

SL General election 2020 – The last nail in the coffin of disastrous Tamil politics

Last November, Gotabaya Rajapakse was elected as the President of Sri Lanka. The primary news emerging from his election was not the return of the butcher of 2009, but the role of the Sinhalese population in solely accounting for his victory. After his election, one of his objectives is to gain control of two-thirds of the Sri Lankan parliament in the forthcoming general election. It has been established as a matter of fact that he will reach his goal in the general election due to the actuality of the Corona-Crisis. However, if he attains his goal, the last nail in the coffin of the Tamils' disastrous politics will be hammered.

The return of the butcher

Gotabaya was elected as Sri Lanka's President last November, solely on the votes of Sinhalese voters. This was a significant victory for Gotabaya because the vote of the Eelam Tamils have played a decisive role in Sri Lanka's electoral politics - even during the presence of the LTTE. The Tamils' votes decided the election of Mahinda Rajapakse in 2005 and his deselection in 2015, which introduced the regime change. Through the regime change with the election of Sirisena, Sri Lanka's constitution was altered where the powers of the President were reduced. However, that change in the constitution unsettled the balance in the separation of the powers within the Sri Lankan state. This disbalance created two power centres in Sri

Lanka, which resulted in the constitutional crisis of 2018, where two Prime Ministers were simultaneously in power. That chaos was bemused by international spectators, as chilli powder was thrown during ensuing deliberations in Sri Lanka's parliament. One year after the constitutional crisis, Gotabaya was elected. His aim to control at least two-thirds of their parliament has a basis of centralising administrative powers under him through a reversal of the change in the constitution.

Corona-Crisis

Soon after the beginning of the new decade, a global crisis emerged in the form of the virus - COVID-19. This virus slowed the pace of Gotabaya's aim to capture a majority of the votes in Sri Lanka's general elections. As a result, he dissolved the parliament in March. Whilst the elections were scheduled to occur on 25.04.2020, they were postponed due to the Corona-crisis. Whilst the crisis had initially appeared to be an obstacle for Gotabaya's ambitions for centralisation, through engaging in crisis management, his image as a strong leader was nurtured. The highest of the Buddhist clergy affirmed such ideals when they described him as a leader, who had saved the country for the second time. With that boost, Gotabaya will certainly attain his goal in the upcoming general election which has been scheduled to occur on 20.06.2020.

Centralisation and Nepotism after the General election

Soon after Gotabaya's election, the centralisation of state structures commenced under Kamal Gunaratne - a fellow butcher from 2009. In this centralisation process, 31 state institutions were brought under the control of Sri Lanka's defence ministry. Another indication for the tendency of centralisation is the proposal of a Constitutional Amendment bill - the 22nd Amendment bill. This aims to reduce the powers of Sri Lanka's Independent Constitutional Council and its ministers. A reduction in the number of ministers is also included in the vision of the bill. Such adjustments aim to reduce the powers of constituent government structures and centralise powers with the President. This would allow the President to make appointments of high-ranking government officials in Sri Lanka's judicial and police sector. Consultation for such decisions would only need to be made with the Prime Minister - the current elder brother of Sri Lanka's president, thus institutionalising nepotism through centralisation.

No more power to bargain

The 21st Amendment bill was also proposed. The proposal suggested an imposition of an increase to the district cut off point for candidates to be elected - from 5% to 12.5%. This increase would have severe consequences for the Eelam Tamils, as the Tamil political landscape is scattered. The increase to barriers to entry will make it difficult for the smaller factions as they would not be able to meet the quota. Therefore, Tamils would not be able to play the role of kingmaker in any forthcoming election on the island. Another opportunity where the Eelam Tamils had the power to bargain, was also lost after the election of Gotabaya. It was the issue of attaining justice for the genocidal onslaught of 2009. Tragically, the Tamils did not use this opportunity for their cause and now Sri

Lanka is set to leave the resolution, which they had previously co-sponsored. Now, both opportunities are lost for good. This has left the Eelam Tamils in their most deprived situation - one that Tamil politicians and activists must take responsibility for. These self-proclaimed representatives are responsible for gambling away the opportunities and leverage that the Eelam Tamils had. They have to understand that both mechanisms were a component of the LTTE's legacy and are soaked with the blood and sacrifices of all the Maveerars (martyrs) and Eelam Tamil civilians.

Legacy of the Tigers

Following the genocidal onslaught of 2009, the legitimacy for Tamil sovereignty is stronger than ever before. The stand taken by the Tigers, cemented that legitimacy. It further generated a possibility for the Eelam Tamils to push the legitimacy of the need for Tamil sovereignty forward, on an international level. However, as one side remained fundamentalistic and caught themselves up with internal power struggles, the other deterred the Tamils away from the struggle. They even worsened the situation of the Tamils, while falling into a trap. They did not understand that these UN-resolutions let the Eelam Tamils search for false justice within Sri Lanka's unitary state. The justice for the 2009 onslaught will never be a substitute for the political solution of the Eelam Tamils. It is as a result that the Tamils sang the Sri Lankan national anthem in Tamil and accepted the Sinhala-Buddhist character of the state ideology of Tamil genocide.

Fortunately, the ideological legacy of the Tigers remains intact through some individuals and a few organisations. Subsequently, the survival of the Tamil struggle lies in their hands and their actions. Perhaps such losses were required, for them to be free to engage in the necessary initiatives to propel the struggle forward. (Nit.)

International News

01.04.2020: **WHO** - According to Colombo Page, the Director General of WHO had contacted Gotabaya via a telephone call to discuss the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 upon Sri Lanka on 31.03.2020. It was reported that the director had congratulated Gotabaya for integrating state services to combat the pandemic.

03.04.2020: **ICRC** - The ICRC delegation in Sri Lanka has continued to assist the SL national authorities' efforts to protect detainees and the general public, reports Colombo Gazette. Having commenced the provision of necessities from 22.03.2020, the ICRC has been reported to have proposed a response plan for COVID-19 in collaboration with SL's Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Department of Prisons and the IGP.

