another politician linked to the ruling alliance addressing a press conference in Colombo criticized a workshop conducted by an NGO to the officers of election commission and demanded an investigation to find out details of the participants and NGOs involved.



“Enemy Forces still in Action. NGOs send Letters to World Bank and IMF asking not provide money to the country” Former Minister Lakshman Yapa said addressing a media brifing. Lankadeepa newspaper. 1st June 2020. P 5

4.2 Repression of end of war memorials in North and East by Tamils

17 incidents were reported in relation to end of war memorials in North and East by Tamils. In addition, another one incident reported outside North and East regarding war memorials was also included in this section. Members of TNPf who organized Mullivaikkal commemoration events, and other political party members who organized similar events and the participants who attended such events faced surveillance, threats and other reprisals. Organizers and participants of commemoration events organized in Chemmani in Jaffna, TNPf office in Trincomalee, St. James Church in Gurunagar and other places in Mullaitivu and Jaffna district and ITAK office in Batticaloa district faced various restrictions and threats. On 15th May, Police attempted to arrest the participants of a memorial event. On 17th May, two court orders were issued against TNPf, one ordering to send 11 leaders into self-quarantine for two weeks and another banning them from organizing public events in three locations: office premises TNA and TNPf and Uthayan newspaper office. The self-quarantine order was lifted after they challenged it in the magistrate court. Also in another case Police visited the houses of the participants of an event and asked the details of the organizers. Also TNPf office was subjected to surveillance multiple times. A female party member alleged that Police pulled her out of her house and threatened that military will shoot at her if she lights lamps to commemorate the Mullivaikkal. A coordinator of TNPf was also questioned over organizing remembrance events in last year. Jaffna university students who organized remembrance events were also subjected to surveillance, intimidation and threats. In addition to Mullivaikkal celebrations, they also organized events to remember Kumudini boat massacre in 1985.⁵³ The Police noted down the names of the participants, threatened and warned them of possible future arrest. New military checkpoints were set up in the Mullivaikkal area and all persons passing a checkpoint were registered. Only one incident reported outside North and East. Two persons were arrested by Puttalam Police for lighting lamps in the Puttalam town to remember those who lost during the war. Puttalam Police said that they were released after statements were recorded.



Jaffna University students lit lamps in remembrance of the many lives lost at Mullivaikkal 11 years ago. Jaffna Police arrived at the memorial and asked for the names of the students who organised the event. Photo Courtesy: Tamil Guardian

⁵³ Kumudini boat massacre on 15 May 1985 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumudini_boat_massacre

4.3 Repression of Freedom of expression

A journalist in Nuwara Eliya District was threatened by a Politician as he reported irregularities of distributing 5000 rupees allowance. An employee of government TV channel was temporarily suspended for criticizing its assistant manager in social media, but given the job after he removed the relevant posts from his social media profile. On the 29th of May 2020 officials from the CID of Police arrived at exiled journalist Darisha Bastians's home in Colombo and made efforts to seize her personal laptop computer without a warrant⁵⁴. A journalist in Kalutara District was threatened and his duty was obstructed by villagers. This occurred in a context where certain media reporting in the recent past have been hostile towards ethnic religious minorities in the country. Journalists were banned from covering "National War Heroes day": the government war victory celebrations, citing COVID19 health precautions. A website of a Sinhala language pro-government, private television channel was subjected to a cyber-attack by a group allegedly supportive of Tamil Nationalism. Two persons were arrested for exposing an incident where a group of people stuck at a temple in Colombo having lack of access to food and drinking water. Police said that the two persons have violated curfew laws by entering the temple, and have published fake news. An inquiry was held against a former MP and whistleblower for allegedly conducting a media conference in a manner that insults Buddhism and he was questioned by the CID for over 5 hours. CID arrested a confidential secretary of a Manager of a state corporation for publicizing a controversial letter warning about a possible ISIS attack to Sri Lanka. Defence Ministry said there is no truth in the letter. Elilini Hoole: the daughter of election commissioner was targeted with hate comments in social media and websites. Also online and offline Hate speech were expressed against former Jaffna district MP Sumanthiran for allegedly criticizing LTTE. Government wrote a letter to the Guardian newspaper in the UK against the inclusion of the term Eelam name as a synonym to the name of Sri Lanka in a travel quiz. Also, it was reported that hashtag Ealam was temporarily removed from Instagram platform. The term Ealam is used by Tamil nationalists since 1950s to refer to North-East parts of Sri Lanka; and it is also used as a part of the names of North East political parties including those represented parliament.

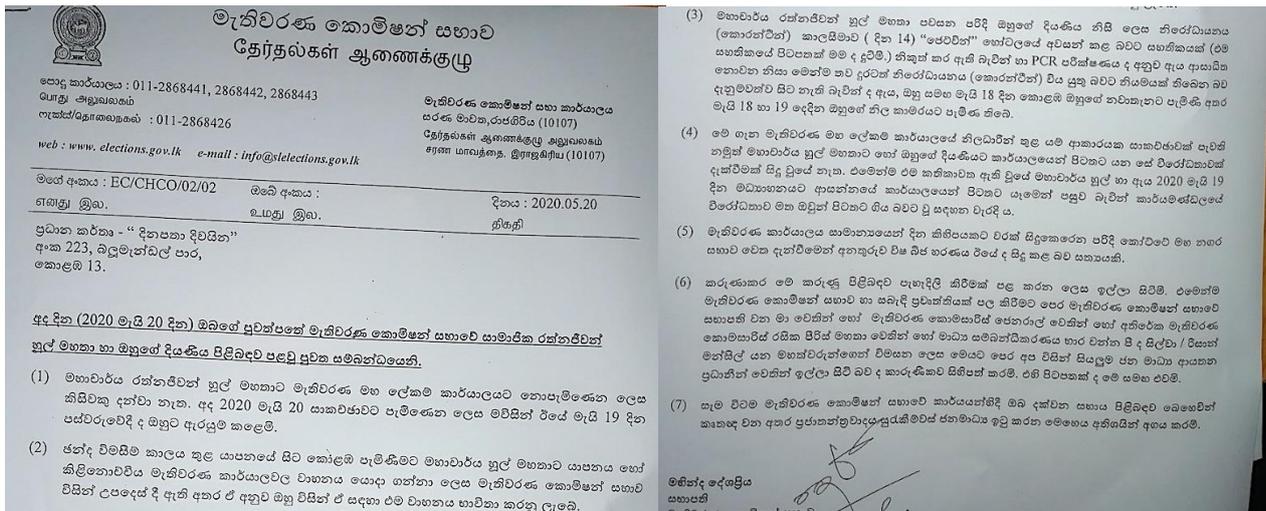


A journalist in Kalutara district was threatened by the people in local area for allegedly taking photographs of a local mosque without the informing the local community members. Photo Courtesy: Hiru News

⁵⁴ Her laptop was later seized in the month of June. See [CID seizes Journalist's laptop](#) . Newswire. Published 15th June 2020. Last accessed 16th June 2020.

4.4 Reprisals against state officials

Two politicians threatened Ratnajeewan Hoole one of the commissioners in Election Commission (EC). A ruling party Politician strongly criticized the commissioner as partisan, and threatened to take action against Hoole when the new Parliament is convened. Another former MP also linked ruling party alliance accused Hoole of allegedly being “a person who supported separatist forces, who signs statements with separatist forces against the country, attacks Sri Lanka state, and signs and issues statements with ‘NGO crows⁵⁵’” and being “either a conspirator, or a person with mental illness” who works according to the agendas of “organizations and NGOs which are against the country.” Pro-government newspapers ran several problematic news items about him and in one instance an editorial compared him to a suicide bomber mentioning about the news that he had taken his daughter to the EC premises after she finished the government quarantine process. A Police officer was allegedly transferred as he refused to make fake charges against another officer who previously handled investigations relating to key human rights cases. An organizer in the funeral of cabinet minister late Thondaman has allegedly threatened Dr. Anil Jasinghe. The funeral was carried out violating COVID19 social distancing and other health regulations, with mass gatherings of people. Ampara Divisional Secretary stated that he will withdraw from land related duties and others after a Politician threatened him and his staff for removal of an illegal construction.



Letter sent to the Daily Divaina newspaper by the Chairman of Election Commission regarding false news published targeting EC member Prof. Hoole. Courtesy: Colombo Telegraph <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/elilini-hoole-defamation-by-severa>

Public health inspectors, a nurse, an electricity meter reader, A Samurdhi officer, a GN officer were assaulted by civilians while carrying out their duties. There were five incidents relating to assaults on Police officers during raids, arrests and other duties. Also there were two incidents relating to forest officers: a group of hunters escaped arrest of forest officers by shooting at them and a group of forest officers were confined by villagers for around 6 hours when they attempted to arrest villagers who violated forest laws.

⁵⁵See the list of acronyms/ key words for more nuanced understanding of the term.

4.5 Legal and policy changes, problematic appointments, and undue influences

On 19th May, during his speech at the 'National War Heroes Day', President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that he would not hesitate to withdraw Sri Lanka from any international organization that continued to make baseless allegations and harass Sri Lankan security forces. Brigadier Priyanka Fernando who was previously convicted by a British court for making death threats at Tamil Protestors in London while serving as the Defence Attache in the Sri Lankan High Commission in UK was promoted to the rank of Major General. Along with him, 177 military officers were promoted on "National War Heroes day". President also issued the gazette notification calling for armed forces same as in the previous months.

