



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



RIGHT TO LIFE
HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

**Right to Life
Human Rights Center**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2023**



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Executive Directors Message



In 2023, the Right to Life Human Rights Organization celebrated its 20th anniversary. Founded in 2003 in the Katunayake Free Trade Zone in the Gampaha district, our organization relocated to Colombo in 2017. This move marked a significant transformation for us, culminating in 2023.

Since 2022, Sri Lanka has faced a severe economic and political crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis led to widespread shortages of essential goods like food, medicine, fuel, gas, and electricity, sparking public protests and pushing the country towards semi-anarchy. The resignation of the Prime Minister and President under popular pressure further complicated the situation.

The new president managed to stabilize the situation by implementing strict measures to control the protests. Despite the repressive actions of the security forces, the state system was gradually restored, bringing some stability to people's lives. However, the majority of Sri Lankans continued to suffer from a severe economic crisis due to increased taxes, rising prices of essential utilities like electricity and fuel, and high inflation. The collapse of small businesses and development sectors disproportionately affected low-income people, impacting our organization and our human rights initiatives.

In response, we engaged in deep discussions on overcoming the economic crisis, focusing on economic rights. One outcome was a study on Sri Lanka's social safety nets, their operations, and their effectiveness. We conducted a survey on the prosperity and comfort provided by these safety nets and held regional discussions based on our findings.

Using our Human Rights First Aid Centers, we expanded our reach in 2023. We also evaluated the performance of independent commissions established by the government, resulting in two reports on complaints received by our centers, the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission, and the Police Commission. Additionally, we prepared a report on the functioning of the Right to Information Act.

In 2023, we transformed our social media presence by converting the Daily Reporter into an English media website, launching a quarterly Torture Monitoring Report, and starting a Tamil Facebook page. Our MOJO program successfully brought human rights complaints to social media, achieving notable success with some submissions.

We collaborated with the National Collective of Civil Society Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations and advocated for democratic process in terms of the government's effort to bring a new Voluntary Social Service Organizations (Registration and Supervision) Act. We met the Minister of Public Security and submitted the civil society proposals. Although Sri Lanka achieved temporary stability by the end of 2023, the country still faces significant political and economic challenges. Our primary responsibility remains to transform this temporary stability into long-term economic development that secures human rights.

Philip Dissanayake
Executive Director

What Right to Life Human Rights Centre did in 2023

Introduction

2023 was a pivotal year for the Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L) as it navigated the aftermath of Sri Lanka's severe economic crisis. The departure of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the initiation of an IMF-backed economic restructuring under President Ranil Wickramasinghe marked a period of significant transition. Despite these challenges, R2L remained steadfast in its commitment to advocating for a torture-free, human rights-protected, and democratic Sri Lanka.

Challenges and Responses

The economic collapse of 2022 led to widespread shortages and a crisis in fuel availability, affecting logistics and the execution of nationwide programs. The coordinators of the Human Rights First Aid Centres (HRFACs) faced substantial hurdles in organizing events due to escalating prices and limited supplies. Nonetheless, R2L and its network of HRFACs tirelessly worked to address these issues, emphasizing the importance of a robust economic foundation as a cornerstone of human rights protection.

Expanding the Discourse on Human Rights

The crisis underscored the interdependence of economic stability and human rights. R2L engaged in extensive internal discussions and dialogues with partners to broaden its vision and mission to include emerging issues such as economic crises and climate change. A baseline survey on social safety nets was conducted, revealing the necessity for enhanced engagement in areas like small entrepreneurship and microcredit to help individuals transition away from social assistance programs.

Strengthening Networks and Advocacy

With the support of its partners, R2L expanded and fortified networks including HRFACs, Journalists for Rights, Lawyers for Human Rights, and Citizens for Justice. These groups played a crucial role in addressing the community's issues and directing victims of rights violations towards justice. R2L also played a key role as a co-convenor in forming and strengthening the Collective of CSOs and NGOs, advocating against the proposed Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Registration and Supervision) Act, which posed a threat to freedom of association and expression.

Peacebuilding

Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L) has recognized the necessity of re-engaging with the peacebuilding process as a fundamental aspect of its advocacy for more inclusive democracy. This renewed focus aligns with the initiatives of the new President, who has proposed the establishment of an independent Truth, Unity, and Reconciliation Commission aimed at addressing transitional justice issues in Sri Lanka. R2L plans to play a proactive role in catalyzing positive change within this framework, facilitating progress in transitional justice and seeking comprehensive political solutions to the ethnic issues that have long challenged the nation. This involvement underscores R2L's commitment to fostering enduring peace and equity across diverse communities in Sri Lanka.

Media and Advocacy Initiatives

R2L significantly enhanced its media and advocacy arm, leveraging both social and legacy media to champion human rights causes. Training sessions in media advocacy were held, focusing on mobile journalism and citizen journalism to equip human rights defenders with the skills needed to effectively disseminate their messages.