06.04.2020: **UAE** - Following news published by Sinhalese media outlining the UAE's introduction of bans preventing the burial of COVID-19 victims and instructions to cremate, the UAE's Embassy in Colombo published a statement denying such claims. The statement further condemned racist attempts to incite hate

towards Muslims in Sri Lanka.

07.04.2020: **India** - According to Sunday Times LK, the Indian High Commission in Colombo mentioned in a statement that medicines had been requested by GoSL. As a result, a 10-tonne consignment of medicines were reportedly gifted from India to Sri Lanka.

10.04.2020: **China** - A Daily Mirror journalist has been reported to have released a statement condemning China's intervention into Sri Lanka's media, reports Newswire.lk. The journalist was reported to have made a post in response to a letter posed to the chairman of the Wijeya Group by the Chinese Embassy. The Wijeya group is known to own several media outlets in Sri Lanka. One of these outlets had published an article regarding the impact of the Chinese state's negligence upon the global COVID-19 outbreak thus enraging the Chinese embassy in Sri Lanka. As a result, the journalist had condemned any external attempt to censor Sri Lanka's media.

13.04.2020: **China** - The official Twitter Account of the Chinese Embassy in Sri Lanka had been suspended for unknown

reasons and restored within a few hours, reports Colombo Gazette.

16.04.2020: **Middle East** - Following meetings amongst SL Foreign ministry officials, a published press release outlined measures introduced to support expatriated Sri Lankans (including those in the Middle East). The decision was made due to suggestions made by the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE), reports Colombo Gazette.

17.04.2020: **GRID Index** - The Global Response to Infectious Diseases (GRID) Index has ranked Sri Lanka 9th in effective crisis-management, reports SL's Ministry of Foreign Relations (MFA).

18.04.2020: **Malaysia** - Malaysian flight evacuates Malaysian citizens stranded in Sri Lanka and India, reports Colombo Gazette.

18.04.2020: **China** - Gotabaya thanked China for their support in SL's efforts to combat the COVID-19 outbreak, reports Colombo Gazette.

19.04.2020: **Pakistan** - Pakistan's CAA allowed SL's request for the operation of a repatriation flight to transport cargo

and stranded nationals on 18.04.2020, reports Colombo Gazette.

21.04.2020: **ICJ** - According to Colombo Gazette, the ICJ had requested that human rights procedures be maintained in the investigation of the Easter Sunday bombings of 2019 following the recent arrest of the SL lawyer, Hizbullah.

21.04.2020: **US** - In a statement published by the US Secretary of State, Pompeo, the US had expressed their alliance with Sri Lanka to counter terrorism. According to Colombo Gazette, the statement was made to mark the first memorial year of the Easter Sunday attacks.

21.04.2020: **UN** - The UN office in Colombo mentioned in a published

statement that Sri Lanka should not ignore any citizens in their efforts to counter the COVID-19 outbreak, reports Colombo Gazette.

21.04.2020: **Seychelles** - Seychelles has been reported to engage in discussions regarding illegal fishing following the interception of a third SL vessel within the past week, reports Colombo Gazette.

23.04.2020: **UNESCO** - In an online meeting, Mahindha briefed UNESCO's cultural ministers regarding Sri Lanka's efforts to preserve SL's cultural sector during the COVID-19 crisis, reports Colombo Gazette.

24.04.2020: **China** - Representatives of China's and Sri Lanka's foreign ministries held talks over the phone.

China's State Councillor and foreign minister, Wang Yi, and SL foreign minister, Dinesh Gunawardena had engaged in these talks and had contextualised the political repercussions of countries who took advantage of the COVID-19 situation, reports Colombo Gazette.

24.04.2020: **HRW** - HRW calls upon SL authorities to consider due processes in Easter Sunday investigations, especially through allowing arrested Muslim figures access to legal assistance, reports Colombo Gazette.

27.04.2020: **Australia** - The Australian government has been ordered to pay the Priya and Nades family with more than \$200,000 in compensation to the Tamil family's bid to remain in Australia.

Out of the fire and into the frying pan

Introduction

Whilst the course of the Tamil struggle for liberation has evolved over time, its fundamental basis revolved around the establishment of a sustainable political solution. With the emergence of the armed struggle, the Tamils' ideal of justice was conceptualised through the LTTE's establishment of a sovereign Tamil Eelam. This subversion of the concept of justice was cohesively pursued by Tamils. However, with the destruction of the Tamil Eelam state through the combined efforts of the genocidal Sri Lankan government and its global co-conspirators, the Tamils' definition of justice was distorted through the influence of Western hegemons. The mirage of international accountability and justice lured the Tamils away from their pursuit of a political solution. Such avenues were encouraged through the broken promises for transitional justice which emerged with the Sirisena administration. The dissolution of the guise of accountability and justice for Tamils through avenues of transitional justice, with the return of the Rajapakse brothers in November of 2019 opened a window for the Tamils to realign the course of their struggle. However, the emergence of a tendency to advocate for "alternative pathways of justice" is an implicit reference to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) which has had a detrimental impact upon the victims' pursuit of justice in Syria and Myanmar. As a result, it becomes crucial to contextualise the impacts of the model to redirect the course of the Tamil struggle away from its self-immolation.

Illusion of Impartiality

The IIIM was introduced in December 2016 as a subsidiary body of the UN to conduct investigations and collect evidence regarding crimes committed in the Syrian

Arab Republic since 2011. The mechanism has an intermediary function where it bridges recent crimes with uncertain future prosecutions through the collation of evidence regarding serious crimes committed under international law. As a result, the mechanism exists as a central repository for the preservation of evidential material through cooperation with local NGOs and civil society groups and thus assists in the process of criminal law case file building. Catherine Marchi – Uhel (the head of Syria's IIIM) explains how criminal accountability functions as a component of the wider transitional justice process where evidence would be collated within the context of transitional justice objectives. In a state where avenues for transitional justice had failed and backtracked the progress of the Tamils' struggle for liberation, the pursuit of yet another band-aid solution of criminal accountability emphasises that Western ideals for justice introduced by global oppressors cannot substitute a political solution. Nonetheless, an examination of the shortcomings of the mechanism as a tool of justice as well as its inability to substitute a sustainable political solution are essential for us to comprehend the future of the struggle.