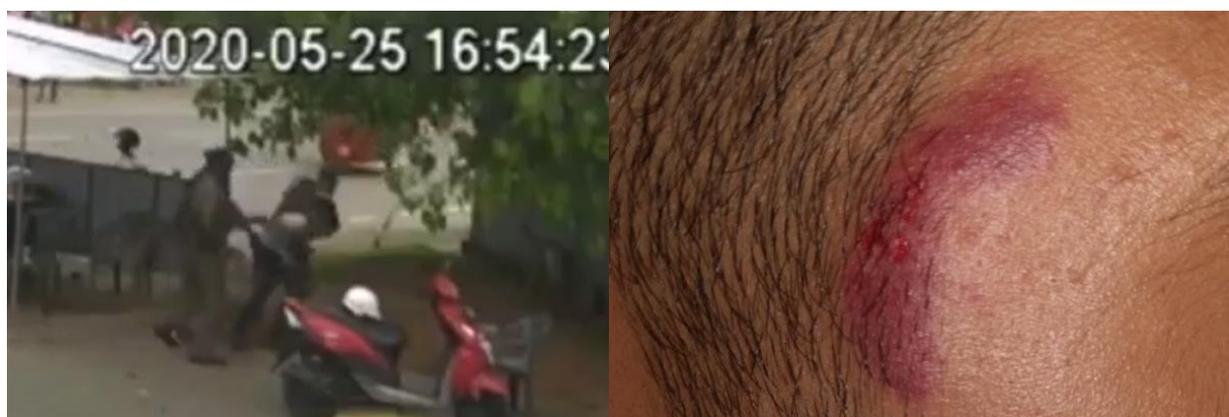


On the 'National War Heroes' day', President Gotabaya called for immunity of 'war heroes', threatened to leave global bodies if they pressure for accountability on alleged crimes committed by military. Photo Courtesy: Ada Derana

4.6 Other incidents

Attorney-at-Law Achala Seneviratne appearing for the controversial 11 youth abduction case against military lodged a complaint with the CID of Police that she was threatened with death in Social Media. A lawyer's house was attacked by unknown assailants, after he appeared on behalf of the TNPF to argue against the quarantining of 11 party leaders and organizers of May18 Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day.

The Police launched a special investigation into the protest organized by UNP MPs against the arrest of former Minister and MP Rajitha Senarathna. A family and the relatives of two victims of a vehicle accident who protested were warned by the Police not to carry out the protest due to COVID19 risks, despite of them having followed social distancing and carried out a non-violent protest. Police took note of the names of participants, and their motorcycle numbers and other details relating who attended a memorial event of assassinated journalist in 2004. A newspaper published a photo of former UN High Commissioner Navaneethan Pillai accusing her of being an LTTE sympathizer and titled the photo as "*Sheep in Tiger clothing: Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navaneethan Pillai, in a Saree reflecting the colours in the LTTE flag*" despite she has been critical of abuses by both LTTE and the government during her time as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.



CCTV footage of assault and torture marks on assaulted child: CCTV footage Video published by former MP Ali Zahir Moulana <https://twitter.com/alizmoulana/status/1268400603363004416> Photo showing torture marks: Sri Lanka Brief

A father of a mentally disabled child - a victim of police torture was threatened of reprisals if legal actions were taken against the Police. A group of volunteers linked to the political party JVP who assisted COVID19 prevention work were obstructed and threatened by a local council member of the ruling party. A van carrying TNPF party members who travelled help victims of a cyclone in Jaffna were subjected to surveillance by military.

The family members of a COVID 19 suspected death have been threatened and intimidated by the authorities to not divulge details publicly. A ultranationalist Buddhist monk⁵⁶ accused a lawyer of being a terrorist and an extremist after the latter has allegedly given a statement to an international media agency about rising islamophobia in the country⁵⁷. Former Minister and MP Piyal Nishantha has allegedly made death threats against the Puttalam District leader and candidate of Ape Jana Bala Party attached to Bodu Bala Sena (BBS). A local council member of Mihintale Pradeshiya Sabha was assaulted by fellow council members in his party for exposing injustices that occurred to people in the area. A secretary of a farmers' Association was assaulted by an illegal liquor business person for allegedly tipping off the Police.

⁵⁶ An ultra-nationalist Sinhala Buddhist organization supportive of current ruling government

⁵⁷ Allegations of a racist statement from President's Ali Sabry. <http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2020/05/13/allegations-of-a-racist-statement-from-presidents-counsel-ali-shabri-video/> Lankaweb. Published 13th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

5. Updates on previous legal cases related to dissent

The legal case regarding the assault on the journalist Upali Thennakoon was taken at the Gampaha High court on 20th May. Upali Thennakoon was the former editor of Divaina and Rivira, he and his wife were assaulted on 23rd January 2009. In August 2019, the Attorney General has filed indictments against two officers: Prem Ananda Udulagama and Lalith Rajapakse attached to the Tripoli Military Intelligence Platoon, over the assault of newspaper editor Upali Tennakoon and his wife in 2009. Charges against the suspects have been filed under Section 317 of the Penal Code at the Gampaha High Court for “voluntarily causing grievous hurt” during the incident⁵⁸. One of the accused Udulagama did not appear at the court on the day. As reported by Lankadeepa, the verdict will be declared on 7th July - the next court date.

The arrested social media commentator- Ramzy Razeek was further remanded by the Magistrate's Court until 11 June. At the High Court, the hearing on Bail Appeal was fixed for 16th July. He has been in prison for over 50 days⁵⁹.

The case against Shakthika Sathkumara was taken at the Polgahawela magistrate court on 19th May. The case was postponed to 22nd September. Fundamental Rights petition filed by Sathkumara is scheduled on 21st July. He had been arrested in April 2019 for writing a short story related to Buddhism and detained for 4 months before being given bail.

A Fundamental Rights Petition was filed on 5th May on behalf of lawyer Hejaaz Hizbullah who was arrested last month for his alleged connection to Easter Sunday attack. The Bar Association and many local and international organizations and activists have condemned his arrest which was done without following due process and denying his legal rights. The Petition was filed by senior Attorney-at-Law Gowry Shangary Thavarajah citing Acting IGP C.D. Wickramaratne, Director of CID SSP W. Thilakarathne, Chief Inspector Karunatilaka of the CID, OIC of the SIU Unit 3 Deepani Menike, OIC of the CID Mihindu Abeysinghe, as well as the Attorney General Dappula de Livera as Respondents⁶⁰. On 18th May, when the petition was taken before a 3 judges panel, Additional Solicitor General Nerin Pulle appearing on behalf of the AG requested further time to present facts concerning the case. President's counsel Ikram Mohamed appearing on behalf of the petitioning party also requested fair time to meet with Hejaaz Hizbullah currently under arrest. Subsequently the next hearing of the case was scheduled for 1st June 2020⁶¹. Additionally 3 Junior Counsel of detained Attorney-at-Law Hejaaz Hizbullah also filed FR applications on 21st May⁶². The Habeas Corpus petitions filed by family members regarding his arrest were withdrawn by family members voluntarily⁶³. Meanwhile 3 children- students of the Al-Zuhairiya Arabic School in Karaitivu filed Fundamental Rights petitions before the Supreme Court alleging that officials who identified themselves as Policemen forcibly took them from their parents in the middle of the night, into undisclosed locations. They have been questioned whether they have received armed training at their schools which they have refused, and were coerced to sign false documents^{64 65}. The children are those funded by Save the Pearls a charity of which Hizbullah was a trustee, together with

⁵⁸ [AG forgoes filing charges against 6 military personnel in Upali Tennakoon assault case](#). FT. published 8 August 2019. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁵⁹ Amnesty International South Asia. [Tweet](#). Published 29th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁶⁰ [Fundamental Rights petition seeks to extricate detained lawyer Hejaaz Hizbullah](#). FT. published 7th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁶¹ [හිජාස් හිස්බුල්ලාගේ පෙත්සම් ලබන ජුනි 01 වැනිදා සලකා බැලේ](#) Lankadeepa. published 18th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁶² FT. [Three Juniors of Hejaaz file FR petitions](#) Published 22nd May 2020. Last accessed 5th June 2020.

⁶³ [හිජාස් හිස්බුල්ලා වෙනුවෙන් පියා - සහෝදරයා ගෙනූ කළ පෙත්සම් ඉල්ලා අස්කර ගනී](#) Lankadeepa. published 27th May 2020. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁶⁴ [Hizbullah Fixed, Police Lied To BASL President](#). Colombo Telegraph. Published 7th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020. And [Three Children allege CID officers tried to coerce them to implicate Madrassah in arms Training](#). Economy Next. Published 13th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁶⁵ [Tweet Justice4Hejaaz](#). Published 14th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

other Muslim Community leaders⁶⁶. The Executive Director of a charity Muslim Hanz was also questioned over the incident.⁶⁷

The petition against Galabodaththe Gnanasara Thero and others for contempt of court for forcefully carrying out the funeral rituals of a Buddhist monk at the controversial Neeraviyadi Hindu temple premises in Mullaitivu despite of a court order issued preventing them from doing so was taken before the Court of Appeal on 13th May. The case was postponed until 16th September. Galabodaaththe Gnanasara Thero is the Buddhist monk who leads the extremist group Bodu Bala Sena (BBS)⁶⁸.

The case against Ranjan Ramanayake for contempt of court was taken at the Supreme Court on 29th May. The case is about his statement to the media on 21st August 2017, alleging that “the majority of judges and lawyers in Sri Lanka are corrupted.” At the time of the statement, Ramanayake was the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare. The complaint against him was made by a retired military officer named Sunil Perera. The court asked the former MP to file objections explaining why the court should not punish him. The next court date is 6th July 2020⁶⁹.