Capacity Building and Organizational Development

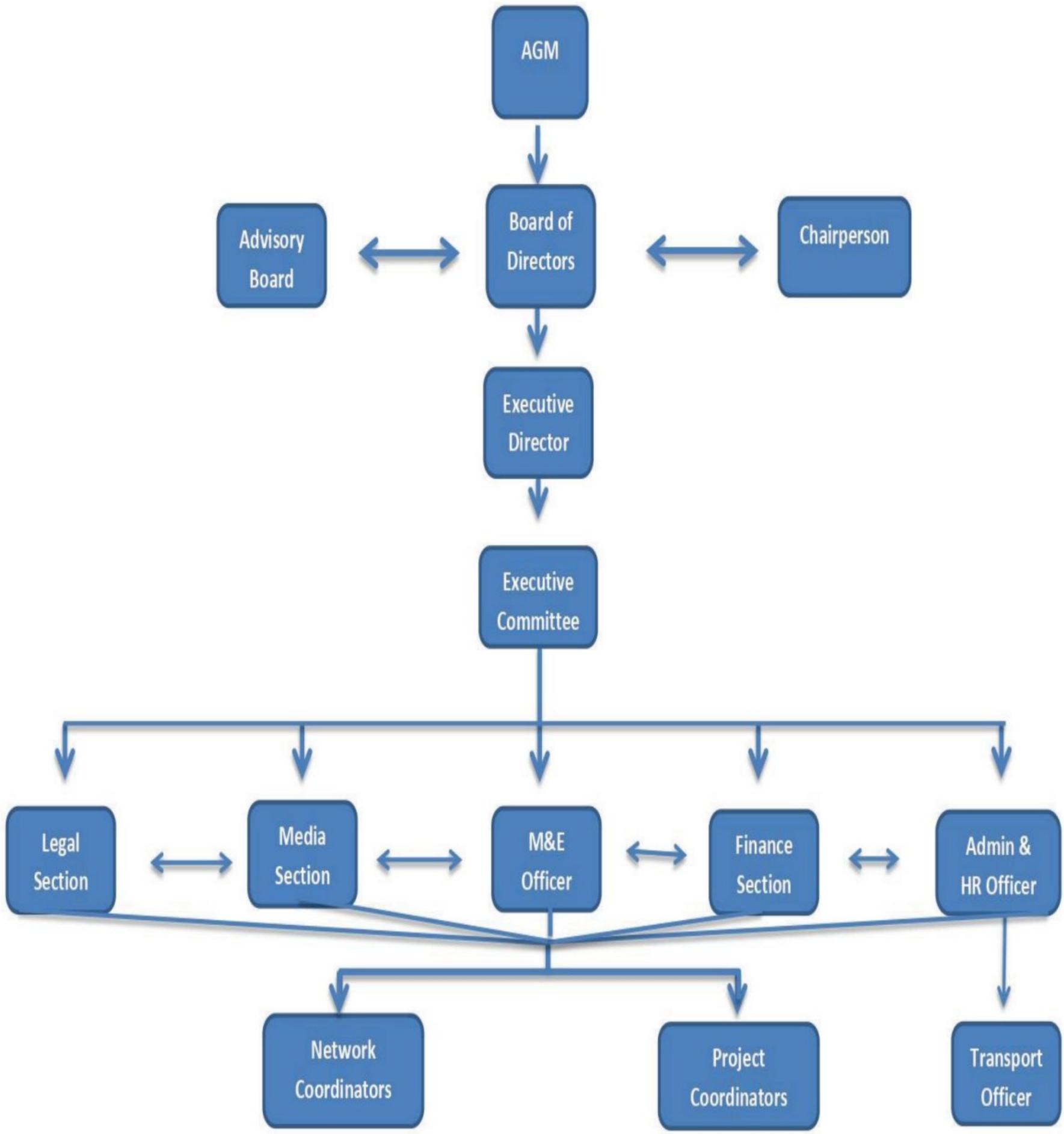
Investment in the professional capacities of R2L staff was a key focus area in 2023. Training in project management, monitoring and evaluation, financial management, human resource development, and advocacy was intensified. Gender parity remained a cross-cutting theme in all of R2L's activities, reinforcing the organization's commitment to equality.

Conclusion

Despite the myriad challenges faced in 2023, it was a year marked by resilience and significant progress for R2L. The organization not only adapted to the rapidly changing socio-political landscape of Sri Lanka but also expanded its scope to address new challenges. As we move forward, R2L remains dedicated to its mission of promoting human rights and democracy, advocating for the necessary reforms to ensure sustainable development and political stability in Sri Lanka.

About R2L

Organization Structure



Board of Directors 2023



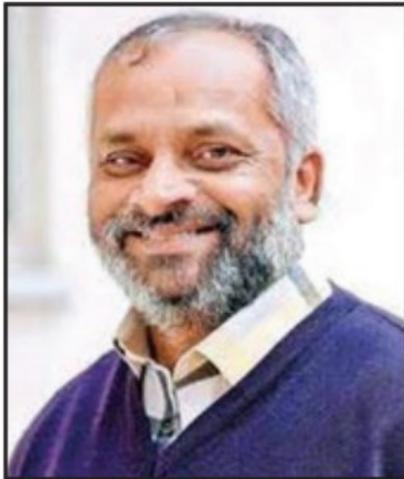
Chairman
Mr. Lakshan Dias (AAL)



Executive Director
Mr. Philip Dissanayake



Director – Finance
Mr. Nihal Fernando



Director
Mr. Herman Kumara



Director
Mr. Dulan Dassanayake (AAL)



Director
Mr. Suresh Nadesan



Directress
Ms. Kusum Silva

Staff of 2023¹

Projects and Fundraising Section

- I. Ajith Perakum Jayasinghe – Projects Manager
- II. Rashmika Wijesinghe – Assistant Project Manager
- III. Dinithi Supekshala – M&E Officer
- IV. Prashanthan Pathmanadan – Project Coordinator
- V. Theivendran Mithilaimaran – Project Officer

Legal, Education and Research Section

- I. Lakshan Fernando (AAL) – Head of Section (Till 31st of May)
- II. Amitha Priyanthi – Victim Liaison Officer
- III. Suneth Gajanayake – Assistant coordinator
- IV. Heshani Karunaratne – Assistant Legal Officer

Media and Communication

- I. Suranjan Prasad – Head of Section
- II. Samudu Basnayake – Coordinator
- III. Sameera Dhannjaya – Technical Officer
- IV. Nuwan Dhananjaya – Media Officer

Finance and Administration Section

- I. Kalpani Perera – Finance Manager
- II. Chamodi Thambugala - Accountant
- III. Anuththara Devindi – Assistant Accountant
- IV. Paulraj Dhanushagar – Accounts Assistant

1. <https://www.right2lifelanka.org/staff/>

R2L Activities in 2023

Legal Section

The Legal Section at R2L is a cornerstone of our commitment to a just and equitable society. With a dedicated team of legal experts, we played a crucial role in promoting justice and protecting human rights in Sri Lanka throughout the past year.

Key achievements:

- Effective legal representation: We handled numerous court cases, providing legal assistance to those in need and securing positive outcomes.
- Advocacy for change: We actively engaged in advocacy programs, pushing for positive changes in the Sri Lankan legal system to ensure fair treatment for all.
- Empowering individuals: We prioritized legal education initiatives, equipping individuals with knowledge of their rights and responsibilities.

Network strength:

Our impact is amplified by four key networks operating under the Legal Section:

- Sri Lankan Collective Against Torture
- Human Rights First Aid Centres
- Lawyers for Rights
- Citizens for Justice

Through collaborative efforts with these networks, we broaden our reach and maximize our impact in the pursuit of a just and equitable Sri Lanka.