Whilst the IIIM has no authority to prosecute as it is not a tribunal, its mandate theoretically facilitates the identification of individual perpetrators and the role of state structures in facilitating such international crimes. A press release published by the Global Justice Center on 27.09.2018, establishes the shortcomings of such models for justice due to its non-prosecutorial nature. However, Marchi-Uhel further established state accountability as neither a primary nor practical process due to the IIIM's limitations in universal jurisdiction despite

the mechanism's claims. A lack of definition regarding operational processing in the absence of the availability of jurisdiction would result in the preparation of case files within a vacuum thus extending a state of evidentiary limbo – a time frame within which the victims' plight may deepen due to continuing oppression. Underutilised data would further generate an opportunity for the international community to continue to procrastinate in its establishment of criminal accountability and thus diminish the public psyche of subjugated communities – an advantage for global oppressors.

The Syria Mechanism: a Geopolitical Arena

This becomes evident with the implementation of the IIIM in Syria. As no courts have jurisdiction over war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria, the IIIM's jurisdiction becomes limited to courts in Europe and North America. These courts only allow the possible prosecution of low perpetrators thus leaving the remaining victims open to further systematised repression by aggravated state officials. Hohler and Pederson, establish the mechanism's inability to predict the occurrence of prosecutions, and diminishes its scope of analysing evidence which falls beyond its non-prosecutorial mandate. An ICTJ briefing from 2018 regarding the possibility of justice for Syrian victims displays the magnified effect that limitations in jurisdiction may have upon victims who remain on the ground. Self-censorship due to fear of persecution would fail to expose the true plight of the victims. Thus, the crucial concerns of consent and witness protection are discarded within a supposedly victim-centred approach. Subsequently, Hohler and Pederson explain the ensuing excessive reliance upon other states. Whilst such reliance would delay the process towards conventional justice, it

becomes evident that such dependence would provide geopolitical agendas an outlet to exploit the victims.

Moreover, the inconsistencies in communication and peculiarities in funding for the IIIM in Syria, raise concerns about the legitimacy of the mechanism. Whilst the IIIM had initially relied on voluntary funding, Marchi-Uhel mentioned that funds for the IIIM had been received from the European Union and 38 other countries by 2018. It is noteworthy that Switzerland had donated USD 2.4 million as funds for the IIIM since its inception. A failure to satisfy the requests of civil societies resulted in the establishment of an externally-funded platform known as the "Lausanne process". These semi-annual meetings were funded by Swiss and Dutch donors to encourage Syrian civil societies to engage with the IIIM. Furthermore, an analysis of the mechanism by the Ferencz International Justice Institute exposes the lack of transparency regarding the mechanism's prosecution strategies with Syrian stakeholders thus questioning the scope of the IIIM. In addition, the heavy political and economic influence of the Swiss government raises concerns regarding the extent of their influence upon the process and thus projects the possibility of such geopolitical exploitation of spaces for justice with the implementation of the mechanism in various contexts. This establishes the geopolitical dimension of such models for justice as one bent upon asserting the repressive authority of global order.

Mirage for Myanmar

On the other hand, the IIIM was established in Myanmar as the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) in September 2018. Introduced following the conclusion of the investigative work of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (FFM), the Myanmar

mechanism had the widest scope of judicial proceedings and investigations in Myanmar, as it spanned from 2011 to an unspecified time in the future. Whilst Myanmar had been referred to the ICJ and the federal court of Argentina for violations of the 1948 Genocide Convention and crimes against humanity, limitations of jurisdiction and Myanmar's obligations, restrict the efficacy of such avenues for accountability. The integration of the confidential work of the mechanism with other UN investigative measures also affects the influence of such avenues. The role of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI) and FFM affect possibilities for diplomatic leverage. Limited and complete denial of access to territory in both Syrian and Myanmar result in a one-dimensional account of evidence thus disregarding the victims' plight. A similar sentiment was extended in the IIMM's first report to the UN's General Assembly which established such investigations as a complex feat without the support of states within the region and the international community. The attribution further addresses the geopolitical context within which these mechanisms are introduced, thus exposing their intent.

Tamils' Trepidations

Whilst the mechanism is within its early stages of implementation, the multitude of inconsistencies raises concerns regarding the legitimacy of the mechanism in remaining true to its impartiality. As a methodology which functions as both an informal and formal transitional justice process, the model of the mechanism can be established as another dead end in the pursuit for justice. Furthermore, the ambiguities in the definition of funding for the mechanism establishes the IIMM as a platform for global actors to exert their political agendas through financial and geopolitical leverage.

As Tamil genocide continues to be systematised through the Sri Lankan government's state structures, 11 years on from its pinnacle, we have been reminded that avenues for justice paved by the West will never substitute the legitimacy of a political solution in the Tamils' struggle for liberation. A political solution universally remains as the only secure mechanism to safeguard the wellbeing of subjugated communities and preserve their distinct sovereignty. In a time where global order is indoctrinated with the interests of global oppressors, the legitimacy of avenues for international justice void of geopolitical exploitation, remain slim. With many predominant Tamil representatives pursuing a new form of an old tool, it becomes apparent that once again, the progress of the struggle may be shifted out of the fire and into the frying pan. Yet, a timely collective awakening guided by the Nandhikadal principles, will permanently liberate the oppressed from the oppressors through dismantling the foundations of global order. (Sen.)

