

**SRI LANKA:**

**Governance Failure, Economic Corruption and Nepotism, Impunity,  
and Grave Human Rights Violations**

**Joint Stakeholder Submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review of Sri Lanka**

**Fourth Cycle, 42nd Session of the Human Rights Council, January -February 2023**

**Submitted on 14 July 2022 by the Women's Action Network (WAN) and the University of Minnesota  
Human Rights Litigation and Advocacy Clinic**

**Women's Action Network (WAN)** is a network of women's organizations based in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. WAN has been working on building capacity of women's rights activists and addressing issues that women face, especially gender-based violence (GBV) and reprisal at the ground level in the North and the East. A few WAN members were part of the preparation of the 2008 and 2012 UPR civil society reports and for the 2017 report, WAN conducted four community-based consultations among members to assess concerns about transitional justice, outlined the concerns of war-affected women regarding women's rights, and offered recommendations. For this 2022 submission, WAN has compiled reports from five of its member organisations on their findings and recommendations especially concerning minority communities.

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. As we submit this report, thousands are on the streets in Sri Lanka protesting the current political and economic crisis. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa declared on July 9 that he would resign on July 13 but he did not and instead fled Sri Lanka). Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, a long-time Rajapaksa ally who had also pledged to resign on July 9 due to protests is now Acting President. Protestors are being met with tear gas, water cannons and threats; reports are that over 75 people have been injured and at least one protestor has died. The most recent reports are that a new president will be appointed on July 20 by a Parliament dominated by the Rajapaksa family, who have controlled the government for decades.
2. Sri Lanka is in the midst of a humanitarian disaster brought on by an increasingly authoritarian government that had entrenched decades of corrupt, repressive leadership from the top levels of power to local levels where officials use thuggery, nepotism and bribery (especially sexual bribery). Sri Lankan citizens are facing extreme hardships and lack of access to jobs, food and water, fuel, medicine, and other essential goods. Officials with allegations of corruption and human rights abuses receive promotions and pardons rather than investigations and punishment; victims are denied remedy.
3. Sri Lanka faces an enormous opportunity to reverse decades of human rights abuses, many linked to political and economic corruption and laws and structures that exacerbate abuse. The international community must provide support, especially to the most vulnerable in impacted communities. This includes immediate and sustained assistance directly to the people. The current crisis cannot be met with austerity measures and the continuation of corrupt policies that worsen inequality and other violations of civil, political and economic rights. Sri Lankan governance structures must be strengthened to support democratic forces working for human rights and in any assistance given to Sri Lanka, the international community must recognize the trust deficit of the people towards the government, especially the President.
4. This report details aspects of the Sri Lankan Government's mismanagement, concentration of executive power and rampant corruption. It provides examples of Sri Lankan civil society advocacy that should be supported to build democracy, transparency, accountability and respect for human rights.

## II. THEME A41: CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

5. During the Third Cycle, the Government made a voluntary pledge to “Ensure that the ongoing constitutional reform process is inclusive, and takes into account fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination, separation of powers, checks and balances, and the independence of the judiciary.”<sup>1</sup> The Government supported recommendations on constitutional reform for the protection of human rights,<sup>2</sup> to continue the process of democratic consolidation to promote the rule of law in the country,<sup>3</sup> and on migrant workers, and noted recommendations on the separation of powers and checks and balances<sup>4</sup>, and on equal protection.<sup>5</sup> These recommendations have not yet been implemented.
6. Rather than moving forward on the pledges and recommendations made in the previous UPR cycle, the Government has imposed states of public emergency, and engaged in financial mismanagement, corruption, and poor governance, further exacerbating a political and economic crisis.

### **A. Consolidation of Executive Presidency and the Current Crisis**

7. Since 2019, government power has been consolidated in the Rajapaksa family, when President Gotabaya Rajapaksa appointed his brother, former Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa, as Prime Minister and his brother Basil Rajapaksa as Finance Minister.<sup>6</sup> The Government has targeted human rights defenders, journalists, and those seeking to investigate and prosecute violations during the 26-year civil war that ended in 2009 as well

as subsequent human rights violations. Rather than carefully vet new appointees, the Rajapaksa administration has appointed persons accused of war crimes to official positions and pledged immunity to those accused.

8. Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since independence. Citizens protested against the Government for its mismanagement of the economy, which has resulted in high unemployment, skyrocketing prices and shortages of food, medicine, fuel, and other essential goods.<sup>7</sup> During recent youth protests against the president, the state media and government members initially called the protesters “extremists”<sup>8</sup> and violence has escalated in response to peaceful protests.<sup>9</sup> In April and May 2022, President Rajapaksa announced three different states of public emergency.<sup>10</sup> The emergency measures gave the president excessive powers to broadly change or suspend existing laws, use force, and violate citizens’ human rights, including allowing the Government officials including the military to shoot civilians “on sight”, detain civilians for 24 hours prior to arresting them, torture and mistreat detainees, and search and seize private property without warrant.<sup>11</sup>

9. The former Prime Minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa, resigned on Monday, May 9 and on June 9, Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa resigned, in response to the escalating anti-government protests, during which at least ten people were killed, over two hundred were injured, and over six hundred were arrested to date.<sup>12</sup> President Gotabaya Rajapaksa refused to resign, instead bringing in a new prime minister in an effort to create a new “unity government.”<sup>13</sup> Ranil Wickremesinghe, the leader of the United National Party (UNP) opposition party, was sworn in as the new prime minister on May 12.<sup>14</sup> That government faced difficulties in filling its Cabinet; it wanted all party members to join and form a coalition government. Except for two members of the main opposition party, Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), who declared themselves independent and took ministerial positions, the rest of the cabinet ministers are once again from the majority Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party and its allies, especially the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).<sup>15</sup>

10. The economy continued to worsen including depleting petrol stocks, foreign reserves, medicines and other essential supplies. On July 9, protests continued as did government repression; peaceful protestors and journalists were among scores if not hundreds who were injured. On July 9, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa stated he would resign on July 13, but instead fled the country. PM Wickremesinghe also announced on July 9 that he would step down but on July 13, President Rajapaksa appointed him Acting President. The future is uncertain about Wickremesinghe’s intentions and many other Rajapaksa allies also remain in control of the country. The formal procedure is that if the President and Prime Minister both step down, the Speaker of the Parliament must convene Parliament within 30 days to select a president. The Speaker of Parliament is a close ally of the Rajapaksa brothers and PM/ Acting President Wickremesinghe is reported to aspire to the presidency.