Five FR petitions were filed by several activists and Muslim Politicians challenging the government decision on compulsory cremation⁷⁰. The hearing of the petition was postponed until 22nd July 2020,⁷¹ and it seemed that the urgency of the matter was not considered. The case filed against the secretary of Mass Media Ministry for canceling the broadcasting license of CSN TV channel for not adhering to transmission regulations⁷² was amicably settled⁷³. The case was concerning offering monopoly of broadcast rights of Cricket to CSN for three years without giving opportunity to other channels to bid. In June 2012, [the BBC](#) quoted the then Chairman of Sri Lanka Cricket Upali Dharmadasa as saying that CSN was owned by then President Mahinda Rajapaksa’s sons⁷⁴.

⁶⁶ [Tweet Justice4Hejaaz](#). Published 14th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁶⁷ [අසාර් නගර්හි රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධානයක අධ්‍යක්ෂවරයාගෙන් රහස්‍ය සොලීසිය ජරණ කරයි](#). Published 8th May. Lankadeepa. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁶⁸ [අධිකරණයට අපහාස කළේ යයි ඥානසාර හිමිට එරෙහි නඩුව කල් යයි](#) Lankadeepa. Published 13th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁶⁹ [රන්ජන්ට එරෙහි නඩුවේ වාචික දේශන කල් යයි](#) Lankadeepa. Published 13th May. Last accessed 15th June 2020.

⁷⁰ [Petitions challenge Sri Lankan government’s compulsory cremation rule](#). The Hindu. published 14th May 2020. Last accessed 5th June 2020.

⁷¹ [සිරුරු ආදාහනය කිරීමට එරෙහිව බදිගුදිත්තාගේ පෙත්සම යුලි 22 දාට](#). Published 27th May. Lankadeepa. Last accessed 15th June 2020..

⁷² [CSN broadcasting license cancelled for not adhering to transmission regulations](#). Ministry of Information and Mass Media. published on 28 October 2016. Last accessed 5th June 2020.

⁷³ [පී.එස්.එන් නාලිකා නඩුව අභියාචනාධිකරණයේදී සමථයකට](#). Lankadeepa. Published 26th May. Last accessed 5th June 2020.

⁷⁴ [Carlton Sports Network to resume broadcasts soon – Rohan Welivita](#) Economy Next. published 27th May. Last accessed 5th June 2020.

6. Statistical Analysis

In total 72 incidents during the 31 days period covered in this report from 1st-31st May 2020, reporting more than 2 incidents per a day. When we compare this with previous months, this is almost the double of the number of incidents reported each month since January 2020.

Month	Number of days	Number of incidents	Incidents per day
January	31	23	0.74
February	29	40	1.38
March	31	23	0.74
April	30	32	1.07
May	31	72	2.32
Total	152	190	1.25

Table 2: Number of incidents reported monthly (January-May 2020)

The increase of number of incidents was significant soon after the curfew was lifted.

Period	Number of days	Number of incidents	Incidents per day
Before Curfew (1 st Feb- 19 Mar)	48 days	54	1.13
During Curfew (20 th Mar - 10 th May)	52 days	52	1.0
After Curfew (11 th May - 31 st May)	21 days	61	2.90
Total	121 days	167	1.38

Table 3: Number of incidents before and during curfew

The number of incidents reported from Northern and Eastern provinces again increased to 32% of total incidents. This amount was 20% during February-April. The month of May is an important period to people in the North-East region every year, because of the Mullivaikkal remembrance events related to large numbers of deaths of civilians during the war and the end of the war. It is also important for the GoSL as celebration period of the war victory. Repression of memorialization in the North and East region as reported each year might have resulted the increase of number of incidents from the North and East. However, when looked at the total number of incidents, an overall increase of the incidents island wide could be noticed.

Location	Number	Percentage
Colombo	16	22%
Gampaha and Kalutara	5	7%
Jaffna	14	19%
Other districts in North and East (Except Jaffna)	9	13%
Other areas	15	21%
Not Applicable	7	10%
online	6	8%
Total	72	100%

Table 4: Geographical distribution of the incidents

The highest number of incidents reported from a single district was reported from District of Colombo as usually. That was 16 incidents and 22% of the total incidents. The highest number of incidents is usually reported from Colombo since it is the administrative and financial capital of Sri Lanka which also includes the highest population. Jaffna district in the Northern Province was the second highest district in terms of number of incidents reporting 14 incidents, two incidents less than Colombo.

Type of violation	Number	Percentage
Physical attacks	11	15.3%
Arrest	3	4.2%
Attempted arrest and threat of arrest	4	5.6%
Obstruction to event	4	5.6%
Surveillance	4	5.6%
Verbal or written threats including online hate speech, insulting statements	20	27.8%
Death threats	3	4.2%
Hate speech	2	2.8%
Hacking and online censorship	3	4.2%
Investigations	7	9.7%
Court orders	3	4.2%
Legal, institutional and policy related incidents	3	4.2%
Questionable appointments	1	1.4%
Others	4	5.6%
Total	72	100.0%

Table 5: Type of violation

The highest percentage of incidents (27.8%) reported was related to verbal or written threats including online hate speech, and insulting statements. These included 27.8% of the total incidents. Another 6.9% of incidents included death threats and hate speech. Second highest percentage of incidents (15.3%) was reported in relation to physical attacks. 9.7% of incidents were related to starting inquiries, questioning, and making home visits to the houses of activists in relation to ongoing inquiries. 4.2% of incidents were related to arrests, while 5.6% were related to attempt to arrest or threat of arrest. In 5.6% of incidents events were obstructed, while another 5.6% of incidents were related to surveillance of participants in public events. 4.2% were about repressive court orders, while another 4.2% were related to other legal, institutional and policy related incidents. Another 4.2% were related to online censorship and one incident of hacking into a media website. Another incident (1.4% of total) was related to a questionable appointment. There were 6% of other incidents.

Ethnicity of the victim	Number	Percentage
Sinhala	15	31%
Tamil	30	63%
Muslim	3	6%
	48	100%

Table 6: Ethnicity of the victims

Details of Ethnicity were applicable and available in 64% (46 in number) of the total incidents. Out of these incidents more than 60% were minority ethnic Tamils. 6% were Muslims. 31% were Sinhala.

Gender of the victim	Number	Percentage
Male	33	87%
Female	5	13%
	38	100%

Table 7: Gender of the victims

Details of gender were applicable and available in 53% (38 in number) of the total incidents. When gender of the victims was considered, 87% were male. Only 13% were female.

Type of victims	Number	Percentage
Journalist	6	8%
Civil Society Activist	7	10%
Civilians	8	11%
Protesters	1	1%
Student Activist	2	3%
State officials	20	28%
Lawyer	2	3%
Politicians	6	8%
Party members	10	14%
Other	10	14%
	72	100%

Table 8: Category of victims

The highest percentage of victims 28% were state officials. 14% were political party members, while 8% were politicians. In the North and East, number of members of TNPf who participated in remembrance events faced reprisals, while opposition politicians in other areas were also victimized. 7 cases were related to civil society activists and organizations. 6 were related to journalists. 2 were related to student activists. Another 2 were reprisals against lawyers. In 8 incidents civilians were the victims. There were also another 10 incidents affecting multiple parties, sectors or national wide.

Perpetrator/ Responsible party	Number	Percentage
Military and Police	27	37.5%
Government and officers	4	5.6%
Politicians	13	18%
Business persons	4	5.6%
Court	3	4%
Unknown	2	3%
Others	19	26.4%
	72	100.0%

Table 9: Alleged perpetrator or responsible party

The military and police were responsible for highest percentage 37.5% of incidents. In 18% incidents Politicians were responsible. Government and other officers in the government were responsible in 5.6% of the incidents. In 5.6% of incidents business persons were responsible. In 4% of incidents courts were responsible. In another 3% of incidents responsible persons were unknown. There were 26% of incidents where the responsible parties were others.

7. List of incidents: 1st – 31st May 2020

	Date	District	Repression of Civil Society Activists and organizations	Source
1.	15th May 2020	Colombo	MP Gammanpila accused FACTCHECK organization, attached to Verite Research of being politically biased, and also called them of “Secret American conspiracy” “ඇමෙරිකානු බළල් අතක්” operated through opposition party UNP.	රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධානයක අතපෙවීමක් ගැන ගම්මන්පිලගෙන් හෙළිදරව්වක්. Ada Derana. Published 15 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
2.	5 th May 2020	N/A	An investigation has been launched into a petition "sent to Geneva" (submitted to UN Human Rights Council) signed by 164 activists against the militarization of COVID19 prevention programme.	කොරෝනා මර්දනය කඩාකප්පල් කරන්න - එන්.පී. ඩී පෙත්සම් ගහලා. Divaina (web). Published 5 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
3.	30th May 2020	Colombo	Minister and former MP Lakshman Yapa speaking to media at the SLPP party head office stated that "enemy forces are still working against the government" referring to the alleged letter and NGOs in general.	සතුරු බලවේග කවදුරටත් ක්රියාත්මකයි. රටට මුදල් නොදෙන්නැයි එන්පීඩී ජාත්‍යන්තර මුල්‍ය අරමුදලට ලේඛ බැංකුවට ලිපි යවලා. හිටපු රාජ්‍ය ඇමැති ලක්ෂ්මන් යාපා. Lankadeepa (Print). 1st June 2020. Page 5
4.	23rd May 2020	N/A	An article published in Divaina newspaper proposed that government should check how much money has been received by NGOs during COVID19 pandemic and whether such money is spent on anti-government activities. The article further said that INFORM, CPA and 22 other organizations have submitted a petition to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) accusing that government has been arresting civil society activists, and has demanded to consider human rights situation in Sri Lanka before providing financial support. It also said that 164 activists and 17 organizations have submitted another letter to Yasmine Sooka against the government's COVID19 prevention programme and appointing military leader Shavendra De Silva as the the head of COVID19 prevntion program. The article sought to level civil society criticisms on increased militarization, and suppression of ethnic minorities as something done to receive foreign funding or “dollars”.	කොරෝනා මර්දනයට එරෙහි වූ එන්.පී. ඩී. වසංගතය. Divaina (web). Published 23 rd May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
5.	31st May 2020	Colombo	Former MP National Freedom Front (NFF) Jayantha Samaraweera addressing a press conference in Colombo criticized a workshop conducted by an NGO to the officers of election commission at a hotel in Beruwala. He also said that an investigation should be launched to find out who attended, which NGOs were involved and other details.	මැතිවරණ කොමිසමේ නිලධාරීන්ට බෙරුවල පැවැත්වූ සමුළුවක් ගැන ජාතිපෙ කතා කරයි (වීඩියෝ). HiruNews. Published 31 st May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