Military News

01.04.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Defence.lk, Kamal Gunaratne had mentioned that the SL government had simultaeneously undertaken all possible precautionary measures to contain COVID-19, whilst combatting; drug trafficking, terrorism and extremism to maintain national security.

01.04.2020: **WHM** - The occupational troops of; 24 Vijayabahu Infantry Regiment, 11 (V) Gajaba Regiment, 5 (V) Mechanized Infantry Regiment and 2 of SL's National Guard serving under the 66th Division of the Security Force HQ-Kilinochchi had distributed hot meal packs and dry rations to locals a few days ago. According to army.lk, 180 civilians from families in; Shivanagar, Pallikuda, Paranthan, Kollakarachchi and Weddiyakurichchi had received the packs.

01.04.2020: **COVID-19** - According to army.lk, an awareness lecture on 'Armed Forces' Prevention from COVID-19 Pandemic' was recently held for the Officers and Other Ranks of SL's 65th Division in Mulankavil. The lecture was conducted on the directions of SL's occupational Commander of Security Forces-Kilinochchi, Major

General Jayantha Gunaratne.

02.04.2020: **Navy** - According to navy.lk, the Metallurgical Corporation of China Ltd. had extended their cooperation with the SL navy's COVID-19 quarantine programme through donating healthcare equipment. It was reported that 1,800 protective face masks and 2,000 surgical gloves had been donated to SL's Naval Headquarters.

04.04.2020: **WHM** - According to army.lk, 65 occupational Division troops under the Security Force HQ-Kilinochchi had distributed dry rations and fresh vegetable packets among 25 selected low-income group families within the Thunukkai and Uyilankulam areas on 31.03.2020. The distribution was conducted in close coordination with respective Grama Seva officials.

04.04.2020: **Air Force** - According to Colombo Gazette, 172 individuals who were quarantined in the SL Air Force quarantine centre in Iranamadu were released following a 14-day quarantine. The individuals had returned from India on 21.03.2020.

04.04.2020: **WHM** - SL's 58th Division HQ in Puttalam donated packs of dry rations and lunch to the 'Lurdu Matha Elders' Home at Kala Oya on 03.04.2020. Brigadier Priyanka Fernando, (General Officer Commanding of the 58th Division) and the remainder of the division had financed the donation, reports army.lk.

11.04.2020: **Navy** - SL Navy reports the successful use of international information exchange and data analysis of satellite communications in a drug bust operation of a foreign vessel in SL waters, reports Colombo Gazette.

12.04.2020: **HQ visit** - According to army.lk, Shavendra Silva had made a visit to the occupied North of Sri Lanka. He was reported to have first visited the SL army's 54th Division troops in Mannar. Alongside his visit to the SL army's occupational Security Force HQ in Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Jaffna, he was also reported to have interacted with locally stationed troops from the; 64th Division, 52nd Division, 574th and 552nd Brigades. The trip was supposedly made to extend his Sinhalese New Year salutations with the occupational forces. It is

noteworthy that Silva had also visited the people of Tharavikulam who had been isolated due to COVID-19 measures.

13.04.2020: **SL Navy** - According to navy.lk, Shavendra Silva had visited the Northern Naval HQ on 12.04.2020. A discussion about the COVID-19 outbreak was reportedly held during the meeting. Shavendra Silva and his entourage were then accompanied by local occupational HODs to oversee a pier construction project which was ongoing at the KKS harbour.

15.04.2020: **Surveillance** - Sri Lanka's Air Force is collaborating with the SL navy to assist the navy's efforts to prevent illegal entry into the country, through initiating daily aerial surveillance operations, reports Colombo Gazette.

18.04.2020: **Visit** - Kamal Gunaratne had visited SL's occupational Security Force HQ in Vanni on 17.04.2020, reports army.lk. He had reportedly addressed more than 300 of SL's tri-servicemen, police and STF personnel during the visit. During his address, he was reported to have appreciated the responsibilities that had been carried out by the officials during the COVID -19 outbreak.

21.04.2020: **Inauguration** - The newly-erected Corporals' Club and Other Ranks Mess complex was inaugurated during a simple ceremony with a representative gathering. The event had adhered to strict health precautions against the COVID-19 outbreak, reports army.lk. The establishments belong to the 66th Division of the Security Force HQ - Kilinochchi.

21.04.2020: **India** - According to Press Trust India, India had prepared troops to be deployed to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan to assist with COVID-19 crisis-management, reports Colombo Gazette.

22.04.2020: **India** - India denies claims that troops would be deployed internationally to combat the COVID-19 outbreak within the region, reports Colombo Gazette.

22.04.2020: **Foreign assistance** - Kamal Gunaratne had insisted that Sri Lanka's forces had already proven their efficiency in COVID-19 management and did not require any foreign military assistance, reports Colombo Gazette. He further mentioned that Sri Lanka is an exemplar state.

23.04.2020: **Bodycam** - According to Newswire.lk, the SL police will be using bodycams to record violations of law and order. The technology will be initially integrated into the traffic sector. It is noteworthy that the SL police had used bodycams in SL's last presidential election.

25.04.2020: **China** - According to Sunday Times, a stock of required healthcare outfits and equipment was donated to the SL navy, at their Naval Headquarters on 24.04.2020.

25.04.2020: **Deployment** - According to SL military's spokesperson Brigadier Chandana Wickremesinghe, armed troops had been deployed to Colombo to engage in the external security of SL's parliament, reports Colombo Gazette.

26.04.2020: **Deployment** - Kamal Gunaratne has been reported to have published a directive cancelling the leave and short-passes of SL's tri-forces personnel of all ranks. According to the Colombo Gazette, the deployment of all personnel across the island had been implemented to ensure that all troops fulfilled their duties in COVID-19 crisis-management.

26.04.2020: **Curfew** - According to Colombo Gazette, an island-wide curfew had been scheduled to be imposed on 27.04.2020 to allow SL troops to return to their respective camps to continue their duties in COVID-19 crisis management. The curfew has been introduced to ensure that the troops do not interact with any public.