11. Constitutional reform measures were promised by the previous Government as part of a power-sharing deal and were seen by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) as guaranteeing non-recurrence of human rights violations, but these efforts have likewise been abandoned. There have also been rollbacks of measures to ensure checks and balances and independent commissions guaranteed in the Constitution. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his government enacted a Constitutional Amendment, known as the 20th Amendment.<sup>16</sup> The primary purpose and effect of the 20th Amendment was to consolidate many powers in the Executive President, upsetting the balance of power with the other two branches.<sup>17</sup> For example, the 20th Amendment extended the President’s power over the Prime Minister, Cabinet and Parliament.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the amendment modified the law-making process, reducing the time a bill had to remain in the public domain before the President could table it.<sup>19</sup>

12. Intimidation and attacks against MPs also became particularly acute during the period of 2019-2021, between the 2019 presidential election of Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the 2020 Parliamentary elections, and the vote on the 20th Amendment. Sri Lanka has multiple political parties and to govern, it is often necessary for parties to join together to form a majority.<sup>20</sup> Our research, included in more detail in the Annex, has found disturbing reports that detention, harassment, and attacks against MPs from 2019 to 2021, influenced the formation of a majority coalition with the SLPP, led by brothers Gotabaya and Mahinda Rajapaksa and the successful passage of the 20th Amendment by a two-thirds vote.<sup>21</sup>

13. PM Wickremesinghe promised to repeal the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment,<sup>22</sup> but it is unclear whether a 21st Amendment will be enacted and restore the 19th Amendment (that safeguarded the independence of the judiciary and commissions and had a constitutional council to limit the president from single-handedly taking decisions; the 19th Amendment also had a clause that the president cannot hold a ministerial portfolio). Two versions of the 21st amendment were presented to the Parliament in April 2022. The first, presented by the SJB political party, takes significant power away from the president, while granting more power to the Prime Minister and Parliament. Conversely, the second version presented by a 41-member MP group, seeks to strengthen the Executive Presidency and bring back executive powers that were curtailed by the 19th Amendment.<sup>23</sup>

14. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa brought increasingly more government institutions under his control. There has also been a growing lack of independence of the judiciary as court decisions are swayed by the President who has the power to impeach Chief Justices.<sup>24</sup> Several articles within Sri Lanka's Constitution combined with recent court decisions have also contributed to the concept of the Executive Presidency and the President's immunity.<sup>25</sup>

## **B. Corruption**

15. Corruption has long contributed to the weakening of public accountability and transparency, further eroded public trust in the Government, and made public services and goods both less accessible and less available. Public officials have misappropriated public funds, evaded taxes, and hidden assets abroad. State enterprises have been misused for private profit. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa introduced tax cuts to benefit wealthy businesses and a select few people by encouraging tax evasion and money laundering, as well as high import taxes on essential items like milk powder.<sup>26</sup>

16. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa established the **Presidential Commission of Inquiry into allegations of Political Victimization** in January 2020.<sup>27</sup> The Commission was created to investigate claims of what it identified as "political victimization" that may have taken place from January 8, 2015, to November 16, 2019<sup>28</sup> and presented its report to President Rajapaksa December 8, 2020.<sup>29</sup> The Commission interfered with law enforcement and the independence of the judiciary, it threatened the separation of powers, and included instances of clear corruption as many of the discontinued cases looked into the misuse of authority, of public funds, and of public property.<sup>30</sup>

17. Former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa tabled a resolution in Parliament on the 9th of April 2021 seeking approval to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.<sup>31</sup> Several officials filed petitions to stop the recommendations from being implemented.<sup>32</sup> The Commission took retaliatory measures, recommending that legal action be brought against people bringing complaints, including police officers, former commanders of the military, members of parliament, former ministers and deputy ministers and prosecutors attached to the Attorney General's Department.<sup>33</sup> The Commission has been especially hostile to the Bribery Commission and police investigators tasked with prosecuting high-level individuals responsible for serious human rights abuses committed under Mahinda Rajapaksa's government, including the Attorney General for high profile criminal cases.<sup>34</sup> Additional details are provided in Annex II.

18. **Bribery.** Allegations of officials engaging in bribery have also been rampant. Sexual bribery, particularly of widows or divorcees, remains a problem, and the primary legal tool used to combat the issue, the Bribery Act, contains vague language, does not address actions by non-state actors, and is rarely and inconsistently enforced.<sup>35</sup> On October 11, 2019, in a landmark case, the Sri Lankan Court of Appeals acquitted four soldiers who were convicted and sentenced for gang rape of a Tamil woman in 2015.<sup>36</sup> Due to the threat to the victim's life since her rapists were released, she left the country in November 2019.<sup>37</sup> In an April 2018 report, the Law and Trust Society compiled a report analyzing hundreds of sexual violence cases tried against men and former combatants.<sup>38</sup> The report concludes that: (1) there is a wide disparity in sentencing, and many sentences that

were below the mandatory minimum; (2) many suspended sentences were ordered; (3) appeals courts regularly find that convictions could not be supported; (4) victims' credibility are consistently attacked and questioned; (5) and public accessibility continues to be an issue.<sup>39</sup> Another specific example occurred in April 2021, when women in rural areas faced high interest rates from lenders and protested to abolish microfinance loans; reports surfaced of lenders seeking sexual factors in exchange for loan repayment and of increasing rates of violence against women in rural areas.<sup>40</sup>

19. WAN has received reports that during the COVID-19 lockdowns and the current economic crisis women are made more vulnerable and they have had no choice but to approach government officials who are corrupt and sexually exploitative.