Cases filed in the year 2023

In 2023, R2L has taken significant steps in the pursuit of justice by filing eight fundamental rights cases. Among these, a particularly notable case involves the police attack on a public protest in Rambukkanadi in 2022. This protest was sparked by widespread discontent among the people due to the severe oil shortage and the ongoing economic crisis. The situation escalated, leading to violence where several protesters were injured, and some tragically lost their lives. In response, R2L filed fundamental rights cases seeking justice for the victims, emphasizing the importance of holding those responsible accountable.

Additionally, R2L has also filed a fundamental rights case addressing the dereliction of duty by the police in connection with the events that took place at Gall-face on May 9, 2022. On this date, despite the clear presence of a hostile mob, the police failed to take appropriate measures to prevent an attack on the protesters, leading to further injuries and unrest. This case aims to highlight the negligence on the part of law enforcement and seeks accountability for their failure to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens.

Judgements received in the year 2023

SCFR 85/2015	L.A.Samantha	Extra Judicial Killing	JUDGEMENT (in favour of the victim
SCFR 135/2020	Ramzi Razeek	ICCPR	JUDGEMENT (in favour of victim
SCFR 15/23	Galleface Case	Torture	Dismissed

Human Rights First Aid centers

Nationwide expansion

2005 -2007 - Gampaha, Matara, Hambantota

2007 -2010 - Gampaha, Matara, Hambantota, Galle, Puttalam

2010 - 2012 - Gampaha, Matara, Hambantota, Galle, Puttalam, Badulla, Monaragala, Kantale, Hatton

2018 -2023 -Gampaha, Matara, Hambantota, Galle, Puttalam, Badulla, Monaragala, Kantale, Hatton, Ratnapura, Kalutara, Anuradhapura, kurunegala, Trincomalee

The operation of Human Rights First Aid Centers in 2023.

Educational workshops and awareness programs

The human rights education workshops were organized in alignment with the Human Rights First Aid Centers across all ten districts. As a result, more than 300 local activists were empowered and mobilized to serve as Human Rights Defenders.



Publicity campaigns

Publicity Leaflets Campaigns on HRFACs

We Conducted leaflets distribution campaign programs to raise awareness of human rights with the participation of the human rights defenders of our Human Rights First Aid Centers



The leaflets campaign was conducted on 10/11/2023 in Monaragala District through our Monaragala District Human Rights First Aid Center.

Awareness Campaign on proposed VSSO Act

Leaflet distribution campaigns were conducted nationwide to inform the public and grassroots social activists about the proposed Voluntary Social Service Organizations (Registration and Supervision) Act.

Case Handling of the Human Rights First Aid Centres

In 2023, our Human Rights First Aid Centers swiftly addressed human rights violations, executive and administrative infringements, and civil incidents, providing vital support for justice. Over 500 cases, including human rights and fundamental rights violations, civil matters, and welfare issues, were reported to and addressed by our centers, offering essential legal remedies to the victims.

Complaints received by HRFACs are referred to Independent Commission Commissions, especially concerning irregularities in the state machinery. Through this process, efforts have been made to enhance the Independent Commission's operations and mechanisms.

Referral of received complaints to independent commissions for further review and action.

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka	National Police Commission	Directing information requests to public authorities. (RTI)
142	62	158



Regional Discussions

Discussion on Proposed VSSO Act

Six regional discussions were conducted in collaboration with Human Rights First Aid Centers to raise awareness and exchange ideas with local activists and civil society leaders regarding the proposed VSSO Act.



Deliberative Discussions on Aswesuma and Other Welfare Benefits Programs

Human Rights First Aid Centers across the 10 districts organized deliberative discussions involving recipients of Aswesuma and other welfare benefits. The main objective was to identify gaps in social safety nets and propose solutions through the sharing of practical experiences.



Research

Baseline Survey on Social Safety Nets

A baseline survey was conducted with the participation of approximately 1200 randomly selected individuals nationwide through Human Rights First Aid Centers to evaluate the effectiveness of social safety nets.

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- පවුලේ මාසික ආදායම් දළ වශයෙන් (විවිධ පිළිතුරු ලබා දීමට අවධානය)
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 - 30000- 40000 අතර
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- සම සතුටු ඉඩමක්/ ඉඩම් හිමිකම් සම්පත්: (විවිධ පිළිතුරු ලබා දීමට අවධානය)
 - පිටතට
 - රජයේ භුමිමත
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i. ඉඩමේ ප්‍රමාණය: ගොඩ පරිමි: මඩ පරිමි: (අක්ෂර ගණනින් ද දැක්විය හැකිය)

ii. වගා කරන භිමි ප්‍රමාණය (වර්ග:.....)

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Projects

Thematic Areas of R2L in 2023

In 2023, the Right to Life Human Rights Centre embarked on a transformative journey with the development of a new strategic plan spanning 2023 to 2025. This pivotal moment saw the organization expanding its scope of thematic areas, transitioning from a focus primarily on issues such as police torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances to encompass a broader spectrum of human rights concerns. Following the conceptual interrelation between human rights and socio-economic rights, the Right to Life Human Rights Centre purposefully included socio-economic rights among the R2L's strategic directions. Therefore, the new strategic plan emphasized not only the importance of dealing with civil and political right violations but socio-economic injustices that hinder human rights and human dignity.

Consistent with the new ambition, the following two main thematic areas of the Right to Life Human Rights Centre's activities were outlined for 2023:

1. Human Rights, Rule of Law, Torture Prevention, and Protection
2. Social, Cultural, and Economic Empowerment.

These themes reflect the Centre's belief in the holistic nature of human rights advocacy, which cannot be subdivided as legal protection, socioeconomic status, or empowerment processes being unrelated to one another. During the year, the Right to Life continued, with persistence and tireless energy, all work and advocacy covered by the two thematic umbrellas to make society safer and more secure for everyone, free from fear, oppression, or deprivation.

By expanding its focus to encompass socio-economic empowerment alongside human rights advocacy, the Right to Life Human Rights Centre positioned itself as a multifaceted force for positive change, dedicated to upholding the dignity and rights of all individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic status.



