

#GOHOMEGOTA Protests 2<sup>nd</sup> Week: 10 Key Takeaways

# Situation Update

Sri Lanka Brief 11 April 2022



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**01.** Youth led #GOHOMEGOTA protests calling for President Rajapaksa to resign continued unabated. Still the protests remain a city/urban phenomenon. Except few districts, all others have seen huge protests organised on non-partisan basis. Protests culminated on 9<sup>th</sup> with 10,000s of young people converging at [Galle Face Green](#), near Presidential secretariat and President's office in Colombo. Now the protestors have camped there, launching the "Occupy Galle Face" sit-in protest till the President resign. Other [civil groups continue to be hold daily protests](#) mainly in and around Colombos.

**02.** Within the week [Trade Unions of Health and Education sectors](#) held lunch time strikes in solidarity with the protestors. Free Trade Zone workers too held protest strikes. The Sri Lanka Government Officers' Trade Union Association (SLGOTUA) [staged a silent protest](#) during their lunch break on 6<sup>th</sup> to demand that the Government provide a speedy solution to the crisis situation. One billion dollar earning [IT industry professional too](#) came out & joint the protests. Hundreds [of lawyers held a protest in solidarity](#) with the #GoHomeGota movement.

**03.** At the [Olivier Awards](#) on Sunday (10) night, the best actor [Hiran Abeysekera paid tribute to his home country of Sri Lanka](#), and said that it is "tough time now... I think of you and wish I was there with you [protestors] මම මෙහි සිටිමි ආදරයි.". Seven former Sri Lanka cricket captains including legendary [Sanath Jayasuriya](#) and [Kumar Sangakkara](#) have voiced their solidarity with the protesters. Cricket is the most popular game in Sri Lanka.

Business community also came out with [strong statement calling for](#) right to protest and freedom of expression. [38 Chambers of Commerce and Industry](#) jointly wrote to the president requesting to address the concerns of citizens that has led to a massive public uprising.

**04.** JVP led Socialist Youth Union held a [massive protest in Kandy](#) while thousands of [public and private university students](#) marched to Galle Face Green on 09th. JVP led [National People's Power organised](#) number of protests around the country. Main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) coalition partner Tamil Progressive Alliance held a massive [rally at Talawakella](#) on 7<sup>th</sup> while SJB held [protests in Dehiaththakandiya and elsewhere](#). [Except in the East](#) no Tamil party led protests campaigns in solidarity with the #GoHomeGota movement.

**05.** So far 41 MPs including former president Sirisena belong to the ruling coalition has taken a position of “independent” from the government. Their [proposal to establish a National Executive Council](#) as an interim solution [has been rejected by President Rajapaksa](#). The [SJB called for abolishing the executive presidency](#) as a precondition for any solution to present crisis and are the drafting a constitutional amendment. [SJB says that it will submit a no confidence motion](#) against the Government when the parliament resume setting on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Some of [the “independent” MPs say](#) that they will not support a NCM.

**06.** A [serious, medical emergency](#) has emerged due to lack of necessary medical supplies. “If supplies are not restored within days, the casualties will be far worse than from the pandemic,” [Sri Lanka Medical Association wrote to the president](#) on 08th April. Country has descended into its [worst financial crisis since independence](#), with [food, fuel, medicine and electricity becoming increasingly scarce](#).

**07.** After the resignation of all cabinet ministers, as requested by the president, only 4 ministers were appointed. There are no Ministers for Power, Energy, Health, and Trade which are the sectors in which the citizen’s lives are worst affected. [The absence of a duly constituted Cabinet](#) is in gross violation of the Constitution. President Rajapaksa’s personal lawyer Minister Al Sabry was reappointed as Minister of Finance, within 24 hours he resigned but resignation has not been accepted.

**08.** Sri Lanka Central Bank (CBSL), Governor, a close confidante of the Rajapaksa family, Ajith Nivard Cabraal was asked to resign by President Rajapaksa after he dissolved the cabinet. Former CBSL and IMF official [Dr. P. Nandalal Weerasinghe](#) was appointed in his place. A [three-member expert committee](#) consists of an ex-Central Bank Governor, an ex-World Bank staffer and an ex-IMF official, was appointed to advice president on upcoming negotiations with the IMF. All these appointments were made in order to negotiate for a IMF bailout.

**09.** On 11<sup>th</sup> April PM Mahinda Rajapaksa making [a scare mongering speech](#), only in Sinhala, asked people to be patient until they solve the issues facing them. His [speech lacked usual emotional and forceful touch](#) and the phrase from his speech, “every second you protest in the road, we are losing dollars” was turned around by many social media users to say that “every second you protest in the road Rajapaksa family loosing dollars!”

**10.** President Gotabaya Rajapaksa [revoked the Emergency Regulations](#) and Social Media ban within 36 hours of imposing them without giving any reasons. Meanwhile on 8<sup>th</sup> April the Supreme Court granted leave to proceed with [the fundamental rights violations’ petitions](#) filed against the declaration of Emergency by the President and fixed the next hearing for 15 July.

Note: Sri Lanka celebrates Sinhala and Hindu new year on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> April 15<sup>th</sup> is Good Friday. Now government has made 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> also holidays. Although being a holiday week “Occupy Galle Face” protest will continue.

For striking photos of the #GoHomeGota movement [visit here](#).