20. **Passing legislation to facilitate corruption, money laundering and state capture of funds.** In July 2021, Parliament introduced a **tax amnesty** to persons holding undisclosed assets abroad, potentially criminals who have earned the money through illegal means and have evaded paying taxes on it.<sup>41</sup> The bill was proposed amidst widespread concerns about money laundering, terrorism financing, drug financing, and abuse of public funds.<sup>42</sup> There were eight petitions filed with the Supreme Court challenging the bill's constitutionality including by the SJB and JVP parties and the Center for Policy Alternatives. In its complaint, CPA argued that the bill discourages compliance with tax laws and is discriminatory against taxpayers who have paid their taxes on time, as it grants tax evaders full immunity from investigation and prosecution if they voluntarily disclose their taxable supply, income, or assets. CPA also argued the bill would allow persons to bring wealth acquired abroad through illegal means into Sri Lanka's financial system.<sup>43</sup> The Court held that the bill would pass subject to certain minor amendments, which were mainly procedural changes for submitting tax declarations, requirements to submit proof of ownership of any assets, date of acquisition and the value of assets. The Court found the tax amnesty scheme constitutional.<sup>44</sup> The revised bill passed in September 2021.<sup>45</sup>

21. On 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the **Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill** was tabled in Parliament.<sup>46</sup> The bill introduced a legal framework within which the Colombo Port City would operate. CPA voiced concerns that the bill would create a financial hub for companies and banks to launder money but this was not seriously scrutinized. The bill was rushed through Parliament, was not gazetted in advance, there was no opportunity for public comment or review, and was passed into law in less than two days amidst the third COVID-19 wave in Sri Lanka.<sup>47</sup> This legislation could lead to corruption, specifically the establishment and inadequate oversight of offshore banks and companies could attract money laundering and illicit financial flows and the lack of public access to ownership information could result in the Port City becoming a safe haven for crime and black market deals. 19 petitions including one by Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) were filed at the Supreme Court, challenging the constitutionality of the proposed Bill. Some amendments were incorporated but TISL is still concerned the law could lead to high levels of corruption.<sup>48</sup>

22. In 2020, the Government of Sri Lanka **targeted import taxes to benefit state-owned enterprises through 'overnight gazettes'**.<sup>49</sup> In 2020, the Government manipulated sugar taxes;<sup>50</sup> while taxes were low, Pyramid Wilmar Ltd. imported large amounts of sugar. A state owned company then made large purchases from the company and did not provide any audits. In addition, the tax cut did not go to the consumer since the sugar was sold at market rate. In April 2022, the National Audit Office finally recommended the Government take action to recover the lost revenue.<sup>51</sup>

23. With regard to **corruption cases**, there have been **limited efforts to investigate, prosecute, and try public officials** involved. Around 45 cases against current and former officials were withdrawn by CIABOC and the Attorney General's Department due to "technical errors". TISL filed a Right to Information application with the CIABOC to obtain a list of these cases. In April 2022, it was reported that 28 cases which had previously been withdrawn were refiled by the Commission.<sup>52</sup>

### C. Migrant Workers

24. During the Third Cycle, the Government supported recommendations related to migration, including to “[a]ccelerate the enactment of the Sri Lanka Employment Migration Authority Act.<sup>53</sup> This recommendation is not being implemented.

25. There is no public information available on the status of the Sri Lankan Employment Migration Authority Act.

26. Poor governance has had negative implications on the **rights of female migrant workers**. According to official statistics, Sri Lanka’s foreign remittances have dropped by more than half (53.1%) this year compared to the amount received in 2021. The economic crisis has led the Government to take measures to increase remittances that have further marginalized migrant workers from Sri Lanka. For instance, the Government submitted a Cabinet proposal to provide monetary incentives for Sri Lankan migrant workers to send remittances through banking channels rather than unofficial transfer services and mobile applications.<sup>54</sup> The Foreign Employment Minister claimed that channeling remittances through banks will help Sri Lanka import crude oil, fertilizer, gas, food, and other essential items. Many migrant workers are reticent to use the banks due to increasing distrust in the Government and not floating the Sri Lankan rupee and applying a fixed rate that is below market rate through banks which discouraged migrant workers from sending their remittances through formal channels.

27. The Government has implemented measures to increase labor migration, particularly of women. On June 21, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a decision to reduce the minimum age from 23 to 21 years for women migrating for employment, stating that this was due to the need to increase foreign employment opportunities. On June 28, the Government further removed the family background requirement for female migrant workers; for example removing the requirement that dependent children be older than 5. Bandula Gunawardena from the Ministry of Foreign Employment stated that rules have been relaxed to “get more job opportunities and earn more dollars for the country at a time it is facing a severe economic crisis.” The Government’s decision was welcomed by recruitment agencies in the Middle East, which reported that most employers hiring domestic workers preferred younger women between the ages of 21 and 25 because they were more energetic and had a higher output. Advocates have expressed concern about the vulnerabilities of younger women going abroad and the increase in the number of women dropping out from higher studies.

### **III. THEME A42: INSTITUTIONS AND POLICIES**

28. During the Third Cycle, the Government noted recommendations including adopting a policy on the protection of journalists and human rights defenders to combat acts of intimidation and violence, as well as investigate and prosecute such acts.<sup>55</sup> This recommendation has not yet been implemented.

29. For example during the first week of July 2022, the Fort Magistrates Court issued an order for police to arrest nine key #GotaGoGama activists as suspects of engaging in “unruly behavior” during recent protests including the protest on June 9th.<sup>56</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka issued a statement in support of Sri Lankan citizens who are peacefully protesting against Government corruption. TISL condemns the Government’s attempts to suppress peaceful protests and the right to freedom of expression and association through the use of emergency regulations, curfew and social media blackouts. TISL calls on the President to answer to Sri Lankan citizens demands, for law enforcement to hold those accountable for their actions, and to safeguard constitutionally protected rights and impose penalties against Government officials who break the law.<sup>57</sup>

#### **IV. THEME E1: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS – GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

30. During the Third Cycle, the Government supported recommendations to implement measures to protect economic, social, and cultural rights, and strengthen social protection systems<sup>58</sup>, including within the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda<sup>59</sup>, through promoting social sustainable development and poverty reduction and by strengthening social protection systems.<sup>60</sup> These recommendations are not being implemented.

##### **A. Financial Mismanagement and the Current Socio-Economic Crisis**

31. The current economic crisis has seen high rates of inflation; as the rate increased more than expected during May 2022, with food prices rising by 57.4% and prices of non-food items increased by 30.6%. The same month, the Prime Minister announced his plan to request foreign assistance, privatize national airlines and print trillions of rupees.<sup>61</sup> The Government also implemented ineffective and discriminatory tax policies and took out excessive loans from foreign banks and defaulted on its foreign debt.