6.	31st May 2020	N/A	The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has initiated investigations into NGOs which have been registered during the term of the previous government without following the due procedures. Director General of the National NGO Secretariat Raja Gunaratne told that NGOs had been registered without looking into their funding sources and projects, and therefore both CID and NGO secretariat have started investigations into some of them.	CID probes NGOs registered without due process. Daily Mirror (web). Published 31 st May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
	Date	District	Repression of end of war memorials in North and East	Source
7.	13th May 2020	Jaffna	Members of the Tamil National People's Front (TNPf) who gathered at Chemmani Jaffna to commemorate the Mullivaikkal day (the day war ended on 18 th May) were threatened to be sent to coronavirus quarantine centres by the police officers.	Sri Lankan military intimidation as Mullivaikkal commemorations begin. Tamil Guardian. Published 13 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
8.	14th May 2020	Trincomalee	TNPf office was visited by the Police OIC of Trincomalee during the Mullivaikkal commemoration event. The police threatened the commemoration attendees	Tamil National People's Front @TnpfOrg. "Trincomalee Police led by the OIC visited our office..." Tweet published 14 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
9.	14th May 2020	Jaffna	Police officers attempted to stop the Mullivaikkal commemoration event held at the at the Naval Church in Jaffna. This event was organized by TNPf.	More Sri Lankan police intimidation as Tamil genocide memorial events continue. Tamil Guardian. published 14 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
10	14th May 2020	Mullaitivu	The Tamil National People's Front Mullaitivu District member Tilahathanathan Kintujan said that the police visited the houses of the people who commemorated Mullivaikkal day at Mullivaikkal Mangkulam on the previous day. Those who identified themselves as policemen in civilian clothes went to the homes of each participant of the event and inquired into the names of the persons who organized the event.	முள்ளிவாய்க்கால் நினைவேந்தல்: அஞ்சலி செலுத்தியோர் வீடுகளுக்கு சென்ற பொலிஸார். Tamil Win. published 14 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
11	14th May 2020	Jaffna	Jaffna university students organized an event to remember Mullivaikkal day. The event was disrupted by the police officers, and names of students who participated in the event recorded. The participants were also told that commemoration is illegal, though the participants were not arrested.	Amidst Police Ban Mullivaikkal Commemoration Lamps lighted at the gates of University of Jaffna. Tamil Diplomat (web). published 15 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
12	15th May 2020	Mullaitivu	TID of Police has attempted to detain and arrest activists with the TNPf, as the party began a series of events to commemorate the Mullivaikkal incident.	Sri Lanka's TID attempt to arrest Tamil activists and send them to COVID-19 'detention centres'. Tamil Guardian. published 15 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

13	16th May 2020	Jaffna	Jaffna University students commemorated the Kumuthini boat massacre in 1985 and the Mullivaikkal genocide. The event was disrupted by the Kopai police officers.	Sri Lankan police continue to intimidate Jaffna Uni students at remembrance events. Tamil Guardian. published 16 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
14	16th May 2020	Jaffna	The police threatened to arrest those who commemorated the Mullivaikkal incident at the Gurunagar, St.James Church.	நினைவேந்தலின் 4ஆம் நாளில் 3 இடங்களில் அஞ்சலி: கைது செய்வோமென பொலிசார் எச்சரிக்கை! Page Tamil (web). published 16 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
15	16 th May 2020	Mullaitivu	Commemoration of 11 persons dead during the war was held at a graveyard in Mullaitivu under the surveillance of the Police, according to a tweet published by a TNPF political party member. 	Ravi Shangaran @ShangaranRavi Tweet published 16 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
16	17th May 2020	Mullaitivu	Two new military checkpoints have been set up in the area. One checkpoint in Irrattaivaikkal, the area where Mullivaikkal starts, has been used to register all passing road users. A large number of troops were also deployed in front of the Vadduvakal bridge to man a new checkpoint.	Sri Lankan security forces ramp up surveillance in Mullivaikkal Tamil Guardian. published 17 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
17	17th May 2020	Jaffna	Sri Lankan police announced that a court order has been obtained barring any events from taking place at that Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and Uthayan newspaper offices in Jaffna or at the home of the TNPF leader, just hours before end of war commemorations events were due to take place.	Sri Lankan court bars TNA, TNPF and Uthayan Jaffna events on May 18 Tamil Guardian. published 17 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
18	17th May 2020	Jaffna	A magistrate in Jaffna issued an order a COVID-19 isolation order against a TNPF leader ahead of Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day. However, after hearing a successful appeal, the Jaffna magistrate has lifted the quarantine order against Gajen Ponnambalam, President of the TNPF, and 10 others.	Sri Lanka cites COVID-19 to order TNPF leaders into isolation ahead of Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day. Tamil Guardian. published 17 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. TNPF successfully challenge Jaffna's magistrate's quarantine order. Tamil Guardian. published 18 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
19	17th May 2020	Vavuniya	TNPF Pradeshiya Sabha member claimed that Sri Lankan police officers threatened her pulling up outside her house and warning that the army will shoot her if she lights lamps to commemorate the Mullivaikkal Remembrance Day.	'If you light lamps, the army will shoot you' – Sri Lankan police warn TNPF member. Tamil Guardian. published 17 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

20	18 th May	Batticaloa	Sri Lankan police halted Ilankai Tamil Arasi Katchi's (ITAK) Mullivaikkal remembrance event at their office in Batticaloa. ITAK members and locals were stopped from paying their respects minutes before the event began. The police handed over a court order to ITAK's General Secretary, K Thuraijasingam. Despite the limited number of attendees, the police insisted that event could not go ahead.	Sri Lankan police halt another Mullivaikkal remembrance event in Batticaloa , published 18 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
21	20th May 2020	Jaffna	TNPF office subjected to surveillance for the 3rd consequent day by military officers. Its leader Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam tweeted that he saw a Mahindra Bolero and 5 motorbikes with troops patrolling the area in which his party office is located in Kokkuvil, Jaffna. He claims that he was in the office during that time (5pm-6.15pm).	Ravi Shangaran @ShangaranRavi Tweet published 20 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. Ravi Shangaran @ShangaranRavi Tweet published 20 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. TNPF office 'surrounded' by Sri Lankan army , Tamil Guardian, published 18 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
22	26th May 2020	Jaffna	The Terrorism Investigation Department (TID), questioned two men for around four hours about last year's Maaveerar Naal commemorations, that took place at the Theravil Maaveerar Thuyillum Illum (Tombs of dead LTTE cadres) in Mullaitivu. One of them, who is also the current coordinator for the Tamil National People's Front (TNPF), was questioned for his role as the Thuyillum Illum's secretary.	Sri Lankan TID officers interrogate Maaveerar Naal organisers , Tamil Guardian, published 26 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
23	18th May	Puttalam	Two persons were arrested for lighting lamps remembering the people dead during the war. Puttalam Police said that they were released after statements were recorded from them.  <i>Two person who lit lamps in memory of those lost during the war were arrested. Photo courtesy Lankadeepa</i> <i>Note: Puttalam is located in North Western Province. It does not belong to the North and East provinces. However this was included in the same section considering this is also linked to Mullivaikkal remembrance day and the only similar incident reported outside North and East.</i>	ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ මිය ගිය පිරිස් සිහි කර පහන් දැල්වූ දෙදෙනෙකු අත්අඩංගුවට , Lankadeepa, Published 18 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

	Date	District	Repression of Freedom of expression	Source
24	5/6	Nuwara Eliya	Tamil mirror journalist S. Sathish Kumar was threatened with death through a telephone call by the chairman of Norwood Pradeshiya Sabha after he reported about irregularities in distributing 5000 rupees assistance	තමිල් මිරර් මාධ්‍යවේදියාට මරණ තර්ජන - සිද්ධිය යට ගහන්න තොණ්ඩමන් මැදිහත් වෙයි ! Colombofox. Published 11 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
25	5/6	Colombo	An employee of ITN was temporary suspended from his job, after he criticized Assistant Manager Sudarman Radaliyagoda, as reported by Lankanewsweb. The letter of suspension claims that the employee had attempted to assault Radaliyagoda. However he has been given the job after he removed the relevant posts from his social media profile. Radaliyagoda was previously accused for his involvement in a case of corruption in ITN and subsequently sacked. He returned to ITN after the current government came to the power.	"පිස්තෝලයට ITN සුරකිමු කිව වෙයි..". Lankanewsweb. Published 8 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
26	19th May 2020	Colombo	Media was banned from covering the "National War Heroes Day"- the government war victory celebrations citing covid19 health risks. Video footage, photographs and write-ups were distributed after the event by different media units. The Presidential Media Unit's Director General Mohan Samaranayake said "health concerns were the reason why the media were prevented, because we would have to invite over 200 journalists. Hence the President decided it should only be the state media."	Polls in balance: SC ruling vital for major parties. Sunday times. Published 24 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
27	24th May 2020	Kalutara	Journalist Bimal Shaman was threatened and his duty was obstructed by villagers when he went to report on how Ramazan is celebrated during the COVID19 and had photographed a mosque in Atalugama area in Bandaragama : an area which was previously locked down for around a month after few COVID19 confirmed cases were found. He had been invited to attend a Ramazan event nearby the area, however on his way home he has photographed a different mosque without informing the community members and has faced this issue. Five persons were arrested and remanded regarding the alleged assault. Note: Many Sinhala language news media reported news about COVID19 situation relating to ethnic and religious minorities in a biased manner and ignoring due sensitivity to media ethics.	Harassment of journalist in Atalugama: Free Media Movement calls for justice. Economy Next. Published 27 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. Five remanded for threatening journo. Daily News. Published 26 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