Projects Carried Out on Year 2023

Over the past year, our organization has experienced substantial growth and achieved notable milestones. We embarked on several pivotal projects that not only were successfully initiated but also completed with excellence. These initiatives have not only met but exceeded our fundraising objectives, bolstering the sustainability and profound impact of our mission. This report outlines the highlights of our major projects and provides an overview of our remarkable fundraising achievements, demonstrating our commitment to advancing our goals and making a lasting difference in our community.

1. To protect and promote human rights of the marginalized – Open Society Foundation Duration: September, 2021- September, 2023

The aims and objectives of this project were:

Purpose: To create a solid civil society movement to stand for the general public specially to inherit the proposed reforms through advocacy and public engagement.

Objective 01: To promote and strengthen civil society through HRDGs and CSO leaders to continuously and consistently protect and promote human rights.

Objective 02: To enhance knowledge and educate the general public on their rights violations during this pandemic situation and to engage with the ongoing social discourse.

Under the above objectives following activities have been conducted.

1. Public Meetings - 10
2. International Day commemorations - 03
3. Press Conferences - 6
4. Publications - 2
5. Workshop for HRDGs/CSO leaders
6. Social Media Campaign for 24 months
7. CSO leaders / HRDGs Meetings (One day) - 6 Meetings

It was mentioned that it is very important to address the previously mentioned problems that arose in the country in carrying out project activities with this goal and objectives. Outlined in the introduction were the primary six activities executed within the project scope. However, the project expanded beyond the initial proposal, encompassing additional activities, as detailed in the table below. Moreover, supplementary endeavors aligned with diverse project objectives were also undertaken in conjunction with the main activities.

Variance activities conducted under the project.

1. Educational program for HRDs – 10
2. Regional International Day commemorations – 2
3. Mobile journalism workshop for Youth HRDs – 1
4. Providing support to needy people through HRFACs – 10 Centre's (3 Months)

2. Strengthening Collective Civil Society Advocacy to Ensure Political and Civil Rights – National Endowment Democracy

Project Objectives:

- Raise awareness about the draft Voluntary Social Service Organizations (Registration and Supervision) Act (VSSO Act) and alternative proposals.
- Advocate for positive changes to the VSSO Act and policy-making through collaboration with CSOs, media, and policymakers.
- Analyze the effectiveness of Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commissions in handling complaints.
- Increase awareness about the misuse of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Act.
- Enhance the advocacy skills of CSO representatives and activists.

Key Activities and Achievements:

- VSSO Act Awareness: R2L conducted six consultations with CSO representatives across Sri Lanka to discuss the proposed VSSO Act and gather feedback. A final meeting was held in Colombo with prominent national-level CSO leaders, politicians, and government officials. Additionally, a pamphlet explaining the VSSO Act was published in Sinhala and Tamil for wider dissemination.
- Media Advocacy: R2L published an opinion editorial in a local newspaper and utilized social media platforms to raise awareness about the VSSO Act and its potential impact on civil society.
- ICCPR Act Analysis: R2L published a report titled "Abuse of Power" analyzing the misuse of the ICCPR Act. Two public seminars were held to discuss the report's findings and raise awareness about the act's implications. Media coverage of these events helped further disseminate the information.
- Human Rights Complaint Analysis: R2L analyzed human rights violation complaints received by 10 Human Rights First Aid Centers (HRFACs) over a 10-month period. They assessed the effectiveness of the Human Rights Commission, National Police Commission, and Right to Information Commission in addressing these complaints.
- Advocacy Skills Training: R2L conducted training programs to improve the advocacy skills of CSO representatives and activists in utilizing social media for advocacy purposes.

Report Links:

- Freedom of Association Challenged in Sri Lanka (English): <https://www.right2lifelanka.org/>
- Freedom of Association Challenged in Sri Lanka (Sinhala): <https://www.right2lifelanka.org/>
- Freedom of Association Challenged in Sri Lanka (Tamil): <https://www.right2lifelanka.org/>
- Abuse of Power (ICCPR Act Report): <https://www.right2lifelanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Abuse-of-Power-ICCPR-Act.pdf>

Overall, the project successfully raised awareness about critical issues related to civil society and human rights in Sri Lanka. Through various activities and advocacy efforts, R2L aimed to achieve a more favorable environment for civil society organizations and the protection of human rights in the country.

3. “You Are Not Alone” Support Torture Victims – United Nations Voluntarily Fund for Victims of Torture – 1st January 2023 to 31st of December 2023

Summary of Proposal and Activities Conducted

The Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L) aimed to provide comprehensive assistance to torture victims in Sri Lanka, focusing on legal, social, psychological, and medical support. Funded by the UNVFVT grant, the project initially planned to assist 45 beneficiaries but effectively supported 191 victims during the implementation period. The organization worked on fundamental rights cases, conducted psychological treatments, organized victims’ meetings, and collaborated with various commissions to enhance accountability and transparency.

Results Achieved

R2L successfully supported at least five fundamental rights cases, providing victims with legal, social, psychological, and medical aid. They filed five new Supreme Court cases, collaborated on 40 incidents with human rights bodies, and conducted six victims’ meetings, enhancing victims’ agency and accountability. Despite challenges such as bureaucratic delays and resource limitations, the project underscored the importance of comprehensive support for victims.

Unforeseen Challenges

Challenges included public pressure, economic crisis, and systemic issues within the government, complicating legal trust-building for police torture victims. To address these, R2L maintained communication with victims, referred psychiatric cases, and demonstrated adaptability in its multifaceted approach to supporting victims.

Key Achievements

R2L filed over 40 fundamental rights cases, with several successful outcomes, including significant Supreme Court rulings. They provided legal aid for cases referred by the Human Rights Commission, engaged with over 150 victims, and initiated human rights first aid centers and a quarterly torture monitoring report.

Assistance Provided

- **Medical:** Referrals to specialized service providers and hospitals.
- **Psychological:** Initial counselling and referrals to psychiatrists.

- **Social:** Organized victim-centered meetings to mobilize victims as human rights defenders.
- **Legal:** Managed legal aspects of torture cases, including filing complaints, representing clients, and conducting legal clinics.
- **Financial:** Provided financial assistance for education and self-employment ventures.