32. In April 2022, three University Professors filed a Fundamental Rights (FR) petition<sup>62</sup> before the Supreme Court (SC) naming 39 respondents including then PM Ranil Wickremesinghe, former PM Mahinda Rajapaksa, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, former Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa, and members of Sri Lanka's Central Bank among others.<sup>63</sup> Petitioners alleged that petitioners neglected and willfully caused damage to Sri Lanka's Central Bank, which has caused citizens to be impacted by economic hardship, including high levels of inflation, shortage of essential goods, and lack of foreign currency.<sup>64</sup>

##### **B. Foreign Debt**

33. On April 12, the Government announced that for the first time in its history that it had defaulted on \$78 million in foreign debt.<sup>65</sup> After the default, the lender, Hamilton Reserve Bank Limited brought a complaint alleging breach of contract.<sup>66</sup> The Bank alleged that Sri Lanka's \$1 Billion debt was being orchestrated by the highest ranking officials including the President and Prime Minister due to corruption. The Bank further accused the Government of Sri Lanka of purposefully excluding bonds held by domestic banks and other interested parties from the announced debt restructuring as certain "favored Sri Lankan parties."<sup>67</sup>

34. On June 22, 2022, then Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe announced to the Parliament that Sri Lanka's debt-laden economy had completely collapsed after weeks of food, gas, and electricity shortages. He stated that Sri Lanka was unable to purchase imported fuel due to the \$700 million in debt owed by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, the country's national energy company. The Government also announced it would not repay the \$7 billion in foreign debt due at the end of 2022, if it comes to a successful negotiation with the IMF on a bailout package.<sup>68</sup>

35. However, human rights organizations including WAN, are concerned negotiations with the IMF are worsening corruption rather than improving the economic situation for the majority of Sri Lankans. Civil society advocates and experts have expressed concern that actors such as IMF will enforce fiscal consolidation through austerity measures, while the Sri Lankan Government will increase taxes through Value Added Taxes (VAT) and make cuts in public expenditures, leading to lower productivity and economic growth and a weaker infrastructure for health, education, and care services crucial to the Sri Lankan population.<sup>69</sup>

36. The IMF should engage in immediate and ongoing human rights assessments that prioritize the rule of law and the protection of civil, political and economic, social and cultural rights. Negotiations must be transparent, strong accountability mechanisms should be established, and social protection schemes should be strengthened and priority given to providing decent work for all categories of workers.

### C. Corruption and Misappropriation of Public Funds by Government Officials

37. Government officials, including Rajapaksa family members, have been accused of holding large sums of money in offshore bank accounts and the misuse of public funds, tax evasion, and money laundering. On October 4, 2021, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists published Pandora Papers documents exposing the secret dealings of three former Sri Lankan officials: Nirupama Rajapaksa, former MP, Deputy Minister of Water Supply and Drainage and cousin of Gotabaya Rajapaksa; her spouse Thirukumar Nadesan; and Ramalingam Paskaralingam, Economic Advisor to the PM and member of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Management during the previous administration.<sup>70</sup> The documents showed potential corruption including the misuse of public funds, violations of the Foreign Exchange Act, tax evasion, and money laundering; a pending case brought in 2016 charged Nadesan with using public funds to assist Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa build a luxury villa outside Colombo.<sup>71</sup> President Gotabaya Rajapaksa requested the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) to launch an investigation into the dealings, while the SJB and civil society organizations including Transparency International Sri Lanka filed complaints with CIABOC.<sup>72</sup> To date, there is no further information on this case. Advocates and journalists have expressed skepticism about the intentions of President Rajapaksa's order for an investigation, pointing to prior allegations that he himself was involved in corrupt dealings, and the lack of progress for corruption investigations in Sri Lanka.<sup>73</sup>

38. Another case linked to Thirukumar Nadesan alleging corrupt use of government funds and lack of accountability began in 2015, when Gotabaya Rajapaksa's older brother Chamal Rajapaksa Sri Lanka's Ministry of Irrigation entered into a contract with a Chinese company to build a storage reservoir and reportedly misappropriated government funds, abusing power to bypass government procurement regulations. Allegedly, the Government paid the company in full but the project has not yet begun.<sup>74</sup> Nadesan is alleged to have been involved in offshore fund transfers.<sup>75</sup>

### VI. THEME E41 - RIGHT TO HEALTH

39. During the Third Cycle, the Government supported recommendations regarding the right to health, which included implementation of measures to promote development and capacity building within the healthcare field.<sup>76</sup> This recommendation has not yet been implemented.

40. **Government decision to stop free distribution of nutritional supplements for mothers and infants.** Thriposha is an essential nutritional supplement that helps prevent child malnutrition which the Government had supplied for free to pregnant and lactating mothers, infants, and children under five years old.<sup>77</sup> According to women's rights groups, due to the lack of funds and budgetary allocation, the government abandoned the production of Thriposha for the last two years. The Government has not yet commented on its decision to close the Thriposha factory or stop freely giving out the supplement.<sup>78</sup> The Government also stopped providing free school meals to children in November 2021.<sup>79</sup> The Government's decision to discontinue this maternal health support program without a replacement and to discontinue school meals for children has already had negative consequences on child and maternal health and nutrition.

41. UNICEF has recently reported that the rate of child malnutrition has drastically worsened. UNICEF Sri Lanka reported that 1.7 million children in the country are bearing the burden of the current economic crisis, which has exacerbated child malnutrition and death as a result of malnutrition. These risks have increased due to the lack of available food and declining quality of available food, rising food prices, and the country's inability to import more nutritious food options: "Seven out of ten families are cutting down their food intake to mitigate the crisis. Those who were having three meals decreased to two, while those who were eating two meals declined it to one."<sup>80</sup> The UN claims that over 56,000 children under the age of five have severe acute malnutrition and require nutritional supplements such as Thriposha to survive.<sup>81</sup>



## **VII. THEMES S - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL IMPLEMENTATION; S01 - SDG 1 POVERTY, B41 - RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

42. During the Third Cycle, the Government made a voluntary pledge to “work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of alleviating poverty through national-level initiatives.”<sup>82</sup> The Government also supported recommendations to implement the SDGs for the entire population and at the grass-roots level,<sup>83</sup> including to implement social policies and other measures to reduce poverty with a focus on vulnerable populations,<sup>84</sup> address regional disparities, and fully implement its Vision 2025 program.<sup>85</sup> Other supported recommendations included contributing to alleviating poverty through health, housing, and education programs<sup>86</sup>, and by implementing a national policy on poverty alleviation.<sup>87</sup> These recommendations are not being implemented, as is indicated through the above discussion of government policies leading to the economic and humanitarian crisis. A few specific examples of the impact of economic crisis worsened by the governance crisis also follow.