28	29th May 2020	Colombo	On the 29 th of May 2020 officials from the CID of Police arrived at journalist Darisha Bastians' home in Colombo and made efforts to seize my personal laptop computer without a warrant.	CID seizes Journalist's laptop . Newswire. Published 15 th June 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
29	5 th May 2020.	Colombo	Two persons were arrested for publishing facebook posts claiming that a group of persons who are unable to return their homes due to lockdown and temporarily staying at Modara Sri Venkateshwara Hindu Temple do not have food and drinking water. Police have told that these two persons have violated curfew laws by entering the Hindu temple, and published fake news. They were presented before Aluthkade magistrate court on 5 th May 2020.	(1) අවතැන් වූ පිරිසකට කන්න නැතැයි ලේස්ලින් දැමූ දෙදෙනෙක් අන්අඩංගුවට (archived link) (2) (Original link) . Anidda newspaper (web). Published 5 th May2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
30	5/6	online	Elilini Hoole: the daughter of election commissioner Ratnajeevan Hoole was targeted with hate comments in social media and websites for writing "being crammed like sardines in Sri Lankan airlines" in a social media post she published about her return from UK during covid19 situation. She has been in UK for her higher studies and undergone quarantine on return.	ස්වාධීන හුල්ගේ දුව සාහිත් වගේ හිරවුනාලු.. නිරෝධායනේදී හොඳට සැප ඕනෑලු.. එංගලන්තයෙන් පණ බේරා ගන්නවා ගත් පසු කුප්පිතු කතා කියයි.. Lankacnews Published 6 th May2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
31	Around 10 th May-15 th May	online	Online and offline Hate speech were expressed against former Jaffna district MP Sumanthiran for allegedly criticizing LTTE. He is also the Spokesperson of Tamil political parties TNA and ITAK. The cause of the controversy is believed to be his comments during a YouTube talkshow titled "Truth with Chamuditha" conducted by the journalist Chamuditha Samarawickrama. According to senior Tamil journalist DBS Jeyaraj, a few of the questions and answers in Sinhala were picked up by sections of the Tamil media that seem to have deliberately mistranslated the words of Sumanthiran with duplicitous twists and mischievous slants. This in turn led to a cacophony of angry voices over mainstream Tamil media and social media -- within and outside Sri Lanka -- berating Sumanthiran for what he had "purportedly" stated.	(1) Did the Tigers form TNA in 2001? Published 16 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. (2) Sumanthiran has no authority to vulgarize the armed struggle. Tamil Diplomat. Published 16 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. (3) Threatening Youtube video. Kanna Kannan. A verbal threat asking not to vote for TNA and people like Sumanthiran and they should be destroyed. Published 14 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. (4) Tweeted photograph. the sign board says I am a Tamil traitor-Nallur Jaffna. Published 13 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
32	22nd May 2020	Colombo	CID arrested Nilmini Perera a confidential secretary of an Assistant Manager of the state owned Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation for publicizing a controversial letter warning about a possible ISIS attack to Sri Lanka. The alleged letter signed by senior manager of the Defense Department of the Sri Lanka Insurance claimed that the state intelligence has received information on a group of terrorists associated with the ISIS planning to launch a disastrous outcome in view of the prevailing situation of the country. On 19 th May, in a statement	අන්අඩංගුවට ගත් රක්ෂණ සංස්ථාවේ රහස්‍ය ලේකම්වරියට ඇප. Lankadeepa. Published 22 nd May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. No truth in extremist threats to Sri Lanka – Defence Secretary. Newsfirst. Published 19 th May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

			issued to media, Defence Secretary Maj.Gen. (Retd) Kamal Gunaratne has said there is no truth in news being circulated in social media networks and the intelligence agencies have not received such information related to extremist threats in Sri Lanka.	
33	22nd May 2020	Colombo	An inquiry was held against MP Ranjan Ramanayake that he has conducted a media conference over internet in a manner that insults Buddhism. He was questioned by the CID for over 5 hours. The inquiry was about a statement he did during a youtube interview that "Buddhist monks have been sexually abused as children"	මුද්‍රිත දූතමං අපහාස වන අයුරින් අන්තර්ජාලයෙන් මාධ්‍ය සාකච්ඡාවක් පවත්වලා. ඕට්ටු මන්ත්‍රී රන්ජන්ගෙන් සිඳිසිඳිය පැය 5ක් ජර්ශන කරලා. Lankadeepa (print). Published 23rd May 2020. page 10
34	17th May 2020	online	One website belonging to Hiru Sinhala language electronic mass media company along with 4 other websites was subjected to a cyber-attack carried out by a group identified as Tamil Ealam Cyber Force.	Probe into Hacking websites. Daily News. Published 18 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
35	15 th May and around	Online	Government wrote a letter to the Guardian newspaper in the UK against the inclusion of the term Eelam name as a synonym to the name of Sri Lanka in a travel quiz. The term is more known for its association of with LTTE Sri Lankan Tamils identify North-East Sri Lanka known as Eelam, as their traditional homeland and it was used to refer to Tamil homeland since the 1950s. The term is also used in the name of the pro-government Tamil political party - Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) led by a cabinet minister in the current government.	UK's The Guardian travel quiz says Eelam is an indigenous name for SL published 15 th May. Last accessed 15 th June 2020. Sri Lanka demands retraction of London Guardian Travel Quiz with reference to "Eelam" GoSL official news portal -News.lk. published 17 th May. Last accessed 15 th June 2020. Jayapalan, A. (2015:8-9). A Transnational Political Engagement: Solidarity, Nationhood and Pan-Tamilness among the Tamils of Tamilnadu. published in 2015. Last accessed 15 th June 2020. Members of Parliament Political parties-8th Parliament of Sri Lanka. Official website of the Parliament of GosL. Last accessed 15 th June 2020.
36	3 rd May 2020	Online	Also, it was reported that hashtag Ealam was temporarily blocked by the Instagram platform as experienced by users.	twitter.com/MarioArul/status/1256973155140358146

	Date	District	Reprisals against state officials	Source
37	1 st May	Galle	A fish vendor who threatened a PHI was arrested and presented before the Baddegama magistrate. The PHI has advised the fish vendor to destroy 17 Kilograms of fish as they were not suitable for human consumption.	මහජන සෞඛ්‍ය පරීක්ෂකට තර්ජනය කළ පුද්ගලයෙක් අත්අඩංගුවට. Lankadeepa. Published 1 st May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
38	2 nd May	Ampara	Ampara Divisional Secretary stated that he will withdraw from land related duties and issuing curfew licenses on holidays, as a Podujana Eksath Peramuna party member has threatened and scolded him and his staff criticizing their actions to remove an illegal building. The administrative officer of Ampara Divisional Secretariat has lodged a complaint on the matter.	රාජකාරියට බාධා නිසා අමපාර ප්‍ර.ලේ. සේවයෙන් බැහැරවෙයි Lankadeepa. Published 3 rd May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
39	9 th May	Jaffna	Mawbima newspaper reported that a group of persons have assaulted a Police officer when he visited a house in Sandilipai, Manippai, Jaffna in civil clothes for his duties. Police has arrested four persons as suspects.	විමර්ශනයට ගිය පොලිස් නිලධාරියෙකුට පහරදීම. Mawbima. Published 10 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
40	Before 11 th May 2020	Anuradhapura	A nurse working in Galkiriyagama hospital has been assaulted by a person who accompanied a patient. Hospital staff protested against the incident on 11th May.	හෙද නිලධාරියාට පහර දුන්නැයි ගල්කිරියාගම රෝහලේ විරෝධතාවයක්. Lankadeepa (Print). Published 13 th May 2020. page 14.
41	11 th May 2020	Ratnapura	Electricity meter reader was assaulted in Pelmadulla in Ratnapura district for high electricity bill.	Minister seeks probe assault CEB meter reader. Daily News. Published 13 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
42	14 th May or earlier	Kandy	A protest was held on 14th May against a physical attack to a Samurdhi officer Mangala Pushpakumara working in Ulapane South GN Divison. At the time of incident, he along with another officer had been preparing the list of beneficiaries for 5000 LKR allowance provided by the government in relation to COVID19. The attackers have arrived there covering their faces, however the vehicle number they came has been noted down.	යතුරු පැදිවලින් හයේ කල්ලියක් ඇවිත් සමෘද්ධි නිලධාරීට පහර දීම. Lankadeepa (Print). Published 15 th May 2020. p12
43	17 th May 2020	Monaragala	When forest officers attempted to arrest a group of hunters who have killed wild animals during a raid, the hunters have fled the scene shooting at the forest officers. However, no one was injured. Incident occurred Banduweewa Gal Ara area, belonging to Katawewa forest office area.	යාල ඉසව්වේ වැටලීමකට ගිය වන නිලධාරීන්ට වෙඩි තබා මස් වැද්දන් පැන ගිහිණි. Lankadeepa (Print). Published 18th May 2020. p12