4. **Safeguarding Human Rights During the Post-crisis Transition in Sri Lanka – Open Society Foundation - 01st September 2023 to 30th September 2025**

Problem: Sri Lanka's economic crisis has exacerbated poverty and social safety net gaps, leaving vulnerable communities struggling. Existing social safety programs are failing to reach those most in need.

Solution: R2L proposes a two-pronged approach:

- **Objective 1:** Strengthen civil society engagement in advocating for human rights, pro-poor social safety nets, and economic opportunities. This includes establishing a civil society coordination committee, conducting policy dialogues, and organizing media advocacy campaigns.
- **Objective 2:** Empower marginalized communities to utilize social safety nets effectively and explore pathways out of poverty through entrepreneurship and decent work opportunities. This includes conducting workshops, establishing help desks, and creating awareness through mobile journalism.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased collaboration among civil society organizations
- Improved policy recommendations on human rights and social safety nets
- Enhanced public awareness of human rights issues
- Strengthened capacity of marginalized communities to access social safety nets and pursue economic opportunities

Sustainability: The project will leverage existing civil society networks and R2L's Human Rights First Aid Centers (HRFACs) to ensure long-term impact.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies: The project acknowledges potential political instability and addresses it by highlighting the necessity of reforms for sustainable development.

5. **Action to Strengthen People's Initiatives on Rights and Entitlements of the vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka (ASPIRE) – MISEREO – 01st September 2023 to 30th September 2025**

Project Goals

This project aims to improve the lives of vulnerable Sri Lankans in two key ways:

- **Protecting Human Rights:** By strengthening access to justice and promoting awareness of human rights.
- **Enhancing Social and Economic Resilience:** By improving understanding and access to government safety nets and supporting local economic revival.

Project Activities

- **Expanding the Human Rights First Aid Centers (HRFACs) Network:** Establishing 4 new HRFACs to provide legal aid and support to victims of human rights violations.
- **Training Civil Actors:** Conducting training programs for HRDs, legal professionals, and journalists to enhance their capacity to address human rights issues.
- **Raising Public Awareness:** Organizing media campaigns, workshops, and discussions to raise awareness of human rights and social safety nets across 16 districts.
- **Supporting Vulnerable Households:** Conducting research on existing safety nets, engaging with government officials, and connecting vulnerable households with available resources.

Project Beneficiaries

- **Victims of Human Rights Violations:** Over 3,168 victims will receive legal aid, compensation, and guidance through the HRFAC network.
- **Human Rights Defenders (HRDs):** 400 HRDs will be trained on human rights and social safety nets.
- **General Public:** Over 144,000 people will be reached through awareness campaigns on human rights and social safety nets.
- **Vulnerable Households:** The project will support vulnerable households in accessing existing government safety nets or alternative support.

Project Timeline

The project will be implemented over three years, with a gradual increase in the number of beneficiaries reached each year. This summary provides a concise overview of the Misereor project's goals, activities, beneficiaries, and timeline.

Media

Overview

In 2023 and preceding years, the Right to Life Media Advocacy Network, a specialized unit of the Right to Life Human Rights Center, assumed a leading role in human rights media and advocacy initiatives in Sri Lanka. Utilizing digital platforms and social media, the network aimed to promote a society characterized by the flourishing of human rights, democracy, and pluralism. Its core objectives encompassed countering misinformation, enhancing transparency, and advocating for the protection of human rights, with a particular emphasis on eradicating torture.

Goals

The objective of the R2L Media Advocacy Network is to strengthen human rights defenders, journalists, and marginalized communities by leveraging digital media, encouraging collaboration among civil society organizations, and advancing democratic principles.

Objectives

- Advocate for human rights and combat torture.
- Promote socio-economic rights and justice.
- Provide legal education and raise awareness.
- Facilitate dialogue on political, economic, and socio-cultural reforms.
- Support transitional justice and reconciliation.
- Strengthen civil society and promote freedom of expression.
- Combat misinformation and enhance media education.
- Build the capacity of human rights defenders.

Recap 2023

The Right to Life Media Advocacy Network was dedicated to achieving its goals by aligning with the organization's vision and mission throughout 2023. It effectively worked to promote human rights and provide advocacy services to the public.

In particular, during 2023, we expanded our presence on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, and X.

Moreover, documentaries, short films, video interviews, and advocacy videos were produced under Right to Life Media Productions. Additionally, the media activities relevant to project initiatives, training programs and networks operating under the guidance of the Right To Life Media Section were successfully executed in 2023, despite facing challenges.

Media productions produced by the Right to Life Media section in 2023 are as follows.

Documentaries

Title	Link
Misuse of ICCPR in Sri Lanka	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/5DoBw6yuXUNwzNL6/?mibextid=oFDknk
Is HRC is a White Elephant	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/35KitVW4FjwVoAkup/?mibextid=oFDknk
The Use of RTI Act in Sri Lanka	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/jfiqTbjfCgH88np/?mibextid=oFDknk
පොලිස් කොමිසම, ඉටු නොවුන අරමුණ	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/GWNU99muUe31PkvF/?mibextid=oFDknk
සංවිධානය වීමේ හිඳුනස අභියෝගයට ලක් වීම	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/P2xocFDEk1umRUZE/?mibextid=oFDknk
අස්වැසුමද අස්වැසුමද	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/n2h3NGhcQPXwL5fv/?mibextid=oFDknk

Advocacy Videos

Title	Link
ශක්තික ගේ සිට නතෘෂා දක්වා අවභාවිතා වන ICCPR	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/WXYX4DBB6ReS8LSx/?mibextid=oFDknk
අවුරුදු 44 පුරාවට PTA පනත භාවිතා කළේ විරුද්ධවාදීන් මර්දනය කරන්න.	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/89iBSDL23wTv1wZK/?mibextid=oFDknk
වින්දිතයන් වදා හිංසනයට ලක් වන්නේ අපරාධ විමර්ශන හිසයි	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/EqhduKac96ATvzKG/?mibextid=oFDknk

Stories of Survivors

Title	Link
රම්සි රාසික්ගේ මූලික අයිතිවාසිකම් නඩුව ජයගනී.	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/6HdQdb11oLMSc5Uo/?mibextid=oFDknk
මානව හිමිකම් ගියොත් 'හක්කපටස්' තෙබුවන OIC ගෙන් තර්ජන	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/o4uLudPTfrVWxqfFY/?mibextid=oFDknk
අරගලය සම්බන්ධයෙන් ප්‍රකාශයක් ලබාගන්නයි කියා රැගෙන ගොස් අමානුෂික ලෙස පහරදෙයි!	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/w7VtdcydS2cNZsTj/?mibextid=oFDknk