43. **Workers employed on plantations** in Sri Lanka have become more impoverished as a result of the current economic and governance crisis. Their wages have decreased and they continue to be largely excluded from Government welfare assistance programs. 50% of the plantation workers are women. Hill Country Tamil (HTC), a minority of plantation workers, have faced growing discrimination related to language, as well as in accessing education, land, housing, government programs and institutions, and employment opportunities. Government health services do not reach the HTC community, negatively impacting maternal mortality and child malnutrition. The Government has also failed to allocate resources to fund educational institutions for the HTC and those available provide instruction only in the Sinhalese language. The HTC population has been granted few housing and property rights. The Government has failed to enact affirmative action programs to ensure HTC’s are afforded employment opportunities.<sup>88</sup>

44. **Government ban on chemical fertilizers.** On April 27, 2021, the Import and Export Control Department of the Sri Lankan Government banned imports of chemical fertilizers and agro-chemicals. Instead, it approved the import of over 120,000 metric tons of organic fertilizer from China and India, which cost over \$35 million.<sup>89</sup> Both deals involved the misappropriation of public funds, lack of accountability, poor administration, and possible breach of procurement procedure and collusion by decision makers involved in negotiating deals for undue gains. The Chinese fertilizer ended up containing a harmful bacteria, but the Sri Lankan government was pressured into paying anyway, and farmers never received any of the organic fertilizer.<sup>90</sup> The Indian fertilizer was purchased for a price much higher than market and the payment was made through a private account rather than through state-owned Ceylon Fertilizer Company, raising red flags about collusion and misappropriation of public funds.<sup>91</sup> Although it was reversed, the temporary ban on chemical fertilizers is likely to have future effects on local food production, a rise in food prices, food imports, food insecurity and unemployment, and decrease in standard of living and productivity.<sup>92</sup> Paddy harvest has reduced by one-third due to the overnight chemical fertilizer ban brought by the president.

## **VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Structural Change to Address Needs of People**

- Ensure food security through the creation of permanent structures protecting people, including strict price controls on goods especially essential food items, kerosene and gas and support and subsidies to the farmer and fisher communities.

- Restore nutrition packages for pregnant and lactating mothers and ensuring school midday meals programme and household level relief for children.
- Utilize public revenue for social security programs
- In IMF negotiations, ensure transparency, accountability, good governance, and that debt servicing arrangements do not undermine adequate social spending to meet the governments ESCR obligations
- Remove tax advantages for wealthy businesses and individuals and exceptions such as the tax amnesty passed in July 2021
- Clarify the status and accelerate the enactment of the Sri Lanka Employment Migration Authority Act
- Refrain from using state violence and threats against peaceful protests and urge all politicians to desist from inciting communal violence

**End Executive Presidency, Address Corruption and Establish Checks and Balances and Accountability**

- Enact a 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment to repeal the 20<sup>th</sup> amendment and restore balance of power that existed under the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment
- Remove presidential authority to impeach Chief Justices - .
- Take measures to ensure that public officials who committed violations are lustrated from public office or held accountable for their acts. Explain in detail what kind of specific actions have been undertaken to establish review mechanisms, perform security sector vetting for those involved in the military and law enforcement during the civil war, investigate allegations, and, if officials are found to have committed a violation, to remove them from power.
- Investigate, prosecute, and punish cases of sexual bribery/exploitation; Amend the “Bribery Act” to include sexual bribery; Adopt a zero tolerance policy in the administrative and service departments
- Transparency and speed in investigation of corruption allegations; remediation to public treasury. Work with international agencies to recover assets moved offshore for private gain; share the outcome and progress of cases and strive for transparency in the execution of its justice.
- Dismantle the Presidential Commission on Victimization
- Consult with impacted farmers on use of fertilizers; after transparent investigation, restore any ill-gotten gains of purchases and ensure transparent oversight

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Third Cycle: Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Sri Lanka*, A/HRC/37/17, (Dec. 29, 2017) [Hereinafter 2017 UPR Report]. Sri Lanka made a Voluntary Pledge to ¶ 119 “” (Sri Lanka).

<sup>2</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.14 “Continue the constitutional reform to create a more comprehensive framework for the promotion and protection of human rights” (Vietnam).

<sup>3</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.59 “Continue the ongoing process of consolidating democracy and the rule of law in the country” (Nepal).

<sup>4</sup> Sri Lanka noted a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 117.16 “Guarantee that the new constitution clearly and expressly recognizes the fundamental principle of the separation of powers, establishes checks and balances and guarantees the independence of the judiciary and the courts, while ensuring that all stakeholders have a place at the table when drafting the new constitution” (Haiti).

<sup>5</sup> Sri Lanka noted a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 117.18 “Ensure that Constitutional reforms guarantee equal protections, rights and treatment of all individuals, without distinction” (Canada).

<sup>6</sup> Bloomberg, *Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa Appoints Brother as Prime Minister* (Nov. 21, 2019), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-21/rajapaksa-appoints-china-friendly-brother-as-sri-lanka-premier>.

<sup>7</sup> NPR, *Sri Lanka is facing economic crisis — and the U.S. dollar is partly to blame*, (Apr. 29, 2022), <https://www.npr.org/2022/04/29/1095642332/sri-lanka-is-facing-economic-crisis-and-the-u-s-dollar-is-partly-to-blame/>.

<sup>8</sup> CNBC, *Sri Lanka’s president declares emergency as police clash with angry protesters* (Apr. 1, 2022), <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/02/sri-lanka-president-declares-emergency-as-police-clash-with-protesters.html>.

<sup>9</sup> The Sri Lanka Women’s NGO Forum, *Media Statement: Urgent plea by Sri Lankan feminists to address the unfolding humanitarian crisis caused by the economic collapse in Sri Lanka* (Apr. 2022).