44	12 th May 2020	Colombo	<p>On 12th May, Sri Lanka Nidahas Podujana Sandanaya (SLNPS) National Organiser and Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) General Secretary, former MP Dayasiri Jayasekara strongly criticized the Elections Commission as partisan, and threatened to take action against some of its members when the new Parliament is convened. Jayasekara especially accused Prof. Ratnajeewan Hoole of being partial and told "Prof. Ratnajeewan Hoole's behaviour is very questionable. He makes false statements, which undermine the functioning of the State. He made a controversial statement about the Attorney General and Army Commander, which are unacceptable and lead us to question his impartiality as an EC member."</p>	<p>Dayasiri claims behaviour of EC member raises impartiality issues. FT. published 13th May 2020. Last accessed 16th June 2020.</p>
45	24 th May 2020	N/A	<p>Divaina newspaper in its editorial said "we learned that he had travelled from Jaffna to Office of Election Commission (EC) using a vehicle belonging EC. One who travels in a public place with someone who should undergo quarantine process for COVID19 is either an utter fool; or a suicide bomber. Hoole has committed a horrific crime by coming to the Election Commission with her daughter in a government vehicle". It further said "Hoole was reported to have been chased away by employees when he arrived at the office of EC. The Elections Commission established by Good Governance Regime seems to be becoming "big illness". The members of the EC such as Hoole appear to be trampling on the neck of Mahinda Deshapriya who is a good government official. We salute the staff who of EC who chased away Hoole and who are accomplishing a great service to the national health."</p>	<p>රත්නජීවන් සුඳ. Divaina. published 24th May 2020. Last accessed 16th June 2020.</p> <p>Elilini Hoole & Defamation By Several News Outlets. S. Ratnajeewan H. Hoole. Colombo Telegraph. published 21st May 2020. Last accessed 16th June 2020.</p> <p>Photograph: Certificate issued to daughter of Prof. Hoole for completing the Government Quarantine process signed by Commander of the Army and Head of the National Operation Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 Lieutenant General De Silva and Director-General of Health Services Dr. Anil Jasinghe. Courtesy – Colombo Telegraph.</p>



46	24 th May 2020 or earlier	Colombo	Around 24th of May, addressing a press briefing in Colombo, former MP representing National Freedom Front (NFF) accused the Commissioner Hoole of allegedly being “a person who supported separatist forces, who signs statements with separatist forces against the country, attacks Sri Lanka state, and signs and issues statements with ‘NGO crows’” ⁷⁵ . He also accused that Hoole took his daughter to the office of election commission with conscious plan of sending other officers in election commission into quarantine process. He also called Hoole of being “either a conspirator, or a person with mental illness” who works according to the agendas of “organizations and NGOs which are against the country” and called constitutional council take action against him.	ජාතික නිදහස් පෙරමුණ නිවසු පාර්ලිමේන්තු මන්ත්වි ජයන්ත සමරවීර මාධ්‍ය හමුව Published 24 th May, 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
47	20th May 2020	Kalutara	A barber and his wife were arrested for allegedly obstructing the duty and threatening a Public Health Inspector (PHI) in Atalugma area in Bandaragama in Kalutara district. This occurred when a PHI who received complaints from villagers about the COVID19 risks of how the Salon was operated, had gone to inquire on the matter.	මහජන සෞඛ්‍ය පරීක්ෂකවරයාගේ රාජකාරියට බාධා කළ කරණවැමියා හා බිරිය අත්අඩංගුවට. Mawbima. published 21 st May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
48	21st May 2020	Puttalam	Two military personnel threatened Police officers demanding to release their father who was arrested under the charges of assaulting another person. They were remanded until 27th May, after they were presented before Marawila magistrate. Two accused have also damaged an electric fan and a water filter in the Police station.	පියා නිදහස් කරන්නැයි පොලීසියට කඩා වැදී යකා නැටු අයියා මලේ රිමාන්ඩ්. Lankadeepa. published 22 nd May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
49	22nd May 2020	N/A	According to Lankanewsweb, former director of the Police Special Investigation Unit SP C.D. Gurusinghe has been transferred to the Police Special Bureau, on the grounds that he had refused to involve former CID director Shani Abeysekara in Dr. Safi's case. Director of Police Media Division Jaliya Senaratne has instructed the then Director of Police Special Investigation Unit, Gurusinghe, to involve Abeysekara regarding CCTV footage of Dr. Shafi's case in a manner in which a charge sheet could be leveled against him. Abeysekara was the former director of CID who was in-charge of handling key investigations related to abductions of journalists, and persons of ethnic minorities, corruption cases and other crimes allegedly committed by Politicians and military personnel. He was first transferred as an assistant of a senior police officer, and then suspended due to seemingly politically manipulated charges.	Police Spokesman to meet the same fate as former CID Director?. Lankanewsweb. Published 29 th May 2020.

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See the list of acronyms/ key words for more nuanced understanding of the term.

50	22nd May 2020	Polonnaruwa	When Forest officers attempted to arrest farmers who were cultivating wetlands in an environmentally sensitive area, the farmers have instead confined the forest officers and kept them for around 6 hours. They were later released with the intervention of Police, civil security personnel and other forest officers. The farmers claimed that they have been cultivating those lands for around 30 years, and government has given them licenses under Mahaweli land scheme.	වැලිකන්දේ ගොවියෝ වනජීවී නිලධාරීන් අත්අඩංගුවට ගනිති Lankadeepa. published 22 nd May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
51	24th May 2020	Jaffna	Muthulingam Uthayashantha, a Sub Inspector attached to Kankesanthurai police has been assaulted with a sword and injured when he along with a team of other Police officers went to inquire about a complaint of a clash between two rival groups in Keeramalai in Jaffna. The victim has been first admitted to the Thelippalai hospital and later transferred to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. Three suspects have been arrested.	KKS police arrest three suspects for attacking a sub inspector with sword. Dinaseena Rathugamage. Island. 26 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
52	25th May 2020	Badulla	GN officer was threatened by a villager when the officer went to hand over legal notice related to a land dispute. The incident occurred in Mudagamuwa area in Kandaketiya in Badulla District.	ග්රාම නිලධාරියාට තර්ජනය කළ පුද්ගලයකු අත්අඩංගුවට. Lankadeepa. Published 25 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
53	29th May 2020	Gampaha	A Police constable has been wounded following an assault by person involved illegal liquor business during a raid in Welikada area in Makewita in Gampaha District. The constable has been hospitalized for medical treatment. Two suspects: the husband and wife have been arrested, and presented before the Gampaha magistrate on 29th May. The suspects were ordered to be remanded until 10 th of June.	පොලිස් නිලධාරියාගේ රාජකාරියට බාධා කළ යුවලක් විමෝච්චි. Lankadeepa. Published 29 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
54	31st May 2020 or earlier	Kurunegala	3 Police constables including a female officer have been assaulted by an accused and his mother when they attempted to arrest the accused over a sexual assault charge. The incident occurred in Galgamuwa area. Following the attack, the Police officers were admitted to Ahatuwewa government hospital.	අනවර සිද්ධියකට අල්ලන්න හඳුනා ඇතැයි මවක් සමග එක්වී පොලිසියට ගලා. Lankadeepa (print). Published 1st June 2020. p7
55	31st May 2020	Colombo	An organizer in the funeral of cabinet minister late Thondaman has allegedly threatened Dr. Anil Jayasinghe: the Director-General of Health Services at the MoH through a telephone call given to him. Several websites, and a statement issued by Upul Rohana: the President of Sri Lanka Public Health Inspectors Association confirmed the news. However Jasinghe has not made any public comments on this. Colombfox news claimed that late cabinet minister's son has threatened Jayasinghe while addressing him in obscene language. The funeral was carried out violating COVID19 social distancing and other health regulations, with mass gatherings of people.	‘අවමඟුලට ගිය අය අතරින් නව පොකුරක් මතු වූවෙහාත් නඩු දැනුවත්’. Lankadeepa. Published 31 st May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. තාත්තාගේ අධිපාථේ යමින් තොණ්ඩමන්ගේ පුතාගෙන් පොඩිය අධියක්ෂක ජනරාල් අනිල් ජාසිංහට... Colombofoxnews. Published 31 st May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

	Date	District	Legal, policy and institutional developments that could impact dissent negatively	Source
56	19th May 2020	Colombo	During his speech at the 'National War Heroes Day', President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that he would not hesitate to withdraw Sri Lanka from any international organization that continued to make baseless allegations and harass Sri Lankan military. "In a situation where even leaders of powerful countries have emphatically stated that they would not allow any action against their war heroes, in a small country like ours where our war heroes have sacrificed so much, I will not allow anyone to exert undue pressure on them or harass them. If any international body or organization continuously targets our country and our war heroes, using baseless allegations, I will also not hesitate to withdraw Sri Lanka from such bodies or organizations" he said. There are fears that Sri Lankans who had cooperated with international organizations like the UN that has been critical of the military may face reprisals based on this statement.	I will not hesitate to withdraw SL from int'l organisations that continue to harass war heroes- President Rajapaksa. Official website of the Defence Ministry Sri Lanka. Published 19 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
57	19th May 2020	Colombo	Brigadier Priyanka Fernando who was previously convicted by a British court for making death threats at Tamil protesters in London, UK while serving as the Defense Attache in the Sri Lankan High Commission in UK was promoted to the rank of Major General. Along with him 177 military officers were promoted on National War Heroes day- commemoration of the date LTTE was militarily defeated. Generally, promotions are not done during a election period. There is also fear that those who have been critical of the military may face reprisals and that this is a signal towards that.	Brigadier Priyanka Fernando promoted. Newsradio. Published 19 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
58	21st May 2020	N/A	President issued the gazette calling for armed forces same as in the previous months. The involvement of armed forces in civilian activities is considered with fear by those who have dissenting views and engaged in dissenting actions with the government and critical of militarization.	Extraordinary Gazette Notification 2176-17 dated 21st May 2020 issued under the Public Security Ordinance (Chapter 40). GoSL. Published 21 st May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