27.04.2020: **Task Force** - A Presidential Task Force has been appointed through the powers of Gotabaya to ensure the health security of SL military camps, reports Colombo Gazette. The Governor of the Western Province and former SL Air Marshal, Roshan Gunathilake is the head of this branch.

Domestic News

01.04.2020: **Curfew** - According to SL's Presidential Secretariat, the curfew imposed in 19 districts would be lifted for 8 hours, reports Colombo Page. It was further reported that the lift would not apply to residents of Colombo, Jaffna, Gampaha, Kalutara, Puttalam and Kandy. According to Colombo Gazette, curfew regulations would be in place until 06.04.2020.

27.04.2020: **Navy quarantine** - According to SL's MoD, all naval personnel returning to duty on 27.04.2020 would be subject to a 14-day quarantine before assuming duty, reports Colombo Gazette. The decision has been made due to the high-levels of diagnosis within the navy itself - of 63 COVID-19 cases, 53 were naval personnel.

28.04.2020: **Donation** - According to navy.lk, a stock of healthcare outfits required for the SL navy's campaign to control the spread of COVID-19 had been donated through the "Manusath Derana" programme.

02.04.2020: **Arrest** - A university student amongst 5 suspects, was arrested by the CID for allegedly spreading false news regarding COVID-19, reports Colombo Gazette.

02.04.2020: **SL Parliament** - According to Colombo Gazette, Mahindha had held a "Party-Leaders" meeting at the Temple Trees.

29.04.2020: **Australia** - According to Newswire.lk, the Australian Department of Defence is supporting Sri Lanka during the COVID-19 outbreak. The support has been reported to have been expressed through the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and AUD 1.47 million in donations.

During the meeting, UNP's Ranil Wickremesinghe, former SL Speaker Karu Jayasuriya and TNA's R. Sampanthan had requested SL Parliament to be reconvened to allow urgent legislations to be passed to address the COVID-19 outbreak.

04.04.2020: **Curfew** - According to Daily Mirror, SL's top authoritative sources had mentioned on 03.04.2020 that discussions were continually conducted to determine whether Colombo could be placed under lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

04.04.2020: **Release** - According to Colombo Gazette, a SL court had released 2,500 minor offenders on bail conditions. It was reported by the PMD that 2,961 inmates were released following recommendations made by a committee assigned by Gotabaya.

05.04.2020: **Fake news** - In a press conference, SL police's DIG, Ajith Rohana mentioned that the SL police had been instructed to implement strict legal action against those who spread misinformation regarding COVID-19 on social media platforms, reports Colombo Gazette.

06.04.2020: **Curfew** - Inefficiency of SL government-introduced ration supply mechanisms and beneficiary payments during the COVID-19 outbreak have increased the hardships faced by around 84,000 families in the Jaffna District, reports TamilNet. The slow processing of payments where many applications

remain pending and a lack of ration stock within the district has reportedly contributed to the hardship.

06.04.2020: **COVID-19** - In a meeting with Sajith Premadasa, Basil Rajapaksa and other SL government ministers in Colombo, Gotabaya briefed the attendees regarding the measures undertaken by the SL government to counter the COVID-19 outbreak.

08.04.2020: **Arrests** - According to Colombo Gazette, 9 individuals had been arrested by SL's CID for spreading misinformation regarding COVID-19. It was further reported that one suspect had been further remanded until 16.04.2020 following a court hearing on 08.04.2020.

08.04.2020: **Centralisation** - Following supposed instructions from Gotabaya to monitor the local distribution of COVID-19 relief, SL's occupational forces have centralised over 200 village officers (mostly Tamils) under their control and supervision, reports TamilNet.

09.04.2020: **Operation** - According to SL Police's DIG, Ajith Rohana, an island-wide operation would be in-effect from 10.04.2020. Violators of

curfew regulations who cross district borders would be subject to a 14-day quarantine period within COVID-19 quarantine centres, reports Colombo Gazette.

11.04.2020: **Curfew** - PMD news reports indicate that curfew regulations would be temporarily lifted for a few hours on 16.04.2020 except for in high-risk areas, reports Colombo Gazette.

15.04.2020: **Arrests** - According to Newswire.lk, 197 individuals were arrested by SL's CID and TID in relation to the Easter Sunday Attacks. The prominent lawyer Hejaaz Hizbullah and the brother of former SL minister ACMC Leader Rishad Bathiudeen, Riyaj Bathiudeen, were amongst the arrested persons.

15.05.2020: **COVID-19** - According to TamilNet, informed EPDP sources had reported that Shavendra Silva had instructed local occupational forces to convert secret military camps located throughout Tamil Eelam to torture and kill former LTTE members into undeclared COVID-19 quarantine centres.

16.04.2020: **COVID-19** - 8 of 14 detainees held at the COVID-19 quarantine

centres in KKS have been reported to have re-tested positive to COVID-19 due to cross infections, reports TamilNet.

17.04.2020: **Arrest** - According to Colombo Gazette, SL police had mentioned that a total of 17 suspects, including 2 women had been arrested for the spread of misinformation regarding COVID-19. One woman was arrested on 17.04.2020 and is scheduled to appear before a local Magistrate later in the day.

19.04.2020: **Transport** - According to Colombo Gazette, SL's Ministry of Transport Management had released guidelines outlining public travel and transportation. The published press release mentioned that public transportation would commence from 20.04.2020.

19.04.2020: **Attack** - Following investigations by the CID, SL police have mentioned that a plot to conduct another attack following the Easter Sunday attacks of 2019 had been discovered and were under further investigation, reports Colombo Gazette.

20.04.2020: **SL General Election** - According to Newswire.lk, the spokesperson of SL's Election Commission had

confirmed that SL's general elections would be held on the 20.06.2020.