Press Conferences

Title	Link
යුක්තියේ ප්‍රමාදය අහියස වින්දිත කළුව	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/fbN2DyQqrf9g3SwH/?mibextid=oFDknk

Short Films

Title	Link
තිත්ත කළුවර	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/CWeuWTJNn9KoSTX4/?mibextid=oFDknk

Media Statements

Title	Link
වඩිඬුක්කෝට්ටේ පොලිස් අත්අඩංගුවේදී මියගිය නාගරාසා ඇලෙක්ස් සම්බන්ධයෙන් මාධ්‍ය හිවේදනය.	https://www.facebook.com/share/p/KWVByLadgfyLZpgt/?mibextid=oFDknk

Productions for Events and International Days

Title	Link
රයිට් ටු ලයිෆ් මානව හිමිකම් මධ්‍යස්ථානයේ 20 වන සංවත්සර සැමරුම	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/86d94qdRR3uRPy32/?mibextid=oFDknk
Activism against Gender-Based Violence	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/wJs7ZmCSZmRPGayk/?mibextid=oFDknk
ස්ත්‍රී පුරුෂ සමාජභාවය මත පදනම් වූ ප්‍රචණ්ඩත්වයට විරෝධී ක්‍රියාකාරීත්වයේ දින 16	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/FjzR8V1p4HWfd2HX/?mibextid=oFDknk
75 වන ජාත්‍යන්තර මානව හිමිකම් දිනය - 'පොලිස් වධහිංසාවේ මූලය, සන්දර්භය හා විසඳුම්'	https://www.facebook.com/share/p/jgPmX9Di4FkK9xj5/?mibextid=oFDknk
Ending Police Torture in Sri Lanka	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/gaqlCzYuqM72d9ym/?mibextid=5SVze0

MoJo Video Productions

Starting in September 2023, MoJo video production commenced, focusing on incidents of human rights violations reported to Human Rights First Aid Centers. These videos are created following Mobile Journalism training workshops conducted for the youth community associated with the centers collaborating on our MoJo Video Campaign.

(Photo Album of MoJo Training <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/fnA6bKxw9qCQEoNz/?mibextid=oFDknk>)

Through monitoring the MoJo video campaign, it became evident that the widespread circulation of these videos on social media platforms effectively communicates incidents of human rights violations and appropriate actions to be taken in response to society.

The most viewed videos are as follows.

Title	Link	Views
අම්බලන්තොට පොලිස් දඩයම	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/vKFi2AZUsHuAN7JB/?mibextid=qi2Omg	120k
මත්කුඩු සම්බන්ධ සැකකරුවෙක් යැයි පවසා වැඩිමහල් සහෝදරයා සොයා ආ පොලීසිය වයස 16 වූ බාලවයස්කාර සොහොයුරාව රැගෙන ගොස් පොලීසියේ තබා ගනී.	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/7cjYFc8gbZLHgMPc/?mibextid=oFDknk	446k
සමෘද්ධි කළමනාකාරිණියට නොදෙවනි වූ සණස කළමනාකරු.	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/2yEmXvwQm3ddgMKC/?mibextid=oFDknk	20k
Key Tag එකකට බොරු නඩුවක් දැමූ කැරලිලේ පොලීසිය	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/n9e3mTWiKCgD6eg9/?mibextid=qi2Omg	112k
සිංහල භාෂාව නොදැන සිටීම නිසා බාලරාමන් මහතාට කසිප්පු නඩුවක් පැටලූ කඳාන පොලීසිය	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/SDYxnBrX5gRD5HoP/?mibextid=qi2Omg	93k
මාලඹේ පොලීසිය යකා නටයි	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/GsawibLDBhA6tGfM/?mibextid=qi2Omg	546k

Expanding our social media reach

In 2022, the media arm of Right to Life exclusively utilized Facebook and YouTube for its campaign endeavors. In 2023, we broadened our social media engagement by extending our presence to additional platforms.

Social Media	Profile Link
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/righttolifelk?igsh=MWRhbTd6Z294a294aA==
Tiktok	https://www.tiktok.com/@right2life.lk?_t=8lhmlYZCJSj&_r=1
X	https://x.com/Righttolifelk?t=Rub83BNv7ZCtyZKs4ukNxxg&s=09
LinkedIn	

Collectives

We Have a Dream: A Citizens' Collective for Change

We Have a Dream is a dynamic collective composed of university academics, artists, civil society leaders, and engaged citizens. Supported initially by Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L) through the Aluth Kathabaha movement, this group has expanded significantly by collaborating with the National Movement for Social Justice, Platform for Freedom, and other key civil society organizations and activists.

The collective has made substantial contributions to national dialogues on economic reforms, human rights protection, and the enhancement of democracy. It utilizes a multifaceted approach to advocacy, including public seminars, online discussions, social media campaigns, engagement through traditional media, and publication of insightful materials.

Serving as a formidable pressure group, We Have a Dream actively advocates for comprehensive economic, political, and social reforms aimed at achieving sustainable development. It also engages directly with policymakers to influence and catalyze the desired changes, positioning itself as a critical player in shaping the nation's trajectory towards a more democratic and just society.

Lawyers for Human Rights

Right to Life Human Rights Centre initiated this Collective in 2021, its still in the expanding stage. The Lawyers of this Collective engage with R2L and Human Rights First Aid Centres to provide legal support for the Victims in various ways.

As the country faced a risk of collapse of Rule of Law in 2022, Lawyers of this Collective supported R2L for the initiatives made by R2L to protect rule of Law and Democracy. We were able to provide Legal Support to the persons who participated in Aragalaya. The Lawyers for Human Rights collective contributed to file Fundamental Rights Cases pertaining to violations happened in the protests held in the 2022 and 2023. Further, Lawyers of this Collective contributed to filing FR cases for the violations of Fundamental Rights specially the Police Torture which were took place any other places in Sri Lanka.

Not only filing FR cases, the Lawyers engaged with filing complaints to the Human Rights Commissions and other Independent Commissions.