	Date	District	Other incidents	Source
59	4 th May 2020	Kandy	A group of volunteers of Sri Lanka Rathu Tharuwa relief team linked to the political party JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) who were disinfecting the Rikillagaskada town were obstructed by the local council member of ruling party. The person had addressed the volunteers in obscene language and had attempted to assault them. However Police have intervened and removed him from the location.	ජවිසෙරතු තරුවට පොහොට්ටු මන්තරිගෙන් කර්ජන . Lankatruth. Published 4 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
60	6th May 2020	Colombo	Former Minister and MP Ali Zahir Moulana of Eastern province tweeted that a 67-year old Muslim man of Madampitiya, who passed away on 5th May has been created against the wishes of family under the guise of being a COVID victim. However, following the cremation family has not been informed of the results of PCR testing conducted. Instead the family members have been threatened and intimidated by the authorities to not divulge details publicly.	Ali Zahir Moulana @alizmoulana Former MP. “appalling to know that yet another deceased” Tweet published 14 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
61	15th May 2020	Mannar	The Family and the relatives of two victims of a vehicle accident protested the decision of the Mannar courts to bail out the accused. The police had told the protestors not to take part in any protests during this time even though they followed social distancing and carried out a non-violent protest.	மன்னாரில் விபத்தில் உயிரிழந்த இரு சகோதரிகளுக்கும் நீதி கோரி போராட்டம் . Tamil Win (web). published 15 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
62	31st May 2020	Jaffna	The Police and intelligence agents arrived at the commemoration of late Tamil journalist, Aiyathurai Nadesan who was murdered in 2004 organized by Jaffna Press Council with the support of TNPF. The participants were subjected surveillance and intimidation. Sinhala website Leader.lk claimed, even though only 7 journalists participated at the event, there were 14 police and intelligence persons. Tamil Guardian said that Sri Lankan police took note of the names of participants, their motorcycle registrations and other details of the event, as a part of ongoing intimidation in the North-East.	Tamil National People's Front @TnpfOrg. Tweet published 15 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. Murdered Tamil journalist remembered despite Sri Lankan police surveillance . Tamil Guardian. published 31 st May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. මරා දැමූ දෙමළ මාධ්‍යවේදියාගේ සමරුවට ආ වැඩි දෙනා ඔත්තු සේවා නිරතවීන් . Leader.lk (web). Published 3 rd June 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
63	13th May 2020	Colombo	Medille Pragnaloka Thero of Sinhale organization accused Presidential Counsel Ali Sabry of being a terrorist and an extremist at Press conference held on 13th May. The accusation seemed as a reprisal after Ali Sabry has a given a statement to Aljazeera about rising islamaphobia in the country. Following the incident Ali Sabry went to the courts against the monk, and court issued a ban preventing monk from further making insulting comments regarding Ali Sabry.	අලි සබරි කියන්නේ තත්කඩයෙක්, අත්තවාදියෙක්, තරස්තවාදියෙක් – මැඩිල්ලේ පන්දාලෝක හිමි කියයි . Colombo Today. published 13 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

64	18th May or earlier	Puttalam	Former Minister and MP Piyal Nishantha has allegedly made death threats against the Puttalam District leader and candidate of Ape Jana Bala Party (AJBP)* linked to Bodu Bala Sena*- an extremist Buddhist organization over an argument relating to coastal erosion in Thoduwawa, Marawila in Puttalam District. Nishantha had attempted to intimidate a forest officer in the month of February.	හිටපු රාජ්‍ය අමාත්‍ය වරයෙකුගෙන් නීතීඥවරයෙකුට මරණ තර්ජන. Mawbima. published 18 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
65	21st May 2020	Kalutara	Police launched a special investigation into the protest organized by UNP MPs against the arrest of former Minister and MP Rajitha Senaratna.	(1) විපක්ෂ මර්දනය: සජීත්ගේ විරෝධතාවය ගැන පොලිසියෙන් විශේෂ විමර්ශනයක්. (2) Police investigate Sajith's protest Lankanewsweb. Published 21 st May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. (3) සජීත්ගේ විරෝධතාවය ගැන පොලිස් පරීක්ෂණ ඇරඹේ.. කොරෝනා පතුරුවන්න කටයුතු කලාද.. Lankacnews. Published 21 st May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. (4) රාජීන නිදහස් කරන්න ඉල්ලු සජීත්ගේ විරෝධතාවය ගැන පොලිස් විමර්ශනයක්. Hiru News. Published 22 nd May. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
66	22nd May 2020	Jaffna	A van carrying TNPF party members on their way to repair roofs damaged by the cyclone were stopped at Pungudutheevu Army Camp. The checking took place for about one hour. Army officers continued to follow the van even after they were allowed to proceed.	Tamil National People's Front @TnpfOrg Tweet published 22 nd May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
67	22nd May 2020	online	Attorney-at-Law Achala Seneviratne has lodged a complaint with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on 22nd May that she was threatened with death in Social Media. Ms. Seneviratne is the attorney in defense for the victimized party of the case in connection to the abduction and disappearance of 11 youths allegedly committed by members of the Navy on the grounds of extortion.	Disappearance of 11 Youths: Lawyer in Defence of Aggrieved Party threatened with Life. Lanka newsweb. published 23 rd May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
68	24th May 2020	Jaffna	Lawyer Roy Dilaksan's house was attacked by unknown assailants. Roy Dilaksan appeared on behalf of the TNPF to argue against the quarantining of 11 party leaders and organizers of #May18.	Tamil National People's Front @TnpfOrg Tweet published 24 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. Ravi Shangaran @ShangaranRavi Tweet published 22 nd May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
69	24th May 2020	Puttalam	A secretary of a farmers' Association in Arachchikattuwa in Puttalam district was assaulted for by a person involved in illegal liquor business for allegedly tipping off the Police. However, the victim has denied of doing so.	ගොවිජන සමිතියේ ලේකම්ට පහර දුන් පුද්ගලයකු විමර්ශන Lankadeepa. published 24 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

70	29th May 2020	Anuradha pura	Upali Ananda: an SLPP local council member of Mihintale Pradeshiya Sabha was assaulted by fellow council members in his party for exposing injustices occurred to people in the area. He was hospitalized following the attack.	සහාය තුළ පහරදීමකින් මිහින්තලය ජීරා සහායේ මන්තර්වරයකුට තුවාල . Newsfirst. published 29 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.
71	25 th May	Kalutara	The father of a child assaulted by Police was threatened by Police not take legal action. When father complained to the Police, he was told that action will be taken against him as the fault with him by allowing the child to roam around. When the child was presented before a Judicial Medical Officer (JMO), the JMO had allegedly said “why did you bring him here? He should be sent to Angoda.* His kind (Muslims) is the reason why we are all wearing masks today. He deserved this and they should all be punished.” After the CCTV footage of the assault went viral in social media Police launched an investigation into the incident. Later police media spokesperson refused such an assault and said they used necessary force at the instance. The police officers were suspended from their job for failing to arrest the child.	Seyed Ali Zahir Moulana . Former MP. Facebook post (Video and text) . published 3 rd June 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020. Sri Lanka: The brutal police assault on Thariq Ahamed, a 14 year old autistic boy – Ali Zahir Moulana . Sri Lanka Brief. Published 4 th June. Last accessed 15 th June 2020. Alleged assault on autistic boy: Officers suspended for not arresting . The morning. Published 7 th June. Last accessed 15 th June 2020.
72	24th May 2020	N/A	Sunday Times in an article written by its political editor published a photo of former UN High Commissioner Navaneethan Pillai titling the photo "Sheep in Tiger clothing: Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navaneethan Pillai, in a saree reflecting the colours in the LTTE flag." A translated version of the article was published in Lankadeepa newspaper owned by the same company with a similar title. Online commentators have pointed out that dresses with similar colours have been worn by others, including present Prime Minister and former President Mahinda Rajapakshe. Ms. Pillai is also known to have been critical of abuses by the LTTE during her time as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.	Polls in balance: SC ruling vital for major parties . Sunday Times. published 24 th May 2020. Last accessed 16 th June 2020.

List of Acronyms /Key words

- 5000 LKR allowance: This was a monthly allowance provided once or twice by the GoSL for families of vulnerable communities who often lost their livelihoods due to the lockdown and COVID19 measures taken by the government. This was originally meant only to provide for low income families. However, since the economic vulnerability could have other dynamics in the COVID19 situation, the definition of the vulnerability was broadened including persons such as private bus drivers and conductors, pre-school teachers etc. The beneficiaries were selected by a village level committee as told by the government. However there was no selection criteria made public. Many low income family members and communities such as estate workers complained that they have not received the benefits. The distribution of the allowance seemed to be politicized, in some cases the politicians and villagers had threatened and assaulted government officers over disagreements on how beneficiaries selected.
- AG: The Attorney General is the Chief Legal Advisor to the Government. In that capacity he advises the Government, Government Departments, Statutory Boards and Public Corporations in respect of all legal matters. He conducts prosecutions in criminal cases and appears on behalf of the Government, Government Departments, Statutory Boards and Public Corporations in any Court or Tribunal
- Angoda: The term Angoda is a pejorative term referring to the country's main mental health hospital located in Angoda area in Colombo District, currently this has been named as National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). In general, telling someone "to be sent to Angoda" is considered offensive.
- AJBP or Ape Jana Bala Pakshaya expected to contest in upcoming parliamentary election under the leadership of Galabodaaththe Gnanasara – the leader of Buddhist extremist organization Bodu Bala Sena. However, the Election Commission(EC) rejected their nomination papers, and the appeal challenging the decision of EC was also rejected by the Court of Appeal.
- ASP: Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP)
- BBS: Bodu Bala Sena (literal translation "Buddhist power Force") is a Sinhala Buddhist ultra-nationalist organisation based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. They are allegedly responsible for number of attacks against Muslims during several communal riots. They organized public campaigns to boycott Muslim owned business places, harassed, and threatened HRDs. After the appointment of current government BBS leader claimed that they will disband the organization after forthcoming general election in 2020⁷⁶. Its leader Galabodaaththe Gnanasara was convicted on two different cases: one is for threatening a wife of disappeared journalist inside court premises, two for contempt of court. He was subsequently given Presidential pardon which is being contested in courts at the present.
- Chemmani: Chemmani is mass grave site located in a village in Jaffna district discovered in 1998, based on a confession of a soldier who allegedly said that hundreds of civilians were killed and buried by the GoSL army during 1995-1996 period. However after excavations only 15 bodies were found. 7 soldiers were initially charged. However nobody was convicted for crimes. Since the end of the war various groups have organized memorial events related in Chemmani.
- CID: The Criminal Investigation Department is the primary investigative arm of the Sri Lanka Police
- Covid19: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a coronavirus discovered in 2019 which led to a global pandemic.
- Dollar Crow: 'Dollar Crow' in Sinhala 'Dollar Kaakka' is a defamatory rhetoric used to against civil activists and NGOs in Sri Lanka by nationalist groups. The term tries to say that NGOs and civil activists are acting for foreign agendas as they are greedy of foreign aid "Dollar".