<sup>10</sup> CNN, *Sri Lanka president declares new state of emergency as protests roil island*, (May, 7 2022), <https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/07/asia/sri-lanka-president-rajapaksa-state-of-emergency-hnk-intl/index.html>.

<sup>11</sup> AP News, *Sri Lanka leader declares emergency amid protests* (May 6, 2022), <https://apnews.com/article/business-sri-lanka-19b439c251fe42cdb39924179c24accf>; See also Amnesty International, *Sri Lanka: New Emergency regulations and shooting orders threaten human rights* (May 11, 2022), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/05/sri-lanka-new-emergency-regulations-and-shooting-orders-threaten-human-rights/>; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2022: Sri Lanka* (2022), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/sri-lanka>.

<sup>12</sup> Foreign Policy, *Why Sri Lanka’s Crisis Has No End in Sight* (May 12, 2022), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/12/sri-lanka-protests-crisis-rajapaksa-prime-minister/>.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> Other opposition parties including the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) refused to come on board without the President stepping down and generally rejected Wickremesinghe’s new government, claiming it lacks legitimacy. *Id.* The main opposition party, SJB, declined to join the Cabinet but pledged to support the new government’s efforts to tackle the country’s economic and political crisis. France 24, *Sri Lanka’s new PM wins support for ‘economic war cabinet’ amid worsening crisis* (May 16, 2022), <https://www.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20220516-sri-lanka-s-new-pm-wins-support-for-economic-war-cabinet-amid-worsening-crisis>.

<sup>16</sup> Center for Policy Alternatives, *A Brief Guide to the 20th Amendment to the Constitution* (Jul. 19, 2021), <https://www.cpalanka.org/a-brief-guide-to-the-20th-amendment-to-the-constitution/>.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> Department of Government Information, *Presidential Election - 2019: Final Result - All Island* (Nov. 17, 2019), <https://web.archive.org/web/20191117131017/https://elections.news.lk/>. After the election, MP Sajith Premadasa formed the SJB party, which split off from the UNP party. Daily Mirror, *Premadasa-faction forms Samagi Jana Balawegaya* (Feb. 12, 2020), [https://www.dailymirror.lk/top\\_story/Premadasa-faction-forms-Samagi-Jana-Balawegaya/155-182916](https://www.dailymirror.lk/top_story/Premadasa-faction-forms-Samagi-Jana-Balawegaya/155-182916). In the 2020 Parliamentary elections, SJB secured 54 of the 225 available parliamentary seats, making them the official opposition party, while SLPP obtained 145 seats. Adaderana, *Parliamentary General Election 2020 Results*, <http://election.adaderana.lk/general-election-2020/>.

<sup>21</sup> Krishan Francis, *Sri Lanka government proposes increased presidential powers* (Sept. 4, 2020), Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/8fc1155cb9137683f1605c845a56f49d>.

<sup>22</sup> Business Standard, *Lankan FM briefs US Ambassador on proposed 21st Amendment to Constitution* (May 30, 2022), [https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/lankan-fm-briefs-us-ambassador-on-proposed-21st-amendment-to-constitution-122053000498\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/lankan-fm-briefs-us-ambassador-on-proposed-21st-amendment-to-constitution-122053000498_1.html).

<sup>23</sup> Sandun Jayawardana, *The two 21st Amendments: Similarities and differences*, The Sunday Times (Apr. 24, 2022), <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/220424/news/the-two-21st-amendments-similarities-and-differences-480728.html>. See also: The

