



Statement for International Women's Day 2024:

**Let's determine to build a world free from torture, where all women can thrive**

On this International Women's Day, the Right to Life Human Rights Centre stands in solidarity with women in Sri Lanka and around the world. As we commemorate this day, it is imperative to recognize and address the grave issue of torture against women, particularly psychological torture, which leaves indelible scars on their lives.

Article 1 of the United Nations Convention against Torture unequivocally defines torture and places the responsibility on state parties to prevent and prohibit such heinous acts. While Act No. 22 of 1994 in Sri Lanka aligns its laws with the UNCAT, the reality for women remains deeply troubling.

Women in Sri Lanka are disproportionately targeted for various forms of torture, including sexual violence. Sri Lankan women also face specific vulnerabilities to workplace harassment and cyberbullying. The prevalence of sexual violence against women, documented in reports by organizations like the World Organization Against Torture, underscores the urgent need for action.

Moreover, the societal stigma attached to survivors of sexual violence exacerbates their trauma, hindering their access to support and justice. The entrenched gender imbalances in power dynamics further compound the vulnerability of women to torture and coercion.

On this International Women's Day, we urge the Sri Lankan government and society at large to prioritize the protection of women's rights and dignity. We call for comprehensive measures to address and eradicate all forms of torture against women, ensuring their safety, security, and access to justice. Together, let us work towards a future where every woman in Sri Lanka can live free from the nightmare of torture and violence.

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