⁷⁶ [Bodu Bala Sena to disband after Gen. Election - Ven.Gnanasara](#). Daily News. Published 20th Nov 2019. Last accessed 22nd June 2020.

- Election Commission/ EC:** Election Commission of Sri Lanka is an independent statutory body responsible for administering and overseeing elections in Sri Lanka. It has also powers take action against election law violations. The commission constitutes three members who are appointed by the constitutional council which is a multiparty body with some representatives of civil society.
- EPDP:** Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) is a Sri Lankan political party based in the North and East of Sri Lanka. They have been accused of being a paramilitary group which had engaged in enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions. Its leader Douglas Devananda has survived several assassination attempts at the hands of LTTE. Between 2006-2014 and since 2019 November its leader held a ministerial position under presidencies of Mahinda Rajapakse and Gotabaya Rajapakse respectively. EPDP is a coalition partner of the present ruling party SLPP.
- Eelam:** The term is more known for its association with LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. However, Sri Lankan Tamils identify North-East Sri Lanka known as Eelam, as their traditional homeland. The term used to refer to Tamil homeland since the 1950s (Jayapalan, 2015)⁷⁷. The term is also used in the name of the pro-government Tamil political party - Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) and others.
- FR/Fundamental Rights:** Fundamental Rights are the selected rights guaranteed by Sri Lankan constitution as detailed in the chapter 3 of the constitution. The rights include Freedom of thought, conscience and religion, Freedom from torture, Right to equality, Freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention and punishment, and prohibition of retroactive penal legislation, Freedom of Speech, assembly, association, movement, and Right to information.
- FR Petition:** Fundamental Rights Petition is a petition filed at the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka regarding a violation or an imminent violation of fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution.
- GN:** Grama Niladhari or the village officer is a Sri Lankan public official appointed by the central government to carry out administrative duties in a Grama Niladhari division: the smallest administrative area for the government.
- GoSL:** Government of Sri Lanka
- Habeas Corpus petition:** Habeas corpus is a legal recourse that a person could go to the courts asking to determine legality of a person being detained, and to produce before the courts. It is also used as a legal recourse for the judicial review of enforced disappearances.
- HRD:** Human Rights Defender is a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights.
- HRCSL:** Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka is an independent statutory body to promote and monitor protection of fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and ensure compliance by the Sri Lankan State of international human rights standards. Its members are appointed by the constitutional council which consists of multiparty body with some representatives of civil society. The Commission has a broad mandate as well as powers to investigate into any complaints of fundamental rights violations or imminent violations and grant suitable redress, including compensation, and of unfettered access to inspect and monitor any place where a person is deprived of liberty.
- IGP:** Inspector General of Police is the head of Sri Lanka Police.
- JMO:** Judicial Medical officer
- JVP:** Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna is a leftist political party with strongholds in Sinhalese majority areas in Sri Lanka. They waged two armed rebellions against GoSL in 1971 and late 1980s. Since 1994, they have been active participants in electoral politics including local government, parliamentary and presidential elections.
- LTTE:** Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam also known as Tamil Tigers is a Tamil militant, separatist organization also considered as a terrorist group for their attacks on Civilians. They fought a war with GoSL for around three decades and they were militarily defeated in 2009.

⁷⁷ Jayapalan, A. (2015:8-9). [A Transnational Political Engagement: Solidarity, Nationhood and Pan-Tamilness among the Tamils of Tamilnadu.](#)

Mullivaikkal: Mullivaikkal is a small village which predominantly Tamil where the last battle of Sri Lankan civil war occurred; large number of civilians were also killed there. It is located in Mullaitivu District, Northern Province Sri Lanka. Tamils annually remember the deaths of their relatives and community members, while GoSL and Sri Lankan forces remember the war victory.

MoH: Ministry of Health

MP: Member of Parliament

NIC: National Identity Card

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OIC: Officer-in-Charge in a Police Station.

OMP: Office of Missing Persons (OMP) is a state institution which is mandated to trace fate and whereabouts of persons who have gone missing or disappeared in Sri Lanka. It also collects information on missing persons, receives complaints, and makes recommendations to the relevant authorities regarding missing persons. OMP was operationalized in February 2018, based on a parliamentary act passed in August 2016.

PCR Test: Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) Test is a DNA testing method used in molecular biology. It is widely used for covid19 testing at the present.

PTA: Prevention of Terrorism Act is a draconian law often used to arbitrarily arrest and detain persons of ethnic minorities, journalists and human rights defenders. It provides the police with broad powers to search, arrest, and detain suspects. PTA was first enacted in 1978.

Resolution 30/1 : UNHCR Resolution 30/1 on Sri Lanka, adopted by the Human Rights Council on 1st October 2015 promoting resolution, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka. It is expected to strengthen and safeguard the credibility of the processes of truth-seeking, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence in the post war situation of Sri Lanka. GoSL co-sponsored the resolution and at the time of adoption as well as follow up resolutions in 2017 and 2019. But new government announced its withdrawal in February 2020.

SLPP: Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (Sri Lanka People's Front) is the ruling political party in Sri Lanka led by the Rajapakses. It was established in year 2016.

TID: Terrorist Investigation Department is a section of Sri Lankan Police that conducts inquiries into terrorism of Sri Lanka. TID has been accused of torture and intimidation of HRDs.

TNA: Tamil National Alliance (TNA) is an alliance of major Tamil political parties based in Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. TNA and candidates supported by the TNA have won all recent elections held in Northern and Eastern Provinces.

TNPF: Tamil National People's Front (TNPF) is a Tamil nationalist political party, launched by a dissident faction of the TNA in 2010. The founding members of the party included then parliamentarians Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam, S. Kajendran and Pathmini Sithamparanathan. This party does not have a parliamentary representation currently. They were active in organizing Mullivaikkal remembrance events in this month⁷⁸.

UN: United Nations

UNHRC: United Nations Human Rights Council

UNP: United National Party (UNP) is a conservative right wing Sri Lankan political Party, favouring a more neo-liberal market-oriented economy. Founded in 1946, it is one of the oldest political parties in Sri Lanka currently in operation. They are perceived as being more liberal towards ethnic and religious minorities, but some of the worst massacres and attacks on ethnic and religious minorities have happened under the past UNP governments.

⁷⁸ [Mapping Sri Lanka's Political Parties: Actors and Evolution](#). Verite Research. Published November 2017. Last accessed 16th June 2020.

Vesak Poya day: Vesak Poya day is a traditional holiday in the month of May in Sri Lanka to commemorate the birth, enlightenment (Buddhahood), and death (Parinirvāna) of Gautama Buddha. It is also traditionally observed by Buddhists and some Hindus in South and Southeast Asia as well as Tibet and Mongolia.

White van Abductions: White van abductions were a form of unlawful arrests led to number of disappearances in Sri Lanka during the war and post war period. Report of the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL)⁷⁹, Amnesty International⁸⁰ and many other local international organizations have mentioned documented evidence about White Van abductions.

White van media briefing: On 10th November, then Health Minister Rajitha Senarathne brought two witnesses into the media conference – a victim and a driver who claimed to have witnessed a case of white van abduction. The person identified as the driver complained about abductions which were said to have been allegedly carried out with the knowledge of some personnel attached to Sri Lankan Police and Army, and with the support of politicians. The driver also acknowledged that he was a part of transporting gold and money said to have belonged to LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.^{81 82} After the Presidential election, these victims along with Rajitha Senarathne were arrested for allegedly making false statements⁸³.

WHO: World Health Organization

⁷⁹ [Report of the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka \(OISL\) \(A/HRC/30/CRP.2\)](#) Published 16 September 2015. Last accessed 16th June 2020.

⁸⁰ [“Only Justice can heal Our Wounds” Listening to the demands of families of the Disappeared in Sri Lanka.](#) Published 2017. Last accessed 16th June 2020.

⁸¹ [Rajitha vows more probes of Rajapaksa era crimes: White van driver, victim recall abductions, mystery of LTTE gold](#) Daily News. Published 11th Nov 2019.

⁸² [Mocking White Van Terror and triggering a disastrous campaign](#) Lankanewsweb. Published 11th Nov 2019. Last accessed 16th June 2020.

⁸³ [CID arrests former Minister Rajitha Senarathne.](#) Daily News. Published 13th May 2020. Last accessed 16th June 2020.