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- <sup>24</sup> The Sunday Times, *No ‘Saviours’ for Sri Lanka, this fiftieth year of the republic* (Jun. 5, 2022), <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/220605/columns/no-saviours-for-sri-lanka-this-fiftieth-year-of-the-republic-484776.html>.
- <sup>25</sup> Sarath Mathilal de Silva, Presidential immunity: Scope and application, Daily News LK (May 31, 2028), <https://www.dailynews.lk/2018/05/31/features/152518/presidential-immunity-scope-and-application>.
- <sup>26</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) has concluded that the current crisis is the result of “decades of misuse and mismanagement of public resources, systemic corruption, kleptocracy, an overall lack of transparency and accountability” and further notes that the Government utilizes several strategies to further corruption, including structural weakening of accountability frameworks, interference with the public service, abuse of state-owned enterprises, rampant abuse of public resources, siphoning away of public funds, cronyism and nepotism. <https://island.lk/crisis-caused-by-decades-of-misuse-public-resources-corruption-kleptocracy-tisl/>
- <sup>27</sup> The Gazette of Sri Lanka, Proclamation by the President (Jan. 9, 2021), [http://documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2020/1/2157-44\\_E.pdf](http://documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2020/1/2157-44_E.pdf).
- <sup>28</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>29</sup> Final Report of PCol on political victimization handed over to President, Daily News (Dec. 8, 2020).
- <sup>30</sup> *Id.* Some high profile cases include the murder of Lasantha Wickrematunge, abduction, extortion and murder of 11 Tamil men allegedly by the Sri Lanka Navy, Welikada Prison massacres, the assassination of Tamil MP Joseph Pararajasingham, and the assaults on journalists Upali Tennekoon and Keith Noyahr among many others.
- <sup>31</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka, Hindsight 2021, <https://www.hindsight.tisrilanka.org/>.
- <sup>32</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>33</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>34</sup> Human Rights Watch, Open Wounds and Mounting Dangers: Blocking Accountability for Grave Abuses in Sri Lanka (Feb. 1, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/02/01/open-wounds-and-mounting-dangers/blocking-accountability-grave-abuses-sri-lanka>.
- <sup>35</sup> THE ISLAND, *Survey Finds Paying Bribes Acceptable to a Quarter of Lankans* (Dec. 9, 2019), [http://island.lk/index.php?page\\_cat=article-details&page\\_article-details&code\\_title=215146](http://island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page_article-details&code_title=215146); Hasini Rupasinghe, *Sexual Bribery in Sri Lanka: Victims Continue to Cry in Silence*, DAILYMIRROR ONLINE (June 14, 2018), <http://dailymirror.lk/article/sexual-bribery-in-sri-lanka-victims-continue-to-cry-in-silence-151257.html>; Dinali Wijayasooriya, *Zero Tolerance on Sexual Bribery*, DAILYMIRROR ONLINE (Dec. 17, 2019), <http://dailymirror.lk/news-features/zero-tolerance-on-sexual-bribery-131-179673>; Gillian Maloney, *It’s Time to Combat Sexual Bribery*, SRI LANKA NEWS (Dec. 2, 2019); <http://www.independent.lk/its-time-to-combat-sexual-bribery/>.
- <sup>36</sup> *Military Rape Cases: No Judgement On 2001 Mannar Gang Rape: WAN*, THE COLOMBO TELEGRAPH (Oct. 9, 2015), <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/military-rape-cases-no-judgement-on-2001-mannar-gang-rape-wan/>.
- <sup>37</sup> *Sri Lankan Court Acquits Soldiers over Gang Rape of Tamil Woman*, TAMIL GUARDIAN (Oct. 11, 2019), <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/sri-lankan-court-acquits-soldiers-over-gang-rape-tamil-woman%C2%A0>.
- <sup>38</sup> Shenali De Silva, *A Snapshot of the Criminal Justice System: Building a Picture through Sexual Violence Cases in the Court of Appeal*, LAW AND TRUST SOCIETY (Apr. 2018), [https://lstlanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/LST\\_CJS\\_REPORT\\_230418-1.pdf](https://lstlanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/LST_CJS_REPORT_230418-1.pdf).
- <sup>39</sup> *Id.* at 100-01.
- <sup>40</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Sri Lanka* (2021), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/sri-lanka/> [2021 US DoS Report]
- <sup>41</sup> The tax amnesty would allow these individuals to bring such assets into Sri Lanka at the very low tax rate of 1% if they voluntarily disclosed the source of the funds with the apparent promise that no questions will be asked.
- <sup>42</sup> The Gazette of Sri Lanka, *Case: “Finance Bill,”* S.C. (S.D.) No.25-32 (2021), <https://www.parliament.lk/uploads/bills/gbills/scdet/6222.pdf>.
- <sup>43</sup> Centre for Policy Alternatives Sri Lanka, *Centre for Policy Alternatives Files Petition in the Supreme Court (SC SD 28/2021) against proposed Finance Bill* (Jul. 26, 2021), <https://www.cpalanka.org/centre-for-policy-alternatives-files-petition-in-the-supreme-court-sc-sd-28-2021-against-proposed-finance-bill/>.
- <sup>44</sup> The Parliament of Sri Lanka, *Case: “Finance Bill”* (2021), <https://www.parliament.lk/uploads/bills/gbills/scdet/6222.pdf>.
- <sup>45</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka, *Hindsight 2021*, <https://www.hindsight.tisrilanka.org/>. The Gazette of Sri Lanka, *Bill No. 58* (Jul. 12, 2021), <https://www.parliament.lk/uploads/bills/gbills/english/6222.pdf>.
- <sup>46</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka, *Hindsight 2021*, <https://www.hindsight.tisrilanka.org/>.
- <sup>47</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>48</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>49</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>50</sup> In May 2020, the Government increased the tax on sugar imports. It was then reduced on October 14 and increased on October 27, but came into force a month later in November.
- <sup>51</sup> Zulfick Farzan, *Sugar Tax Scam: Recover loss of Rs. 16b from importer – Audit Office*, News 1st (Apr. 17, 2022), <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/04/17/sugar-tax-scam-recover-loss-of-rs-16b-from-importer-audit-office/>.
- <sup>52</sup> *Bribery Commission re-files over 25 cases*, Daily News (Apr. 4, 2022), <https://www.dailynews.lk/2022/04/04/law-order/276389/bribery-commission-re-files-over-25-cases>.
- <sup>53</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.173 (Indonesia).
- <sup>54</sup> Such incentives are to include tax deductions, duty relief, interest -ree and low interest housing loans and discount voucher.
- <sup>55</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 117.1 “Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty” (Montenegro) (Spain).