21.04.2020: **Easter attack** - According to Daily Mirror, Gotabaya had mentioned that he would not allow any form of extremist violence from any extremists to influence Sri Lanka again and that the perpetrators responsible for the Easter Sunday attacks from 2019 would be held accountable.

22.04.2020: **Constitutional Council** - According to Newswire.lk, SL's Constitutional Council had been scheduled to convene on 23.04.2020.

22.04.2020: **New Regulation** - According to Newswire.lk, the SL government had announced the introduction of a new regulation for the maintenance of social distancing and hygiene. The new regulation will include; the closure of food stalls near hospitals, maintenance of the closure of barbershops and the permission of only two individuals in a three-wheeler.

22.04.2020: **Arrest** - According to Sunday Times LK, three fundamental rights (FR) applications were filed this week before SL's Supreme Court, including two by former Sri Lanka

Human Rights Commission (HRCSL) member Ambika Satkunanathan. The applications were put forth to challenge the presidential pardon granted to genocidaire, Sunil Ratnayake.

23.04.2020: **Maha Sangha** - According to Newswire.lk, Gotabaya had met with the "Maha Sangha" (high-ranking Buddhist monks). In this meeting, he was reported to have explained the measures undertaken by the SL government to combat the COVID-19 situation. The Maha Sangha was reported to have mentioned that Gotabaya would be remembered as the leader, who had saved the country twice. The upcoming Vesak celebrations were reported to be held online through the use of electronic media. It was also reported that Gotabaya is scheduled to meet with the Maha Sangha on the third Friday of each month.

25.04.2020: **TNA** - According to Newswire.lk, TNA MP, M.A. Sumanthiran had stated that the opposition would assist the SL government to pass necessary funds and regulations to address the COVID-19 situation, if SL parliament reconvened.

25.04.2020: **ID System** - According to Azzam

Ameen, a new system based on the SL ID-Nr had been introduced. The system has been reported to be used to regulate the flow of the public to purchase food and medicine within localities.

29.04.2020: **Arrest** - SL police spokesperson, SP Jaliya Senaratne mentioned that 41,557 people had been arrested for curfew violations and 10,719 vehicles were seized, reports News First LK.

Economic News

01.04.2020: **Stock market** - The CSE had announced that the market would be closed until the island-wide curfew would be lifted, reports Colombo Page.

01.04.2020: **SriLankan Airlines** - According to newswire.lk, SriLankan Airlines is scheduled to suspend their flights from 08.04.2020 - 21.04.2020.

02.04.2020: **SriLankan Airlines** - According to Newswire.lk, SriLankan Airlines has been reported to introduce a cut to employee wages in response to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 situation.

02.04.2020: **Foreign Currency** - The chief of

29.04.2020: **Easter Attack** - According to Newswire.lk, SL's TID had gathered intelligence regarding two locations, where the Easter Sunday bombers had allegedly received weapons training. The locations were reported as places in Thoppur and Sampur. The TID was further reported to have specified that another fundamentalist organisation was active from Puttalam. .

30.04.2020: **SL Parliament** - According to Newswire.lk, Gotabaya had replied to the

SL's Central Bank chief & head of Treasury had requested Sri Lankans of the diaspora or foreign "well wishers" to deposit their foreign currencies into local SL banks to counter the economic consequences generated by the COVID-19 outbreak.

02.04.2020: **World Bank** - World Bank has approved a loan of USD 128.6 million to assist Sri Lanka to; "prevent, detect, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen its public health preparedness", reports newswire.lk.

02.04.2020: **Hambantota** - The Chinese embassy in Sri Lanka had tweeted that their first ship had arrived

opposition's request through a letter. The opposition had requested SL parliament to be reconvened on 27.04.2020 - a request which Gotabaya had denied in the published letter.

30.04.2020: **SL Parliament** - A meeting has been convened with SL's old parliament MPs scheduled to meet on 04.05.2020 to discuss the country's current situation, reports Colombo Gazette. The meeting was reportedly arranged by Mahindha.

at the Hambantota International Port to discharge fuel.

03.04.2020: **Markets** - During a meeting between SL Foreign Minister Gunawardena and the Foreign Ministry at the Ministry in Colombo, discussions were conducted regarding the implementation of practical economic solutions to support expatriated SL communities and to seek new market solutions.

04.04.2020: **UN** - According to Colombo Gazette, UN's Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

(ESCAP), Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana had mentioned to Daily Mirror that emergency fiscal support would assist the pressures upon SL's economy and health industry due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It was further reported that she had mentioned that the additional measures implemented by the government would increase the strain of debt upon the administration.

06.04.2020: Investments - In a published Gazette notification, Mahindha and SL's Minister of Finance, had introduced measures to suspend local citizens from making any outward payments for foreign investments. The suspension has been mentioned to span a period of 3 months, reports Colombo Gazette.

08.04.2020: SL Rupee - According to Newswire.lk, the SL rupee had hit 200 against the USD for the first time in history.

09.04.2020: US - According to Daily Mirror, the U.S Embassy in Colombo had announced that USD 1.3 million was donated to help protect healthcare workers and slow the spread of COVID-19. It was also reported that infection prevention and control support would be provided by the United

States Agency for International Development (USAID).

09.04.2020: EU - According to Daily Mirror, the EU had pledged EUR 22 million to support SL's COVID-19 response and its; health, agriculture and tourism sectors.

10.04.2020: London - The London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG) has been reported to have donated LKR 5 million to UNICEF to assist Sri Lanka's efforts to control the COVID-19 outbreak, reports Colombo Gazette.

10.04.2020: COVID -19 - According to PMD News, SL's COVID - 19 Healthcare and Social Security Funds' balance had surpassed LKR 609 million due to corporate and individual donations. It was mentioned that the donations would be credited into a special account opened under the number of 85737373 at the Corporate Branch of the Bank of Ceylon.