Lawyers for Human Rights Collective discussed to expand the lawyers collective regionally based on Human Rights First Aid Centres which are working across the island. This expansion will start from Galle HRFCs in 2024

Citizens for Justice

A press conference was convened on August 22nd at the National Library Auditorium, drawing attention to a critical issue: the hardships endured by victims as a result of significant delays in the dispensation of justice.

Sri Lankan Collective Against Torture

In 2023, the Sri Lankan Collective Against Torture (SLCAT) undertook significant activities to combat institutionalized violence and promote human rights. Following a Supreme Court judgment that held Senior Superintendent Deshabandu Tennekoon responsible for torture, SLCAT issued a statement demanding urgent action from President Wickremasinghe, the Attorney General, and the National Police Commission to address systemic police violence and restore public trust. They also criticized Minister of Public Security Tiran Alles for his support of Tennekoon and called for his resignation and removal. Additionally, SLCAT organized a policy dialogue on Human Rights Day to discuss police torture, featuring key speakers like Justice Minister Wijayadasa Rajapaksa, who emphasized the need for legislative reforms and technological advancements in crime investigation. In September, SLCAT hosted a seminar to critique the government's Anti-Terror Bill, highlighting its broad definition of terrorism and calling for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in favor of a more balanced legal framework. These efforts underscore SLCAT's commitment to eradicating torture and aligning law enforcement practices with international human rights standards.

Journalists for Rights

In 2024, the Journalists for Rights organization actively promoted freedom of expression and access to information. On September 26, they held a seminar at the Colombo National Library to commemorate the International Day for the Universal Access to Information. Themed "The Future of Right to Information in the Limits of Cyberspace," the seminar coincided with the Sri Lankan government's publication of a draft bill on online safety. Attorney-at-Law Viranjana Herath, delivering a keynote address, warned that the proposed bill could significantly curtail freedom of expression, emphasizing the necessity of unrestricted internet access for contemporary life, citing past difficulties when social media was temporarily blocked during the 2017 Digana violence.

Throughout the year, Journalists for Rights organized several key events. On August 25, they held a media discussion on the 13th Amendment at the Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research Institute. Their Annual General Meeting took place on June 19, addressing organizational matters and future initiatives. On June 14, they proposed new broadcasting regulations at a press conference. Earlier in the year, on April 28, they publicly opposed the Anti-Terrorism Act with another press conference. Celebrating the International Day of Ensuring Universal Access to Information, they held a press conference on September 19 at the National Library Auditorium in Colombo 07, focusing on "Right to Information and the Role of the Journalist." Additionally, on January 19, they commemorated Black January with an event titled "Let's not forget!" to honor murdered, kidnapped, and disappeared journalists. These activities underscore the organization's ongoing commitment to advocating for journalists' rights and promoting transparency and freedom of information in Sri Lanka.

Main Events

International Days

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

On June 26, 2023, the Right to Life Human Rights Center held a commemoration to honor the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture was organized under the theme "Torture: a Crime against Humanity." Distinguished speakers, including Forensic Pathologist Prof. Clifford Perera, Mr. Lakshan Dias AAL, Prof. Rohana Samarajeewa, Human Rights Activist Ms. Amitha Priyanthi, and Mr. Philip Dissanayake, Executive Director of the Right to Life Human Rights Centre, shared their expertise and perspectives on combating torture and upholding human dignity. Their collective insights underscored the imperative of concerted efforts in combating such egregious violations of human rights.



International Day for the Universal Access to Information



Right to Life Human Rights Centre along with Journalists for Rights Collective held a seminar in Colombo National Library on 26 September 2024 to commemorate the International Day for the Universal Access to Information which falls on 28 September every year. A public discourse was recently convened, delving into the crucial theme of "The Future of Information Rights within the Realm of Cyberspace." The event featured distinguished speakers, including Ms. Nadeeshani Perera AAL, the Executive Director of Transparency International; Mr. Viranjana Herath AAL from the Media Law; Mr. Dulan Dassanayake AAL, Secretary of Journalists for Rights; and Mr. Rohana Siriwardhane from Journalists for Rights.

International Human Rights Day

In commemoration of the 75th International Human Rights Day, Right to Life Human Rights Centre along with the Sri Lankan Collective Against Torture organized a significant event titled "The Root of Police Torture." This initiative aimed to address concerns surrounding police torture and discuss potential solutions. International Human Rights Day took on a unique approach this year, commemorating through a policy dialogue centered on the pressing issue of "Police Brutality: Origins, Context, and Solutions" took place on December 11 at the Lakshman Kadiragamar Center in Colombo 07. Dr. Wijeyadasa Rajapakse, the Honorable Minister of Justice, graced the event as the chief guest. Senior DIG Mr. Priyantha Jayakody, drawing from his extensive



experience in the police service, shed light on the necessary reforms needed to address police brutality effectively. Forensic pathologist Prof. Clifford Perera provided invaluable perspectives on forensic practices in cases of human rights violations, highlighting areas requiring reform. Victim Liaison Officer Ms. Amitha Priyanthi shared personal experiences, both as a victim and an activist, adding a crucial human dimension to the discourse. Additionally, Mr. Dulan Dassanayake AAL elucidated on the legal mechanisms pertinent to addressing this issue.

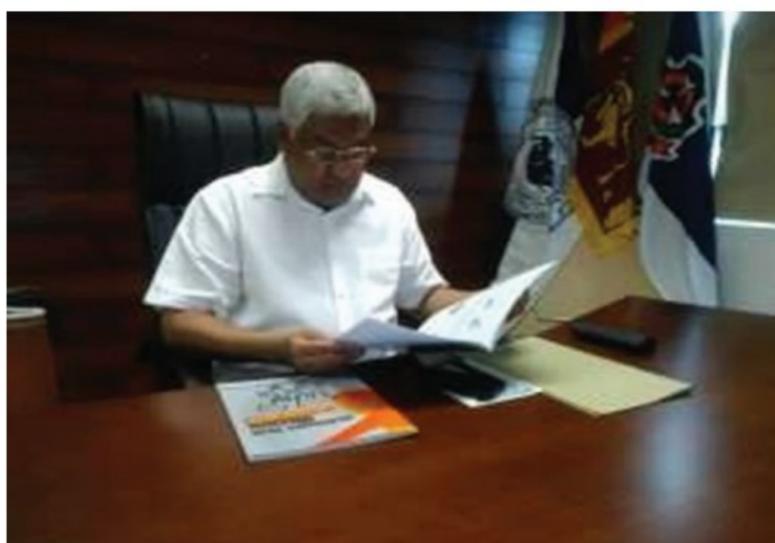
Special Events



On the occasion of 20 years of our Right to Life human rights organization, a function was organized on 25th February at BMICH Mihilaka Medura.