- <sup>56</sup> Newswire, Police name 9 key GotaGoGama activists as suspects in court : Arrest order issued (Jun. 17, 2022), <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/06/17/police-name-9-key-gotagogama-activists-as-suspects-in-court-arrest-order-issued/>.
- <sup>57</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka, The people's power can no longer be contained by the chains of corruption (Apr. 4, 2022), <https://www.tisrilanka.org/the-peoples-power-can-no-longer-be-contained-by-the-chains-of-corruption/>.
- <sup>58</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.15 “Continue the Constitutional reforms to guarantee the fundamental rights of the entire population, and move forward in the implementation of the reforms as planned in the National Human Rights Plan” (Mexico).
- <sup>59</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.49 “Focus on economic, social and cultural rights as a first step towards achieving programmes within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda” (United Arab Emirates).
- <sup>60</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.14 “Continue the constitutional reform to create a more comprehensive framework for the promotion and protection of human rights” (Vietnam).
- <sup>61</sup> Anusha Ondaatje, *Sri Lanka's new PM to sell national airline, print money to pay salaries*, Business Standard (May 17, 2022), [https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/sri-lanka-s-new-pm-to-sell-national-airline-print-money-to-pay-salaries-122051700177\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/sri-lanka-s-new-pm-to-sell-national-airline-print-money-to-pay-salaries-122051700177_1.html).
- <sup>62</sup> *Fundamental Rights Petition in the Matter of an Application under Terms of Article 17 and 126 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka* (Jun. 2022), [https://pdfhost.io/v/u3DMTbbue\\_UJ\\_Petition\\_II\\_Final](https://pdfhost.io/v/u3DMTbbue_UJ_Petition_II_Final).
- <sup>63</sup> Sunday Times LK, *Three academics file FR case against those who caused economic crisis* (Jun. 5, 2022), <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/220605/news/three-academics-file-fr-case-against-those-who-caused-economic-crisis-484786.html>.
- <sup>64</sup> Aazam Ameen, *Depletion of dollar reserves: FR filed against MR, BR, PB, Cabraal, Attygalle and several others*, The Morning (Jun. 3, 2022), <https://www.themorning.lk/depletion-of-dollar-reserves-fr-filed-against-mr-br-pb-cabraal-attygalle-and-several-others/>; Colombo Page, *Supreme Court to hear FR petitions filed by BASL seeking solutions to the current economic crisis* (Apr. 5 2022), [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_22A/Apr05\\_1649128976CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22A/Apr05_1649128976CH.php).
- <sup>65</sup> European Parliament, *At a Glance: Sri Lanka's Debt Crisis* (May 2022), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729441/EPRS\\_ATA\(2022\)729441\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729441/EPRS_ATA(2022)729441_EN.pdf).
- <sup>66</sup> Complaint at 1, *Hamilton Reserve Bank Ltd. v. The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka* (S.D.N.Y. 2022) (No. 1:2022cv05199).
- <sup>67</sup> Complaint at 3, *Hamilton Reserve Bank Ltd. v. The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka* (S.D.N.Y. 2022) (No. 1:2022cv05199).
- <sup>68</sup> Krishan Francis, *Sri Lankan prime minister: Island's economy 'has collapsed'*, ABC News (Jun. 22, 2022), <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/sri-lanka-pm-economy-collapsed-unable-buy-oil-85551129>.
- <sup>69</sup> The Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum, *Media Statement: Urgent plea by Sri Lankan feminists to address the unfolding humanitarian crisis caused by the economic collapse in Sri Lanka* (Apr. 2022). See also Amnesty International, Letter from South Asia Regional Office Director Yamini Mishra to Mr. Tubagus Feridhanusetyaway, IMF Resident Representative in Colombo (June 9, 2022) (reminding IMF Representative of priori statements on the importance of stronger social safety nets to mitigate adverse impact of the current economic crisis on the poor and vulnerable.”)
- <sup>70</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka, *Hindsight 2021*, <https://www.hindsight.tisrilanka.org/>.
- <sup>71</sup> Scilla Alecci, *Clamor for crackdown on hidden wealth jolts Sri Lanka elite following Pandora Papers revelations*, International consortium of Investigative Journalists (Nov. 1, 2021), <https://www.icij.org/investigations/pandora-papers/clamor-for-crackdown-on-hidden-wealth-jolts-sri-lanka-elite-following-pandora-papers-revelations/>
- <sup>72</sup> Transparency International also requested the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Election Commission to investigate potential money laundering claims and obtain an asset declaration and issued press releases demanding the Government to take action
- <sup>73</sup> Scilla Alecci, *Clamor for crackdown on hidden wealth jolts Sri Lanka elite following Pandora Papers revelations*, International consortium of Investigative Journalists (Nov. 1, 2021), <https://www.icij.org/investigations/pandora-papers/clamor-for-crackdown-on-hidden-wealth-jolts-sri-lanka-elite-following-pandora-papers-revelations/> (In 2016 Gotabaya Rajapaksa and a cousin charged with corruption for allegedly using offshore accounts to purchase fighter jets and pocketing \$10 million; when Gotabaya Rajapaksa became president he gained immunity so the investigation never concluded). See also, Editorial, *The Murky Side of Pandora Papers*, The Sunday Times (Oct. 10, 2021), <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/211010/editorial/the-murky-side-of-pandora-papers-457958.html>: “The President referring the Pandora papers to the Bribery and Corruption Commission...and asking them to investigate...is tantamount to a bad joke...The biggest prosecution it has done in all its years is arguably against a school principal who accepted a bribe of a tea set.”
- <sup>74</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka, *Hindsight 2021*, <https://www.hindsight.tisrilanka.org/>.
- <sup>75</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>76</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.126 “Continue to implement measures to promote infrastructure development and capacity-building, especially in the field of health and medical services” (Japan).
- <sup>77</sup> Kanchana Kolagolla, *Crisis cuts off vital food programme*, Ceylon Today (May 14, 2022), <https://ceylontoday.lk/2022/05/14/crisis-cuts-off-vital-food-programme/>.
- <sup>78</sup> Kanchana Kolagolla, *Crisis cuts off vital food programme*, Ceylon Today (May 14, 2022), <https://ceylontoday.lk/2022/05/14/crisis-cuts-off-vital-food-programme/>.
- <sup>79</sup> Kapila Bandara, *Nearly 5 million in hunger, 56,000 children severely malnourished: UN*, Sunday Times (Jun. 12, 2022), <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/220612/news/nearly-5-million-in-hunger-56000-children-severely-malnourished-un-485814.html>.
- <sup>80</sup> Amani Nilar, *Sri Lanka: Second-highest in child malnutrition in South Asia, says UNICEF* (Jun. 18, 2022), <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/06/18/sri-lanka-second-highest-in-child-malnutrition-in-south-asia-says-unicef/>.
- <sup>81</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>82</sup> Sri Lanka made a Voluntary Pledge in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 129 “Work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of alleviating poverty through national-level initiatives including the Gramashakthi People's Movement” (Sri Lanka).

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- <sup>83</sup> Sri Lanka supported Recommendations in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.50 “Continue efforts to ensure the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for the entire population” (Algeria); ¶ 116.48 “Continue its efforts for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the grass-roots level” (Pakistan).
- <sup>84</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.120 “Continue to pursue its successful social policies in the fight against poverty, with the aim of increasing the quality of life of its people, particularly the most vulnerable sectors” (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela).
- <sup>85</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.118 “Fully implement its Vision 2025, expand existing programmes such as the Gramashakthi People’s Movement, or establish new initiatives where necessary, to boost poverty alleviation efforts and to address regional disparities” (Singapore).
- <sup>86</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.121 “Continue its efforts in alleviating poverty through health, education and housing programmes and in developing enabling legislation to ensure the human rights of vulnerable groups” (Bhutan).
- <sup>87</sup> Sri Lanka supported a Recommendation in the 2017 UPR Report: ¶ 116.122 “Encourage the implementation of its national policy on poverty alleviation to realize its goals of eradicating poverty in the country by 2030” (Brunei Darussalam).
- <sup>88</sup> For more information, see excerpts from a briefing paper by the Human Development Organization and Institute of Social Development on human rights violations against the Hill Country Tamil in Annex IV. *See also* Institute for Social Development – Kandy, <https://www.isdkandy.org/>.
- <sup>89</sup> Transparency International Sri Lanka, *Hindsight 2021*, <https://www.hindsightn.tisrilanka.org/>.
- <sup>90</sup> Amani Nilar, *How a fertilizer ban became a part of Sri Lanka’s Crisis*, News First (May 29, 2022), <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/05/29/how-a-fertilizer-ban-became-a-part-of-sri-lankas-crisis/>.
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