10.04.2020: China - According to Daily Mirror, the Chinese Embassy in Colombo had mentioned that 20,064 COVID-19 test kits (PCR-Fluorescence Probing) had been donated through a collaborative effort between the Alibaba Foundation and the Jack Ma Foundation to Sri

Lanka. The kits have been scheduled to arrive from Shanghai on the night of 10.04.2020.

12.04.2020: COVID-19 - According to Newswire.lk, a new bank account entitled, the "Special Deposit Account", had been announced to allow the Sri Lankan diaspora and inhabitants to remit their; earnings, savings and investments to any bank of choice within Sri Lanka. It was further reported that the interest rates would be high and the minimum period of maturity would be 6 months. 14 foreign currencies are also reported to be accepted.

12.04.2020: World Bank - According to the World Bank, several South Asian countries (including Sri Lanka) are due to face the worst recession in the last 4 decades due to the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak. The annual growth of Sri Lanka's economy is estimated to be between -3% and -0.5%.

15.04.2020: SL Rupee - According to Azzam Ameen, the selling rate of the USD is at 195.78 Sri Lankan Rupees.

16.04.2020: Plantations - Planters have been reported to have mentioned that a depreciation in the currency will further

impact current high cost production in the plantations industry, reports Colombo Gazette.

17.04.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Newswire.lk, the COVID-19 fund had generated LKR 703 million. This money will be reportedly spent on:

- The provision of medicine
- Medical research equipment
- Financial needs for health security facilities (including capacity building)
- Ensuring the safety and well-being of employees of the health sector and essential service providers
- The provision of basic needs for:

Children, Women, low-income families, senior citizens, differently-abled persons and other vulnerable groups.

17.04.2020: **IMF** - According to Colombo Gazette, the IMF is engaged in discussions with the GoSL regarding a Rapid Credit Facility Program and are in the process of reviewing current funding programs provided to Sri Lanka.

19.04.2020: **Extortion** - District and Divisional Secretariat officials and

Samurdhi development officers from Jaffna have mentioned that their salaries had been cut under 3 categories with claims to support COVID-19 relief efforts, reports TamilNet.

21.04.2020: **Donation** - According to PMD News, the COVID-19 Healthcare and Social Security Funds' balance had surpassed LKR 785 million.

21.04.2020: **Japan** - According to Newswire.lk, Japan had donated LKR 230 Million RS to Sri Lanka to assist their control of the COVID-19 outbreak. The funds are reported to be provided through UNICEF, IOM and the International Federation of Red Cross.

22.04.2020: **Task Force** - Gotabaya had established a Presidential Task Force in charge of Economic Revival and Poverty Eradication, reports Colombo Gazette.

23.04.2020: **Canada** - According to Colombo Gazette, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) had granted CAD 56,000 in funds to the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka to combat the COVID-19 outbreak.

24.04.2020: **Fitch Ratings** - According to Newswire.lk, Fitch Ratings had downgraded Sri Lanka's Long-Term Foreign and Local-

Currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDR) from 'B' to 'B-'. This negative rating was reportedly made due to SL's introduction of cuts to their Value Added Tax (VAT) scheme and the increased printing of the LKR.

27.04.2020: **Donation** - According to PMD News, the COVID - 19 Healthcare and Social Security Funds' balance had surpassed LKR 866 million.

28.04.2020: **Cargo** - According to Colombo Page, the freights division of Emirates (Emirates Sky Cargo) had assisted SL to export 1,000 tonnes of local produce to Europe, the Middle East and Asia within 2 weeks.

29.04.2020: **Technology** - According to Newswire.lk, a locally manufactured robot was presented to Mahinda Rajapakse. Reports indicate that this robot is capable of diagnosing 200 diseases and providing corresponding medical advice.

29.04.2020: **China** - China's acting ambassador and charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Colombo, Hu Wei had expressed China's interest in supporting Sri Lanka to rebuild their economy during a meeting with

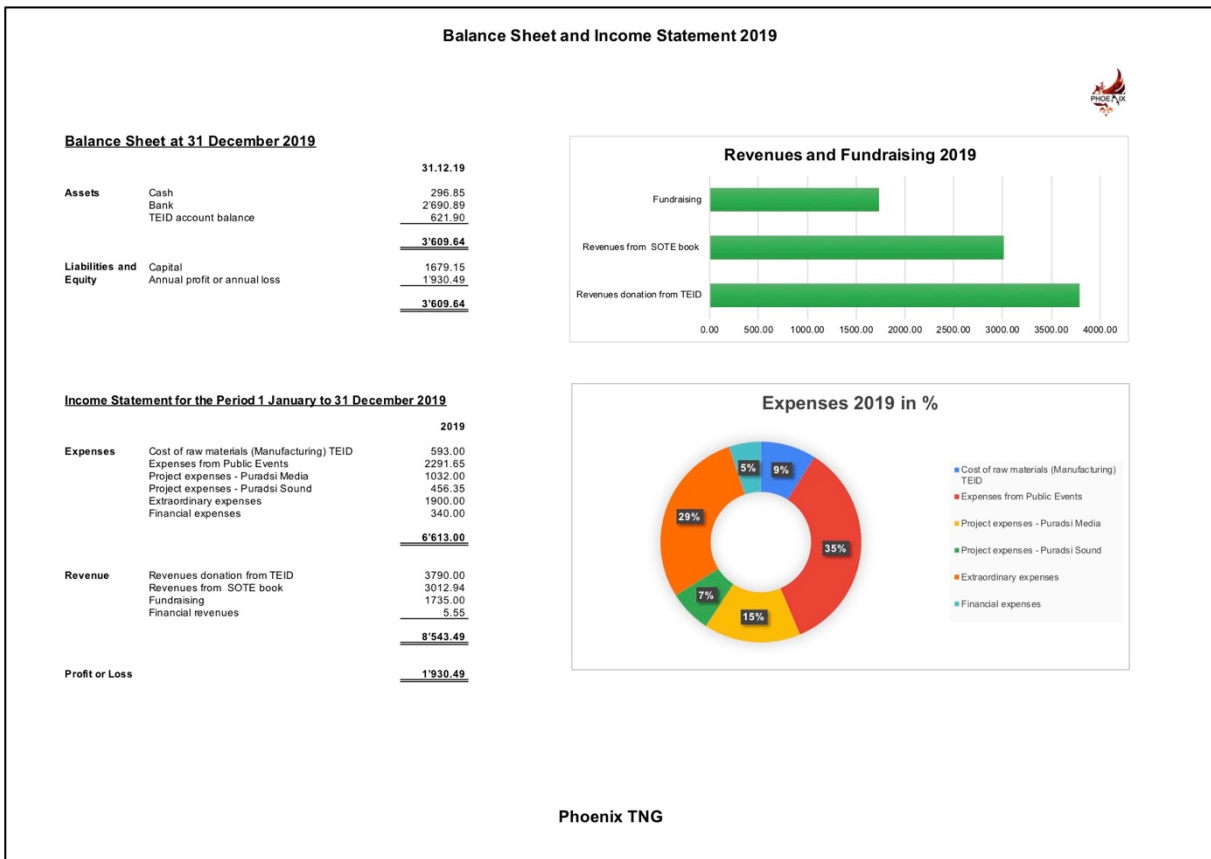
Gotabaya, reports Colombo Gazette.

29.04.2020: **Post** - SL's postmaster-general, Ranjith Ariyaratne has mentioned that SL's post service would recommence from 04.05.2020, reports Colombo Gazette.

27.04.2020: **Donation** - According to PMD News, the COVID-19 Healthcare and Social Security Funds' balance had surpassed LKR 878 million.

30.04.2020: **Petrol** - Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminal Ltd.'s Chairman, Uvais Mohamed had

mentioned that SL's supplies of petroleum were sufficient as the country's store had not been used due to curfew measures. As a result, the import of petroleum has been temporarily suspended, reports Colombo Gazette.



News about Oppression & Resistance

31.03.2020: **Media** - A Tamil journalist, Nadrasalingam Thusanth was attacked on 30.03.2020 by unidentified persons in Kilinochchi despite curfew regulations, reports Tamil Guardian.

03.04.2020: **HRW** - HRW's South Asia Director, Meenakshi

Ganguly has been reported to have mentioned that SL's measures to combat COVID-19 had curtailed freedom of expression. Ganguly mentioned that such restrictions were implemented through "blanket" censorship and threats of arrest, reports Colombo Gazette.

12.04.2020: **Cremation** - According to Colombo

Gazette, a published Gazette notice introduced the mandatory cremation of all COVID-19 affected victims who had perished as a result. However, as reported by Aljazeera, it is noteworthy that 2 Muslims who had passed away due to COVID-19 had been forcibly cremated earlier this month. The cremation of the 2 individuals had

occurred prior to the official announcement and had been in direct violation of the families' cultural beliefs thus drawing immense international criticism.

13.04.2020: **Media** - After receiving death threats following a post made on Facebook in the Sinhala language which outlined the plight of Muslims on the island on 02.04.2020, the son of late-journalist Star Razeek, Ramzy Razeek, was arrested and detained by SL police on 09.04.2020, reports TamiNet.

21.04.2020: **Muslim unity** - The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka requested Muslims to unite against the violence and injustice that had been unleashed against them, especially in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks of 2019, reports

Colombo Gazette. The council had reportedly made the request through a published statement.

28.04.2020: **HRCSL** - HRCSL had written a letter to SL's Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP) expressing condemnation regarding the police's arrest of countless individuals from 01.04.2020. The letter was reported to have expressed that the restriction of freedom of expression and the democratic rights of citizens were unacceptable, even during times of crisis, reports Colombo Gazette.

28.04.2020: **Protest** - The locals of Araali staged a protest condemning the occupational military's appropriation and conversion of local schools into COVID-19 quarantine centres, reports TamiNet. Despite

maintaining a policy in Colombo that schools should not be converted into quarantine centres, the SL government's actions have reportedly outraged Tamils and received condemnation from the Ceylon Teachers' Union.

29.04.2020:

Remembrance - The 15th memorial of Mamanithar D. Sivaram was commemorated across Tamil Eelam despite curfew regulations, reports TamiNet.

30.04.2020: **Media** - According to Colombo Gazette, Facebook will be engaging with the AFP and fact crescendo in SL to address the spread of misinformation across social media platforms. The interaction allows accounts to be removed or restricted based on legal orders.

Signs of Structural Genocide

10.04.2020:

Appropriation

- According to TamilNet, resettlement into lands appropriated by the SL navy in Mullikkulam near Mannar was becoming increasingly unlikely - especially with the introduction of curfew measures. The lands had been appropriated during Gotabaya's term as SL's Defence Secretary in 2013 to establish a naval command HQ. Whilst only 35 acres of lands were used for the HQ, the remaining privately-owned lands were deemed "out-of-bounds". The Sirisena regime had returned 77 acres of Church lands but continued to deceive the protestors that the remainder would be released overtime. The lands remain out of reach to their traditional owners - the Eelam Tamils, reports TamilNet.

27.04.2020:

Militarisation - A Tamil teaching college in Jaffna, as well as 5 local schools within the occupied Northern Province have been appropriated by SL's military to establish COVID-19 quarantine centres, reports TamilNet. These include:

- Jaffna National College of Education (JNCOE) - Koopaay
- Kaithadi Government Mixed Tamil School (GMTS) - Kaithadi
- Reberg College - Chavakachcheri, Jaffna
- Azhakaapuri GMTS - Kilinochchi
- Olu - Madu Maha Viththiyaalayam - Mullaiththevu
- Peasaalai school - Mannar

28.04.2020:

Militarisation - The occupational SL military had seized over 50 schools to function as military-run COVID-19 quarantine centres causing outrage amongst locals, reports TamilNet.