The launch of the research report prepared by lawyer Mr. Dulan Dasanayake on the inappropriate use of the ICCPR Act in Sri Lanka was held on the 23rd of March at BMICH .



Right to Life Human Rights Center's Executive Director Philip Dissanayake handed over the recent report published by R2L on Volunteer Social Service Organizations (Registration and Supervision) Act to

1. Minister of Public Security Tiran Alles and
2. Director General of the Non-Governmental Organization Secretariat Mr. Sanjeewa Wimalagunaratna



Right to Life Human Rights Center (R2L) facilitated a consultation on the challenges and responsibilities of civil society in Sri Lanka in the present context. The discussion focused on the role of civil society in economic, political, and state reforms.

Publications

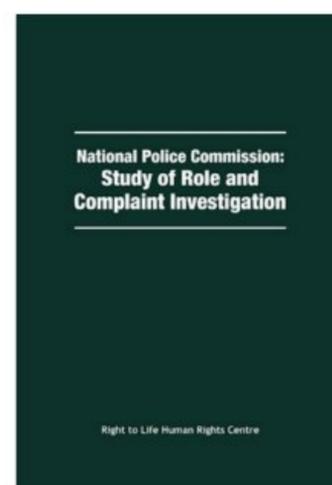
1. The Effectiveness of Aswesuma Welfare Benefit Scheme Preliminary Findings and Ongoing Assessments

<https://www.right2lifelanka.org/the-effectiveness-of-aswesuma-welfare-benefit-scheme-preliminary-findings-and-ongoing-assessments/>



2. National Police Commission: Study of Role and Complaint Investigation

<https://www.right2lifelanka.org/npc-report/>



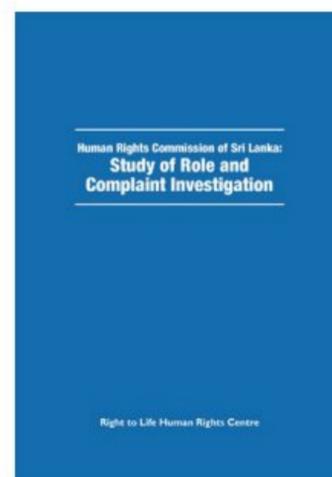
3. Freedom of Association Challenged in Sri Lanka

<https://www.right2lifelanka.org/vsso-report-book/>



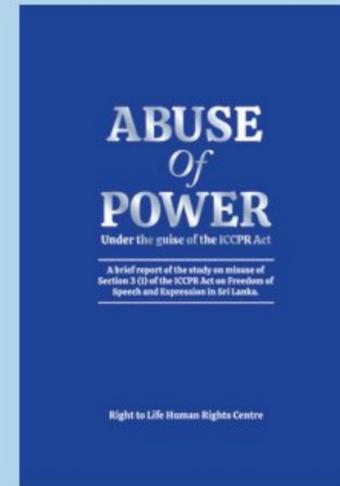
4. National Human Rights Commission: Study of Role and Complaint Investigation

<https://www.right2lifelanka.org/hrc-report/>



5. Abuse of Power – Under the Guise of the ICCPR Act.

<https://www.right2lifelanka.org/abuse-of-power-iccpr-act/>



Funding Portfolio Summary

Funds Received 2023

The Finance section of R2L plays a crucial role. It highlights the significant contributions we make by providing financial support for projects and various activities aimed at promoting and protecting human rights. Through meticulous budgeting, transparent financial management, and responsible resource allocation, we ensure that our funds are effectively utilized to create a meaningful impact in advancing social justice and equality. This section showcases our commitment to financial integrity and the sustainable growth of our organization.

#	Donor	Project Title	Total Grant Amount (LKR)
1	United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) -2023	You Are Not Alone - Support Torture Victims	7,962,200
2	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Addressing violence against peaceful protestors and aftermath in Sri Lanka.	455,359.12
3	Freedom House (FH) – 2022	Enhancing the Resilience of Civil Society.	620,341.31
4	Freedom House (FH) – 2023	Safety Nets for Economic & Human Rights	620,341.31
5	Rule of Law		927,000
6	Management Systems International (IDEA)	Strengthening torture prevention mechanisms through community engagement	215,000
7	Open Society Foundation (OSF) - 3	To protect and promote human rights of the marginalized	20,422,982
8	Open Society Foundation (OSF) - 4	Strengthening Civil Society Engagement	3,591,698
9	National Endowment For Democracy (NED)	To consult on and provide input into various current or pending legislation and build the strength and capacity of other CSOs to advocate against anti NGO legislation.	6,720,518
10	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Addressing violence against peaceful protestors and aftermath in Sri Lanka.	455,359.12

Balance Sheet - 2023

Right to Life Human Rights Centre			
No. 288/135, Jayawardena Gardens, Baseline Road, Colombo 09.			
Balance Sheet			
as at 31st December 2023 - SLR			
		Note	
Assets			
Non Current Assets	01		16,698,328.81
Property, Plant and Equipment			
Current Assets			
Receivables	02	1,722,570.00	
Cash at Bank	03	19,632,910.03	
Cash in Hand	04	<u>221,551.07</u>	
		<u>21,577,031.10</u>	
Current Liabilities			
Accrued Expenses	05	<u>1,481,840.00</u>	
		<u>1,481,840.00</u>	
Current Assets Less Current Liabilities			<u>20,095,191.10</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities			<u>36,793,519.91</u>
Fund and Reserve			
Accumulated Fund	06	9,496,999.36	
Unutilized Project Fund	07	19,087,983.97	
Reserve Fund	08	4,033,536.58	
Gratuity Provision	09	<u>4,175,000.00</u>	
			<u>36,793,519.91</u>
			<u>36,793,519.91</u>



RIGHT TO LIFE
HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE