



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



RIGHT TO LIFE
HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE



RIGHT TO LIFE
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ANNUAL REPORT - 2024





VISION

A pluralistic Sri Lankan society that protects and promotes the rights of citizens to enjoy justice, equality and respect for life.

MISSION

To be placed as an active platform in which diverse actors from the national to local level engage with responsible institutions against (1) human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial killings, and (2) economic and social rights violations of people, ensuring effective interventions that guarantee full enjoyment of constitutional rights in Sri Lanka.

CORE VALUES OF



IMPARTIALITY

Equal treatment of all, irrespective of one's ethnic, religious, cultural, political, sexual, or any other identities.

FEARLESSNESS

Showing no fear of reprisal, and leading local communities and local actors to stand for their rights.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Creating an environment in which both the victims and service provider develop trust and confidence in R2L

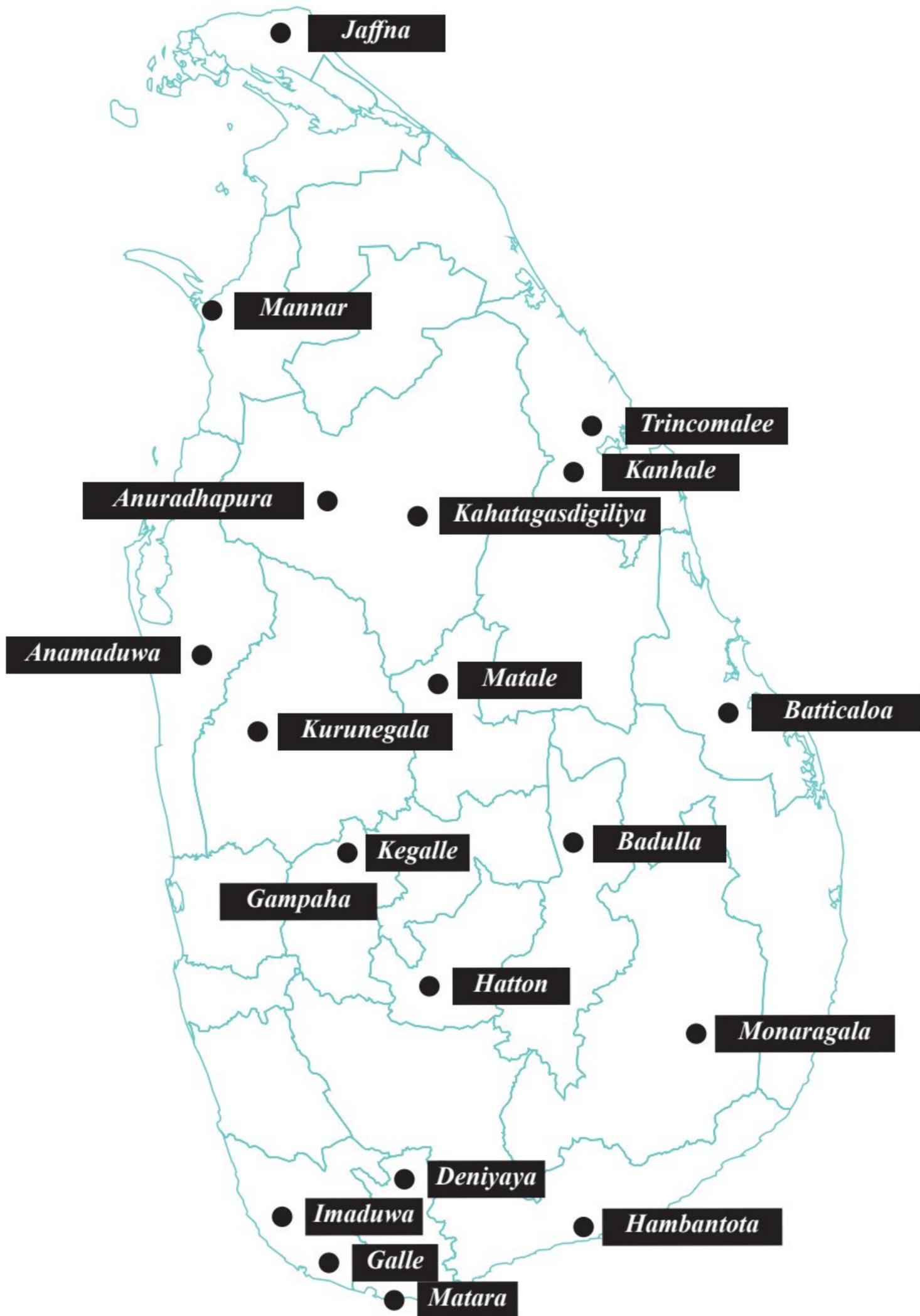
ACCOMMODATIVENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS

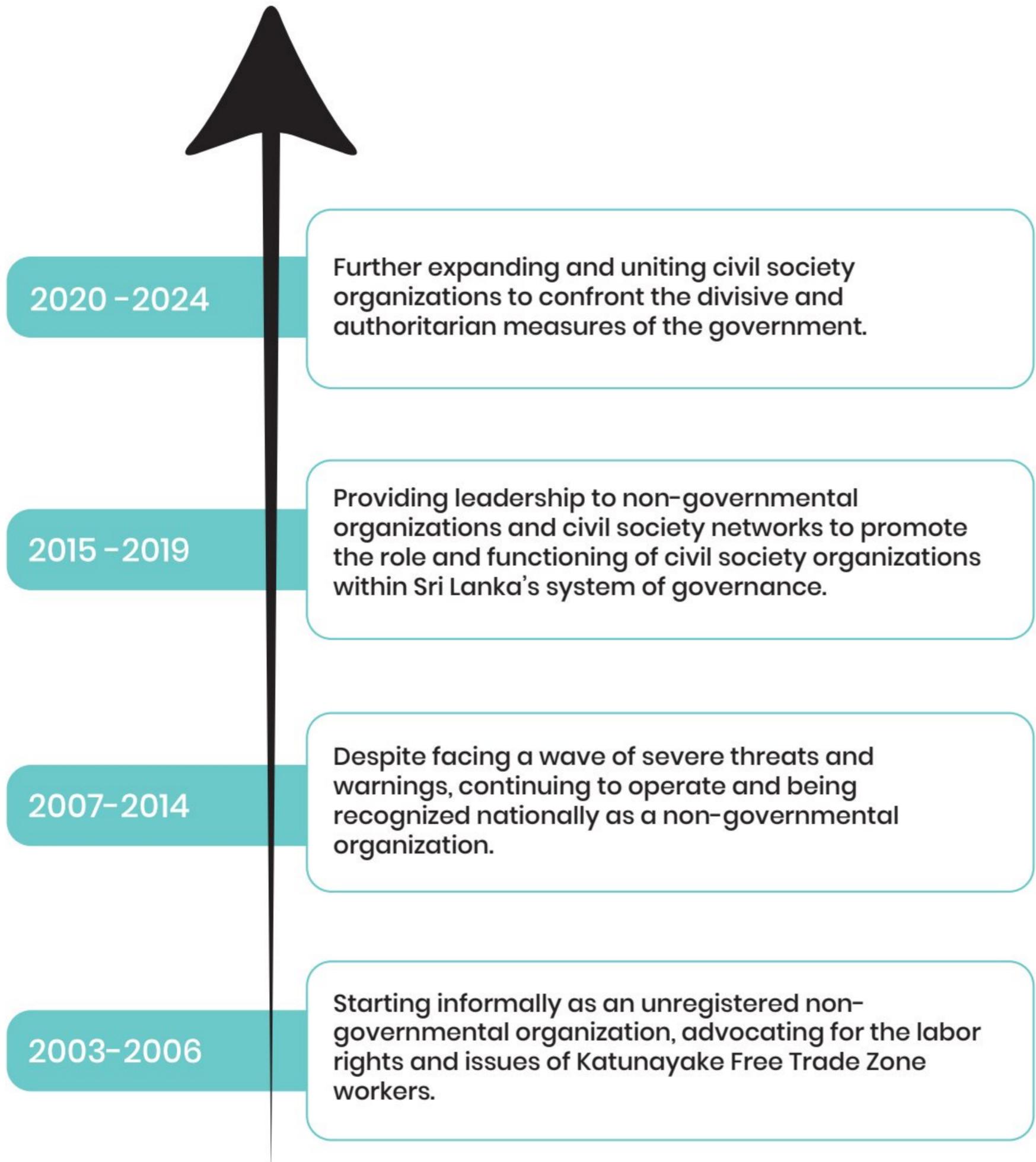
Being open to inputs from formal and informal actors and groups and taking their inputs in implementation of activities that have mutually beneficial terms.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Conducting R2L's actions in an open and clear manner, being responsible for its actions and having ability to provide sound reasoning for its actions.

HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST AID CENTERS





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – 2024



The Right to Life Human Rights Centre, established in 2003, has traversed a journey of 21 years, navigating numerous challenges while working in diverse ways to protect and promote human rights in Sri Lanka and to safeguard the rights of victims who have faced human rights violations.

Throughout these two challenging decades, the organization has evolved through four distinct phases, and 2024 marks the beginning of the organization's fifth phase.

We enter this fifth phase as a human rights organization operating solely on foreign funding within a country that has suffered a massive socio-economic collapse due to national bankruptcy.

Amidst the global economic crisis, and at a time when funding for Non-Governmental Organizations in Sri Lanka was being severely curtailed, it became a significant challenge for us to continue our work while upholding the human rights principles we have always championed.

In this context, we had to exert significant effort to continue protecting victims of various human rights violations, maintain legal proceedings—including over fifty Fundamental Rights cases for which we provided legal aid—and ensure at least a minimum level of operation for our Human Rights First Aid Centres established in 24 locations across 19 districts, all while safeguarding the human rights defenders working within them.

Furthermore, we were able to initiate a significant dialogue regarding how to ensure the sustainability of both the organization and the services provided by our Human Rights First Aid Centres island-wide, to face future challenges. We were also able to collate a substantial number of ideas regarding the practical measures necessary to navigate this situation.

Despite all these challenges, we were able to maintain a significant level of operational activity.

Moreover, in 2024, we succeeded in filing four new Fundamental Rights cases and leading four existing Fundamental Rights cases to victory.

Additionally, in 2024, we were able to contribute to the creation of three films based on three serious incidents in Sri Lanka: the Sriyani Silva vs. Iddamalgoda case, the Gerald Mervin Perera incident, and the assassination of journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge. This was achieved by engaging three veteran Sri Lankan film directors: Dr. Visakesa Chandrasekaram, Prasanna Vithanage, and K. Sanjeewa.

Drawing on past experiences, we step into 2025 with the vision of building a secure Sri Lanka with rights-based economic development, and with the concept of building a sustainable organization at the forefront.

Philip Dissanayake

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1. Executive Summary: Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L) – 2024

In 2024, the **Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L)** significantly advanced its mandate to protect and promote fundamental rights in Sri Lanka amidst a complex landscape of political and economic transition. Through a multifaceted strategy encompassing direct victim support, grassroots empowerment, and high-impact advocacy, the organization has reinforced its position as a critical catalyst for justice and systemic reform.

Key Institutional Achievements

- **Holistic Victim Assistance:** R2L provided comprehensive support to over **1,200 victims** of human rights violations. This included critical legal aid, medical interventions, and psychosocial services for survivors of torture, enforced disappearances, and police brutality.
- **Expansion of the HRFAC Network:** The **Human Rights First Aid Centre (HRFAC)** network was expanded to **24 locations** nationwide, including new centers in Jaffna, Mannar, Batticaloa, and Gampola. These hubs serve as vital community-based mechanisms for emergency human rights response and documentation.
- **Capacity Building and Empowerment:** The organization trained over **300 Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)** and journalists. A specialized **Advocacy Training Module** was launched in Sinhala, Tamil, and English to standardize and enhance grassroots monitoring and documentation.
- **Transitional Justice and Accountability:** Through the **PUJA Project**, R2L documented **80 testimonies** and implemented national media campaigns to elevate victim-centered justice in the national discourse. The organization also premiered the documentary “32,” highlighting a 25-year struggle against custodial torture.
- **Evidence-Based Advocacy:** R2L successfully launched the research report “*Strengthening Sri Lanka’s Social Safety Nets*,” providing a comprehensive analysis of the **Aswesuma** welfare program and offering actionable policy recommendations for more equitable targeting.

Strategic Financial Oversight

R2L maintained rigorous financial accountability, managing a total income of **LKR 94,604,372.79** against an expenditure of **LKR 98,627,916.76**. The organization continues to diversify its resource base through strategic partnerships with international donors, including **MISEREOR, Freedom House, and the UNVFVT**.

Future Strategic Direction (2025–2028)

Moving forward, R2L is committed to a three-year strategic plan centered on:

- **Economic Sustainability:** Establishing social entrepreneurship models within the HRFAC network to ensure long-term financial independence for local advocates.
- **Climate and Digital Justice:** Formally integrating environmental accountability and digital rights specifically protecting journalists and HRDs from online repression—into the core thematic agenda.
- **Institutional Reform:** Continuing to push for an independent **Truth, Unity, and Reconciliation Commission (TURC)** and systemic police reforms to end the culture of impunity.

By bridging the gap between grassroots needs and national policy, R2L remains dedicated to fostering a pluralistic society where justice, equality, and the respect for life are guaranteed for all Sri Lankans.

1.1 Key Achievements in 2024:

- **Victim Support:**
 - ✓ Assisted 1,200+ victims of human rights violations, offering legal aid, psychosocial services, and medical assistance.
 - ✓ Provided critical support for victims of torture, enforced disappearances, and police brutality, ensuring they had access to necessary care and justice.
- **Training and Empowerment:**
 - ✓ Trained 300+ HRDs and journalists across Sri Lanka to enhance their capacity in human rights advocacy, monitoring and documentation of violations, and digital media usage for human rights campaigns.
 - ✓ Empowered local communities by strengthening the human rights protection network at the grassroots level.
- **Advocacy for Transitional Justice:**
 - ✓ PUJA Project raised awareness for transitional justice, accountability, and victim-centered justice through high-impact media campaigns and policy dialogues.
 - ✓ Successfully engaged government officials, civil society organizations, and legal professionals to push for legal reforms and accountability in Sri Lanka's post-conflict recovery.
- **Human Rights First Aid Centers (HRFACs):**
 - ✓ Expanded the network of HRFACs to 24 locations across the country, providing emergency support to victims of human rights abuses and offering legal and medical aid.
 - ✓ HRFACs served as vital hubs for human rights defenders, ensuring victims had access to critical services in times of need.
- **Research and Documentation:**
 - ✓ Initiated and supported research on torture prevalence in Sri Lanka, particularly within the police department and higher education institutions. This research lays the foundation for future legal reforms and institutional change.
 - ✓ Conducted documentaries and testimony collections to amplify the voices of victims and ensure their stories are heard, contributing to public discourse on Human rights.
- **Community Empowerment:**
 - ✓ Through the ASPIRE Project, we strengthened the rights and entitlements of vulnerable communities by providing training, legal assistance, and resources aimed at addressing socio-economic disparities and cultural sensitivity.
 - ✓ Facilitated capacity-building sessions for local leaders and community-based organizations to ensure sustainable human rights protection and advocacy at the grassroots level.

R2L's multifaceted approach to victim support, capacity-building, advocacy, and community engagement has made substantial progress in 2024. Despite facing numerous challenges, the organization's strategic initiatives have successfully fostered human rights awareness, empowered local communities, and contributed to systemic change in Sri Lanka.

Looking ahead, R2L will continue to build on these successes, advancing its mission to ensure accountability, justice, and human dignity for all Sri Lankans.

2. Project Overview

2.1 Safeguarding Human Rights During the Post-Crisis Transition in Sri Lanka

Objective:

The objective of this project is to strengthen civil society engagement in Sri Lanka's post-crisis recovery by addressing human rights violations, advocating for systemic reforms, and promoting justice. The project aims to empower local civil society organizations (CSOs) to play a key role in protecting human rights in a politically and economically unstable environment.

Progress:

In 2024, R2L achieved notable progress in organizing **4 key policy dialogues** involving **over 200 participants**.

These dialogues engaged government officials, activists, journalists, and legal professionals in discussions about human rights issues such as **police brutality**, **freedom of expression**, and **the right to protest**.

These dialogues not only raised public awareness about human rights challenges but also led to concrete **recommendations** for **policy reforms**.

R2L also expanded its **Human Rights First Aid Centers (HRFACs)** to **12 additional districts**, bringing the total number of centers to **24** across Sri Lanka. These centers have provided **legal, medical, and psychosocial support** to over **1,200 victims** of human rights violations, ensuring timely and essential assistance to vulnerable populations.

Additionally, R2L conducted **15 community outreach sessions**, engaging local populations in human rights advocacy and training. These efforts have significantly contributed to strengthening civil society's capacity to demand accountability and justice in post-crisis Sri Lanka.

2.2 Civil society-led Policy Dialogues



Between 2024 and 2025, the Right to Life Human Rights Centre, in collaboration with partner organizations, conducted four major policy dialogues in Sri Lanka addressing key human rights issues. The first dialogue, held on December 11, 2024, focused on ending police torture, bringing together over 85 participants to discuss legal reforms, independent oversight, and ethical policing.

The second, on May 21, 2024, addressed the misuse of



law, science, and media, highlighting cases of misinformation and disinformation and emphasizing media accountability and public literacy. The third, held on December 11, 2024, examined the protection of human rights amid a political shift under the new NPP government,

with discussions on strengthening legal frameworks, expediting judicial processes, and promoting civil society–state collaboration.

2.3 Advocacy Press Conferences and Media Engagement – 2024

During 2024, the Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L), together with Journalists for Rights (J4R), strengthened public advocacy for press freedom, accountability, and justice through a series of national press conferences and media discussions.

The **first press conference** was held on **January 30, 2024, at the National Library** under the theme **“Justice for Murdered, Disappeared, and State-Repressed Journalists.”** The event reflected on **Black January** is a month symbolic of state violence against journalists in Sri Lanka.

Journalist **Ms. Jayani Abeysekera, Ms. Sandya Ekneligoda**

(wife of the disappeared journalist **Mr. Prageeth Ekneligoda**), and **Mr. Dulan Dasanayake (AAL)**, Secretary of J4R, delivered key remarks, sharing personal experiences and reinforcing the call for justice and non-recurrence of media repression.

The **second press conference** took place on **April 8, 2024, at Janaki Hotel**, focusing on **“Journalistic Accountability in the Face of Laws Restricting Freedom of Expression.”** The session was attended by **over 20 members of J4R**, including regional journalists.

Senior journalist Mr. Ajith Parakum Jayasinghe, President of J4R, and **Secretary Mr. Dulan Dasanayake (AAL)** spoke on the rushed passage of new legislation without public or institutional consensus, highlighting its harmful implications for the media sector and the growing restrictions on professional freedom of expression.

The **third press conference** was convened on **August 22, 2024, at Janaki Hotel**, addressing the **Role of Journalists During the Presidential Election Period.**

The panel included **President Ajith Parakum Jayasinghe Secretary Dulan Dasanayake (AAL)**, and journalists **Mr. Janur Kichilan** and **Mr. Ragamani Sekar**. The discussion emphasized the need for **fair enforcement of election-related media regulations, equal airtime for all candidates**, and the responsibility of political leaders to present practical programs addressing the country’s socio-economic crisis with realistic solutions. In addition, a **major media discussion and film launch** was held on **December 19,**

2024, at the PVR Cinema, One Galle Face, Colombo, with the premiere of the short film **“32.”** The film documents the custodial torture and death of **Lasantha Jagath Kumara**, who was tortured at the **Payagala Police Station in 2000**, and highlights the **25-year justice struggle led by his sister.**

Although the Supreme Court confirmed torture through **SCFR 471/2000**, full accountability remains unrealized.

The screening brought together journalists, human rights defenders, activists, and policymakers, reinforcing national concern over persistent torture, delayed justice, and impunity.

The film served as a platform to **memorialize victims of state violence**, **renew public dialogue on ending impunity**, and **advocate for institutional reforms to prevent torture and ensure timely justice**.

Participants collectively urged the government to take meaningful action to deliver justice for journalists and families affected by murder and enforced disappearances, while safeguarding freedom of expression in law and practice.

The discussion also highlighted concerns surrounding the **Online Safety Act**, particularly its potential to further restrict journalists' professional space, economic opportunities, and future career prospects.

Speakers stressed the importance of **protecting press freedom**, **preventing repeated persecution**, and **upholding democratic rights**, especially in the current legal and political climate.



2.4 Aswesuma research report was officially launched

Aswesuma research report.

During the initial quarter of the project, efforts were focused on gathering essential information pertinent to the research. This involved exploring the existing social security networks in Sri Lanka and conducting interviews with key informants regarding the *Aswesuma* social security network, which is a primary focus of the study. Subsequently, an in-depth analysis of the collected data was carried out. For this study, we conducted a comprehensive survey to capture a wide range of opinions and experiences related to the *Aswesuma* Welfare Benefit Program in Sri Lanka. A random sample of 1,092 individuals was selected from 17 districts and 74 Divisional Secretariats across the country, in collaboration with Human Rights First



Aid Centres. The sample included *Aswesuma* applicants, beneficiaries (both *Aswesuma* and *Samurdhi*), appellants, and eligible community members. Based on these findings, a final research report has been produced. The resulting report, “*Strengthening Sri Lanka’s Social Safety Nets: A Comprehensive*

Analysis and Path Forward,” examines the history and theory of Sri Lanka’s welfare policies, presents a case study of the *Aswesuma* scheme, and identifies key challenges such as inefficiencies and poor targeting. It concludes with policy recommendations aimed at improving service integration, beneficiary targeting, and collaboration between the government and NGOs through both short- and long-term reforms. Moving forward, R2L conducted training programs with these insights.

To share these insights, a public dialogue titled “**Countering Terrorism while Safeguarding Social Security and Human Rights**” was held on **26 September 2024** at **BMICH**, featuring key experts.

During the event, two publications, including the study on the PTA and the Aswesuma research report, were officially launched.

2.5 One-day mobile journalism (MOJO) training

On 23 March 2024, a one-day Mobile Journalism (MOJO) Workshop was held at the Hector Kobbekaduwa



Agricultural Research Institute, with the participation of 30 youth and human rights defenders connected to our Human Rights First Aid Centers. The workshop underscored the importance of citizen journalism through social media platforms, with a strong focus on ethical reporting practices to curb misinformation.

Participants were trained in both the technical use of mobile devices for journalism and the practical application of MOJO to advance human rights advocacy and support social entrepreneurship.



They also received a guidance module on accurate incident reporting, along with an introduction to human rights and fundamental rights, enabling them to identify, document, and report genuine incidents more effectively.

The primary objective was to cultivate a network of young social media activists equipped with modern digital tools to expand the reach and impact of our Human Rights First Aid Centers.

Following the training, the participants joined the Media and Advocacy Unit of the Centres and have since played an active role in digital content creation. Notably, under this project, they are producing the “Shepreneur Stories” MOJO video series, which documents women’s entrepreneurial journeys, alongside videos highlighting human rights violations.

3. ASPIRE Project: Strengthening Rights and Entitlements of Vulnerable Communities

Objective:

The **ASPIRE project** aims to empower marginalized and vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka by advocating for **social welfare reforms**, improving access to rights, and ensuring that these communities are not left behind during the recovery process.

Progress

The ASPIRE project represented a significant step in strengthening and expanding the Human Rights First Aid Centre (HRFAC) network of the Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L). In response to the increasing landscape of rights, entitlements, and human rights violations in Sri Lanka, the project focused on expanding grassroots access to human rights support and enhancing community-based response systems. Building on 10 fully operational HRFACs directly managed by R2L, four new centers were successfully established in Jaffna, Mannar, Batticaloa, and Kandy (Gampola) following continuous engagement and consultations with partner organizations and civil society stakeholders. The official launch of these centres in March 2024 marked a key milestone in the organization’s efforts to

widen its geographical reach and deepen local-level human rights service delivery. During the first year of implementation, the Mannar HRFAC advanced community-level legal advocacy by initiating a Fundamental Rights petition, demonstrating strengthened capacity for legal accountability and rights-based action. With this expansion, R2L now maintains 14 active HRFACs across 14 districts, reinforced by a dedicated network of youth-led Human Rights Defenders who volunteer their time and commitment to sustain centre operations, build community trust, and strengthen local human rights protection, awareness, advocacy, and case support mechanisms.

New HRFACs Opening Ceremonies





3.1 HRDs Trainings

The ASPIRE project strengthened regional legal and media networks to support human rights protection across HRFACs. Building on this effort, 364 Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and community leaders were trained to systematically monitor and address local human rights violations.

The capacity-building sessions equipped participants with the knowledge and practical tools needed to advocate for social protection measures and community-level interventions, particularly in response to the economic challenges faced by vulnerable communities.

As a result, a well-connected regional network of HRDs has been established, capable of engaging government authorities, promoting accountability, and advancing constructive dialogue to protect and uphold human rights at the grassroots level.



3.2 Regional Lawyers' and Journalists' forums Network

The Right to Life Human Rights Centre strengthened grassroots human rights protection by establishing structured regional networks for legal and media collaboration within the HRFAC framework. The **Regional Lawyers' Forums** provided a coordinated platform for legal consultation, case review, and experience sharing between district lawyers and HRFAC teams. The Lawyers' Collective jointly managed the legal aid clinic process and supported national advocacy initiatives, guided by legal consultant **Mr. Dulan Dassanayake (AAL)**.

Similarly, **District Journalists' Forums** enhanced regional media engagement, documentation of violations, and advocacy support for HRFAC activities. The forums, facilitated by Senior Journalist **Ajith Perakum Jayasinghe**, emphasized empowering **youth journalists** through **Mojo (mobile journalism) training**. Trained journalists collaborated with HRFAC coordinators to produce mobile-based human rights stories and videos, fostering the next generation of media advocates.

This integrated model improved regional responsiveness, strengthened collaboration, and amplified human rights accountability and advocacy across Sri Lanka.



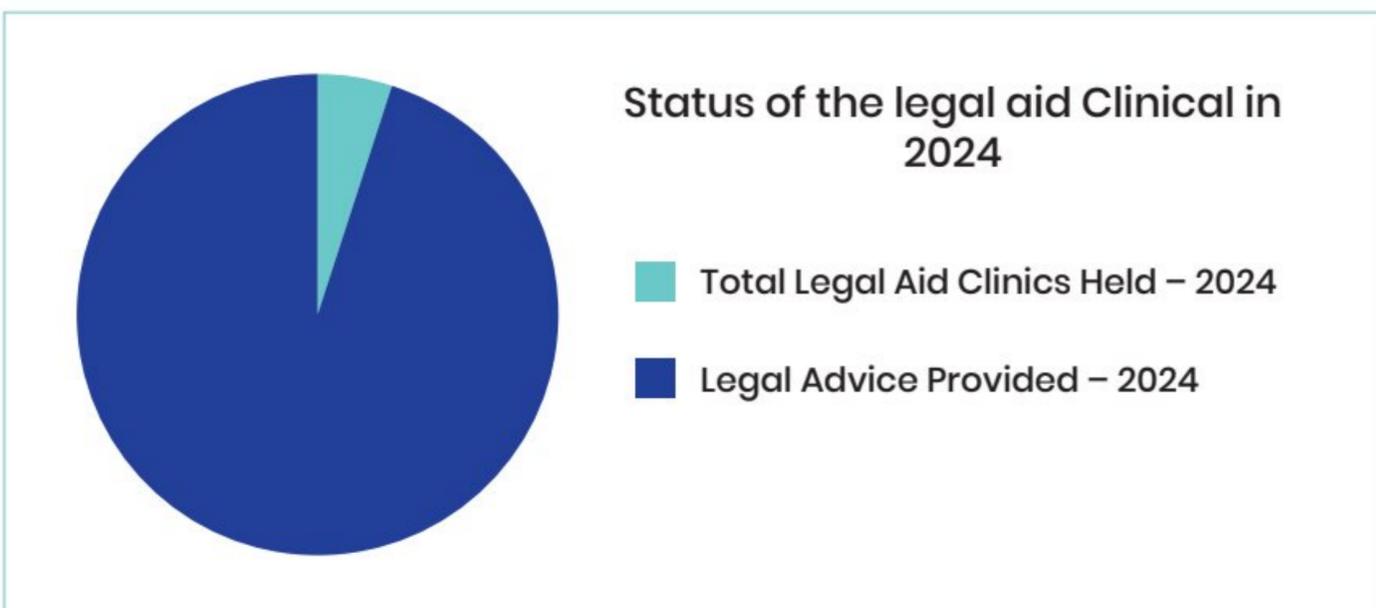
3.3 Legal Aid Clinics



Legal aid clinics were conducted at each Human Rights First Aid Centre (HRFAC) to provide essential legal advice and support to victims of various cases.

All cases received through the HRFACs were systematically monitored by coordinators, who ensured proper assessment and referral to lawyers within the Lawyers' Collective. Initially planned as monthly sessions, the activity was redesigned to maximize resources and expand outreach, allowing not only referred victims but also community members to access legal guidance. This approach strengthened grassroots human rights protection by ensuring professional handling

of each case, consistent follow-up, and timely legal assistance. The coordination between HRFACs and the Lawyers' Collective established an effective system for responding to violations and safeguarding victims' rights.



4. United Nations Volunteer Fund for the Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) Project: “You Are Not Alone - Support Torture Victims”

Objective:

This project seeks to provide **holistic support** to victims of torture in Sri Lanka, offering **legal, medical, and psychosocial services** to help victims recover from trauma and seek justice.

Key Achievements:

- **102 victims** of torture were supported, surpassing the target of **45 victims**.
- **30 legal aid cases** were pursued, with **10 victims** receiving **financial support** for medical treatments.
- **Psychosocial support** was provided to **70 victims**, helping them cope with the psychological trauma caused by torture.
- **Training sessions** were conducted for **100 stakeholders**, including **law enforcement officers, judicial authorities, and human rights defenders**, to raise awareness on **preventing torture** and improving **victim assistance**.
- Awareness campaigns were held in **10 districts**, involving **over 500 participants**, focusing on the **legal framework** for torture prevention and the rights of victims.

4.1 Main Results Achieved Through This Project (UNFVT)

In 2024, the UNVFVT project achieved notable progress in providing comprehensive support to victims and human rights defenders across Sri Lanka. A major priority was ensuring access to healthcare, which was facilitated through the systematic collection and coordination of request letters, consent forms, medical prescriptions, and official medical records. This strengthened the delivery of timely and verified medical assistance.

Psychosocial support services were carried out under the leadership of Amitha, offering counselling and emotional recovery assistance. Critical interventions were provided in high-profile cases, including the Habaraduwa police torture incident and the Hambanthota case involving **Imasha**, where victims required urgent psychological support alongside legal action.

To ensure localized and responsive support, the project worked closely with regional Human Rights Facilitation Centers (HRFACs), particularly in Gampaha, Kurunegala, and Rabukkana. These partnerships enabled tailored victim support, community-level coordination, and case referrals aligned with regional needs.

On the legal front, the project documented and pursued justice in more than 12 significant cases involving police brutality, extrajudicial killings, and other serious human rights violations. Legal coordination included facilitating appearances before the Human Rights Commission and providing structured support in Magistrate, District, and High Courts. Key cases such as the Minuwangoda police case and the Mannar police accident case were actively monitored and advanced.

New Fundamental Rights (FR) cases were filed in 2024, ensuring victims received legal aid and professional representation from experienced lawyers, including Lakshan Dias and Shantha Jayawardhana. More than 20 court appearances were supported through case preparation, logistics, and victim guidance, reinforcing the project’s commitment to ensuring that victims’ voices were represented within the justice process.

Grassroots engagement was strengthened through victim meetings and legal clinics conducted in areas such as Galle, Kanthale, and Mannar. These sessions provided direct legal awareness, case consultation, and community solidarity for affected families.

Emergency financial assistance was also extended through individual cash grants, including support provided to victims such as K.U. Mallika and Buddhi Ivantha, enabling them to cope with immediate socio-economic challenges. Maintaining detailed case records throughout all interventions ensured transparency, accountability, and responsible case management.

Overall, the UNVFVT project combined medical, psychosocial, legal, and financial support to address both urgent and long-term needs of victims. Through coordinated and compassionate action, the project contributed to measurable improvements in victim well-being, access to justice, and community trust, reinforcing its role in promoting human rights and legal accountability in Sri Lanka.

4.2 Medical Assistance & Specialized Care (Including Referrals)

The organization delivered essential medical support to survivors of torture, addressing both urgent physical injuries and related psychological trauma. Direct medical assistance included facilitation of medical prescriptions, securing informed consent, and obtaining verified medical records to ensure continuity of care. Beneficiaries such as Imash Amishka, Buddhi Ivantha, Hansaka Deshan, Madushanka Silva, Madushanka Silva, and Dilshan Fernando received medical support through the programme.

A key component of service delivery was referral-based medical assistance, where survivors were connected to hospitals and specialized medical or rehabilitation service

providers for advanced treatment. Among the beneficiaries, Imash Amishka and Hansaka Deshan were under 18 years of age, reflecting targeted support for minors facing heightened vulnerability. Medical services were structured to allow multiple forms of assistance per beneficiary, ensuring comprehensive care based on individual medical needs.

This integrated approach strengthened survivors' access to professional healthcare, upheld their dignity, and supported long-term recovery, in line with the organization's mandate to protect the rights and well-being of torture survivors across Sri Lanka.

4.3 Psychological & Psychiatric Support (Through Referrals & Expert Collaboration)

The organization ensured access to vital psychological care for torture survivors and their families, despite initial limitations in engaging in-house psychologists due to budgetary and resource constraints. To bridge this gap, the programme adapted an external referral model, collaborating with qualified psychologists, counsellors, and mental-health professionals.

Through this approach, survivors, including Nimesh Viduranga and Ishan Shalitha, along with their immediate family members, received trauma-focused counselling, emotional support, and guided psychosocial care from partnered external experts. These services directly addressed anxiety, distress, and trauma-related psychological impacts experienced by both victims and their caregivers.

All psychological and psychiatric support was delivered through referrals and structured expert collaborations, enabling beneficiaries to receive multiple sessions and different types of mental-health assistance as required. This flexible and survivor-centred model demonstrated the organization's sustained commitment to mental well-being, ensuring no victim or family was left without psychological support, while strengthening networks with external mental-health providers across Sri Lanka.

4.4 Torture Survivors' Meetings Community Support & Solidarity

The organization facilitated three regional meetings for torture survivors in Galle, Mannar, and Trincomalee, creating safe and inclusive spaces for survivors and affected families. These meetings strengthened community-level solidarity and ensured survivors could access legal guidance, psychosocial support, and peer engagement in a supportive environment.

The sessions were especially impactful in the Northern and Eastern provinces, regions that have faced prolonged conflict and systemic human-rights concerns. Survivors actively shared testimonies, engaged in discussions,

and received structured support based on their individual needs. The strong participation and meaningful interaction reflected continued confidence in the programme's services and advocacy approach.

These meetings enabled beneficiaries to receive multiple forms of assistance, including follow-up legal and psychosocial referrals where required. This milestone demonstrated the organization's commitment to survivor empowerment, resilience building, and equitable access to justice, particularly for communities in historically underserved regions across Sri Lanka.

5. BCHARD Project: Bolstering Advocacy Capacity of Human Rights Defenders

Objective:

The **BCHARD project** focuses on enhancing the **advocacy capacity** of **Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)** and **journalists** by providing them with **training** and **resources** to better engage in human rights advocacy and **policy reform**.

5.1 Key Achievements:

- The **HRD Advocacy Training Module** was developed in **3 languages** (Sinhala, Tamil, and English), benefiting **over 300 HRDs** across Sri Lanka.
- **40 journalists** were trained as **master trainers**, expanding the reach of human rights education to **more than 200 HRDs** in rural areas.
- **Training sessions** were held in **12 districts**, empowering **162 HRDs** and **journalists** with the skills needed to **advocate effectively** for **human rights**.
- The project contributed to **15 advocacy campaigns** that reached an audience of **over 10,000 people**, advocating for **legal reforms**, **media accountability**, and **transitional justice**.

5.2 BCHARD Project

The project was successfully implemented to strengthen the advocacy capacity of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and journalists in Sri Lanka. The initiative focused on building essential knowledge, training master trainers, developing advocacy resources, producing digital awareness content, and improving the Aithiya.lk web platform as a national human rights advocacy hub.

The project delivered five main outputs:

1. Development of an HRD Advocacy Training Module,
2. Training journalists as trainers,
3. Conducting HRD training sessions,
4. Producing advocacy materials, and
5. Strengthening the Aithiya.lk digital platform.

A key achievement in 2024 was the development of the **HRD Advocacy Training Module** in September, published in **Sinhala, Tamil, and English**. The module includes advocacy principles, strategic planning, digital engagement, and case-based examples, making it a practical tool for HRDs from diverse communities.

To expand advocacy leadership, **40 HRDs and journalists** were trained as **master trainers**, forming a decentralized network linked to **Human Rights First Aid Centers (HRFACs)** to support grassroots advocacy.



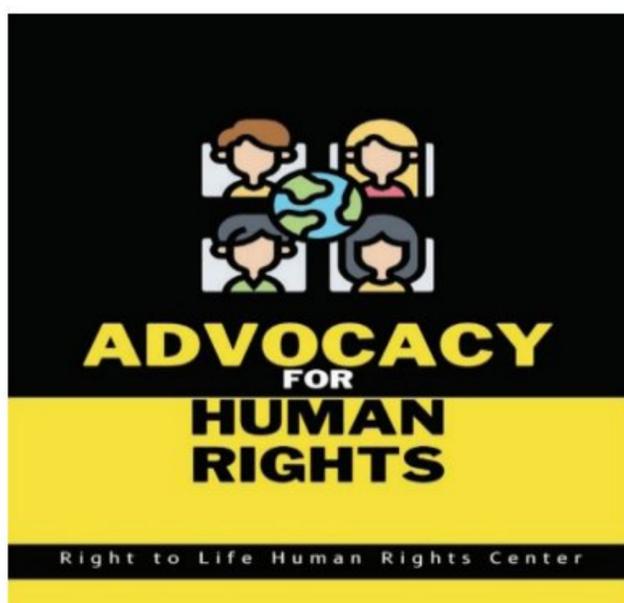
Following this, **163 HRDs** received in-person advocacy training between **December 2024 and February 2025** across 12 HRFAC districts, including Kurunegala, Trincomalee, Monaragala, Hambantota, Galle, Matara, Jaffna, Mannar, Hatton, and others. These trainings strengthened collaboration, strategic advocacy planning, and defender confidence. To increase public awareness, the project also supported the creation of **36 multimedia advocacy contents** (videos, infographics, and articles), initiated in January 2025 and completed in July 2025, focusing on national human rights concerns and digital civic space challenges.

Despite emerging legislative challenges affecting digital rights and civic space, the project integrated advocacy for legal reform to protect HRDs and journalists operating online.

By the end of 2024, the **Aithiya.lk platform** had been significantly improved to host HRD-generated content, amplify digital advocacy, and support national awareness, education, and mobilization for human rights protection.

5.3 Training of Trainers (TOT) and Advocacy Training Module

A two-day **Advocacy Training of Trainers (ToT)** was conducted on **6–7 November 2024** for **40 journalists and Human Rights Defenders (26 males, 14 females)**, selected through an open and transparent process to ensure inclusive participation. The training aimed to



strengthen participants' capacities to plan and implement effective human rights advocacy campaigns.

Facilitated by the **Right to Life Human Rights Center** and affiliated experts, the program covered **advocacy principles and planning, legal challenges, media engagement, digital content production, risk management, gender sensitivity, and climate change advocacy**. Participants actively engaged in discussions, shared experiences, and completed hands-on exercises, enhancing their practical skills to address human rights issues in their communities.

The training utilized the newly developed **Advocacy Training Module**, a comprehensive resource designed to guide HRDs, journalists, and civil society actors. The module includes five sections:

1. **HRDs and Legal Frameworks** – Roles, challenges, and protections under national and international law.

2. **Understanding Advocacy** – Importance, distinction from activism, and strategies to influence social change.
3. **Advocacy Planning** – Tools for issue identification, goal setting, stakeholder mapping, and strategy development.
4. **Advocacy Tactics and Tools** – Lobbying, media engagement, digital advocacy, and creation of reports, infographics, and videos.
5. **Risk Management** – Mitigating political, legal, and digital risks with practical case studies.

To ensure accessibility, the module has been **translated into Sinhala, Tamil, and English**, with printed copies distributed during HRD training sessions across **12 districts**. It is also **freely available online** on the Right to Life Human Rights Center’s website, supporting open access and sustainability.

5.3. Training of Trainers – Advocacy Program

A two-day Advocacy Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted on 6–7 November 2024 to strengthen the capacities of 40 journalists and Human Rights Defenders (26 males, 14 females) in human rights advocacy. Participants were selected through an open and transparent application process, ensuring inclusive participation from diverse regions and backgrounds.

The training, facilitated by the Right to Life Human Rights Center and affiliated experts, focused on practical skills for advocacy.

Sessions included advocacy principles and planning, legal challenges, media engagement, digital content production, risk management, gender sensitivity, and climate change advocacy.

Participants were actively involved in discussions, raising questions on community engagement, legal challenges, and digital security, and taking part in hands-on exercises. The interactive sessions and group activities enhanced their practical knowledge and skills.

By the end of the program, participants were equipped to plan, implement, and lead effective advocacy campaigns, applying the tools and frameworks learned during the training.

The ToT strengthened the overall capacity of journalists and HRDs to address human rights issues in their communities effectively.

6 PUJA Project: People Unite for Justice and Accountability

Objective:

The People Unite for Justice and Accountability (PUJA) Project, implemented by the Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L) as a partner organization, has made significant steps in promoting transitional justice (TJ), human rights advocacy, and victim-centric reconciliation in Sri Lanka throughout 2024.

6.1 Key Achievements of the PUJA Project – 2024

- **Strengthened Transitional Justice Advocacy**

The project enhanced understanding of transitional justice among civil society actors, journalists, and legal professionals through targeted capacity-building initiatives. Public discourse on accountability was elevated through opinion editorials, social media campaigns, and multimedia storytelling.

- **Amplified Victim-Centred Justice**

PUJA documented powerful testimonies from victims and families affected by enforced disappearances and wartime violations. Survivors were also provided with essential psychosocial support, enabling trauma recovery and sustained engagement in justice-seeking processes.

- **Advanced Public Awareness and Policy Engagement**

High-impact advocacy initiatives were successfully implemented, including a press conference examining presidential candidates' commitments to transitional justice. The project produced compelling advocacy content, documentaries, reports, and articles to inform and engage broader audiences on human rights issues.

- **Laid Foundations for Sustainable Advocacy**

The project established a growing repository of research, documentation, and victim narratives to support future transitional justice efforts. It also strengthened networks among civil society organizations, journalists, and human rights defenders, fostering long-term collaboration and impact.

- In 2024, the project produced 26 powerful victim-centred stories highlighting the lived experiences of individuals affected by war, enforced disappearances, political violence, and displacement across Sri Lanka. These narratives included survivors of civil war, families of the disappeared, former combatants, widows, and youth who overcame adversity.

- The stories documented key themes such as resilience, justice-seeking, trauma, stigma, reintegration, and reconciliation, while amplifying marginalized voices from diverse communities. Several stories also highlighted academic and sporting achievements, demonstrating hope and recovery despite conflict-related hardships.

- Through ethical storytelling and increased collaboration with journalists, these productions expanded public awareness, strengthened advocacy efforts, and contributed meaningfully to national dialogue on transitional justice, accountability, and peacebuilding.

6.2 Key Outputs and Results – 2024

- **80 victims’ testimonies** were documented nationwide as part of a transitional justice advocacy campaign.
- **500 participants** attended **three public forums** focused on accountability and human rights.
- **20 Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)** were trained in transitional justice processes, strengthening grassroots advocacy for truth-telling, reparations, and justice.
- Despite funding constraints, the project expanded public awareness through multimedia storytelling, reaching **over 5,000 viewers** via documentaries and social media platforms.



GLADYS JAYAWARDENA, A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL WHO WAS ASSASSINATED IN 1988

Dr. Gladys Jayawardena was a distinguished Sri Lankan medical professional whose groundbreaking...

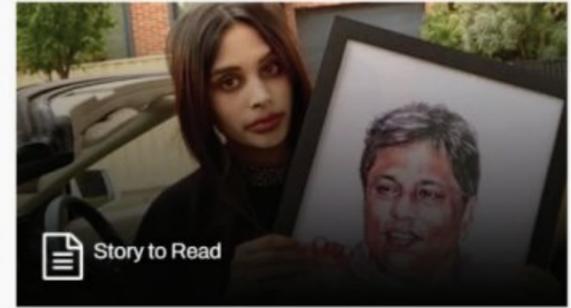
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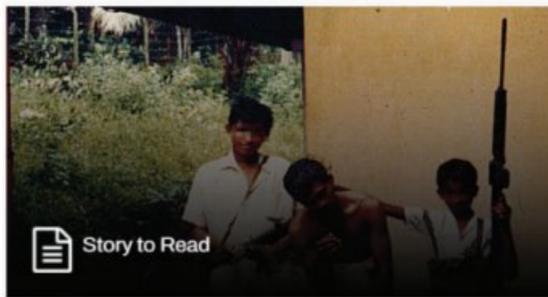
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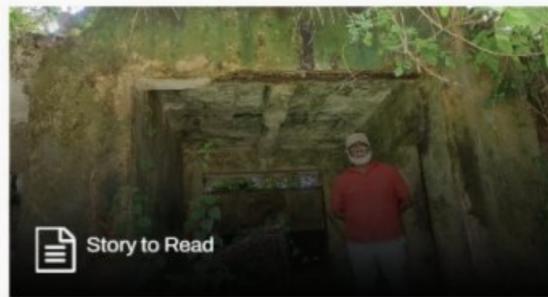
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BATALANDA TORTURE CAMP AND ALLEGATIONS AGAINST POLITICIANS

The Batalanda Torture Camp was a notorious site in Sri Lanka during the 1980s which became infamous...

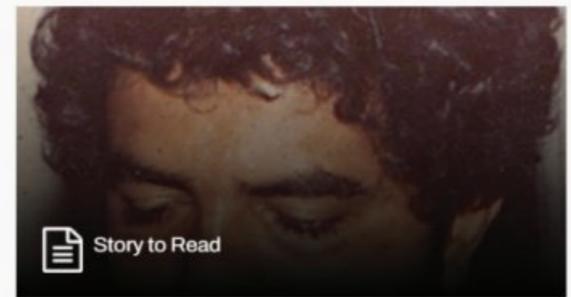
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MANIKKHAMI'S STORY

The village of Bowatta in Welikanda, Polonnaruwa, is a settlement established under the Mahaweli...

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7. BCS Project: A Torture-Free, Peaceful, Inclusive Society

Objective:

The **Bolstering Civil Society project** seeks to tackle the root causes of **torture** in Sri Lanka by conducting **public awareness campaigns**, providing **capacity-building** opportunities, and advocating for **policy reforms** that address **socio-economic disparities** and **cultural issues**.

Key Achievements:

- **SLCAT Consultation Meeting** brought together **30 key stakeholders** to discuss the **prevalence of torture** in **police departments** and **higher education institutions**.
- **20 junior lawyers** were trained on **fundamental rights cases**, enabling them to advocate for **torture victims** and improve access to justice for marginalized groups.
- **10 HRFACs** were launched in **strategic locations**, providing **legal** and **medical assistance** to victims of torture and **human rights abuses**.
- The project conducted **10 awareness campaigns** across **5 regions**, reaching **1,500 individuals** and raising public awareness about **torture prevention** and **legal rights**.

7.1 Key Achievements and Success Stories

1. VictimAssistance

Over **1,200 victims** of human rights violations received holistic support through **legal aid**, **psychosocial services**, and **medical treatment**.

- **102 torture victims and family members** were supported through **legal representation**, facilitating over **20 court appearances**.
- Provided **psychosocial support** to **80 victims**, particularly those from high-profile cases such as the **Habaraduwa police torture case** and the **Minuwangoda police case**.
- Delivered **medical support** to **75 victims**, ensuring they received treatment for injuries sustained from torture and police brutality.
- **Legal clinics** and **victim meetings** were held in **3 districts**, helping victims access immediate assistance and support.

2. Training and Empowerment

200+ Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and **journalists** were trained in **advocacy**, **human rights documentation**, and **media engagement**, improving grassroots advocacy capabilities and community protection mechanisms.

- **40 journalists** were trained as **master trainers**, who then trained **162 HRDs** across **12 districts**, including **Matara**, **Jaffna**, and **Kurunegala**.
- **Training of Trainers (TOT)** sessions were conducted in **5 regions** with a focus on empowering local HRDs to **use social media** effectively for **advocacy** and **human rights campaigns**.

- The **HRD Advocacy Training Module** was developed in **3 languages** (Sinhala, Tamil, and English), benefiting **over 300 HRDs**.
- The training sessions empowered HRDs with practical skills such as **video editing** and **infographic creation**, with participants from areas like **Kurunegala** and **Hambantota** leading local campaigns post-training.
- Over **36 multimedia advocacy materials** were developed, highlighting issues like **police torture**, **human trafficking**, and **gender-based violence**, which were shared across **Aithiya.lk**, **social media**, and **YouTube**, reaching **over 10,000 viewers**.

3. Advocacy

Public forums, **policy dialogues**, and **media campaigns** increased public awareness of **human rights violations** and the need for **policy reforms**, including **transitional justice** and **anti-torture laws**.

- In 2024, **5 major public forums** were held, attracting **over 1,500 participants** from **civil society**, **media**, and **government sectors**. Key dialogues included discussions on **police accountability**, **transitional justice (TJ)**, and **media freedom**.
- A **press conference** organized by R2L in **August 2024** focused on **transitional justice** and **constitutional reforms**, attracting **82 journalists** and **human rights activists**. The discussions highlighted the need for an independent **Truth, Unity, and Reconciliation Commission (TURC)** to address **historical injustices** and promote **national healing**.
- **Public campaigns** such as the **International Day in Support of Victims of Torture** led to significant **media coverage** in major Sri Lankan outlets, including **Lankadeepa**, **Ada**, and **Sirasa TV**, with **over 10,000 viewers** engaged through **social media** platforms.
- **Transitional justice (TJ)** awareness was raised in **5 provinces**, with **local HRDs** and **journalists** driving **grassroots campaigns** on social issues such as **period poverty** and **ethnic inequality**.
- R2L's work on **social media** and **multimedia storytelling** significantly contributed to the ongoing dialogue about **justice** and **accountability**, with video content from **HRFACs** shared on platforms like **Aithiya.lk**, gaining **significant traction** among both **local and international audiences**.
- The **BCHARD project** created a network of **HRDs** who used **mobile journalism (MOJO)** to document and raise awareness about local human rights violations, producing **120 MOJO videos**, which were shared on social media channels and widely viewed by **over 5,000 individuals**.

These achievements demonstrate the **holistic approach** of R2L's initiatives, which not only provided direct support to **victims** but also **empowered communities** through **education**, **advocacy**, and **training**. By **empowering HRDs** and **journalists** with the necessary tools, knowledge, and platforms, R2L has significantly contributed to **human rights protection** in Sri Lanka, pushing for **accountability**, **justice**, and **transitional reforms**.

8. Financial Status

8.1 Overview of Financial Performance

During the reporting year, the organization maintained sound financial management and accountability. Income was generated through grants, donor contributions, and project funding. Expenditures were aligned with program priorities, ensuring efficient use of resources and continued organizational sustainability.

8.2 Income and Expenditure Summary

Category	Amount (LKR)
Total Income	94,604,372.79
Total Expenditure	98,627,916.76
Surplus / Savings	(4,023,543.97)

8.3 Budget Allocation and Spending per Project

Project Name	Project Titled	Received funds Year of 2024 LKR
UNVFVT	“You Are Not Alone - Support Torture Victims”	7,427,700.00
OSF	Safeguarding Human Rights During the Post-Crisis Transition in Sri Lanka	10,215,028.00
FREEDOM HOUSE	(Safety Nets for Economic and Human Rights (SNEHR))	12,252,095.60
MISEREOR	Strengthening Rights and Entitlements of Vulnerable Communities	20,879,965.60
DRL - PUJA	People Unite for Justice and Accountability	15,341,335.73
BSC	A Torture-Free, Peaceful, Inclusive Society	9,500,000.00
Embassy of The Netherlands	Bolstering Advocacy Capacity of Human Rights Defenders	8,178,353.76

8.4 Audited Financial Report Highlights

The organization’s financial statements for the reporting year were audited by an independent, qualified auditor. The audit confirmed that the accounts present a true and fair view of the organization’s financial position and that all funds were utilized in compliance with applicable financial regulations, donor requirements, and internal policies.

9. Future Plans and Strategic Direction

9.1 Strengthening Economic Sustainability through Social Entrepreneurship

- Building on the capacity developed through the **trained social entrepreneurship groups**, R2L will establish **structured income-generating systems** linked with the Human Rights First Aid Centre (HRFAC) Network.
- These initiatives will focus on **community-based micro-enterprises**, ethical production, service-based models, and cooperative mechanisms.
- The objective is to enhance the **financial independence of HRFAC members and vulnerable communities**, while also strengthening the long-term sustainability of grassroots human rights work.

9.2 Grant Mobilization and Resource Diversification

- R2L will formally institutionalize a target of **submitting a minimum of two Calls for Proposals (CFPs) per month**.
- Priority will be given to funding windows focusing on:
 - Human rights protection
 - Economic justice
 - Climate justice
 - Digital rights and media freedom
- This strategy aims to reduce dependency on single-source funding and ensure **organizational continuity and program stability**.

9.3 Expansion and Strengthening of the HRFAC Network

- R2L plans to **expand the Human Rights First Aid Centre (HRFAC) Network into new underserved districts**, prioritizing conflict-affected, plantation, coastal, and climate-vulnerable communities.
- Focus will also be placed on:
 - Strengthening the capacity of existing HRFACs
 - Standardizing service delivery mechanisms
 - Enhancing legal referral and documentation systems
- The goal is to position HRFACs as **permanent, community-based human rights protection mechanisms** across Sri Lanka.

9.4 Integrating Climate Justice into the Human Rights Agenda

- R2L will formally integrate **climate justice as a core thematic priority**, recognizing its growing impact on:
 - Economic rights
 - Housing and land rights
 - Livelihood security
 - Disaster vulnerability
- Planned actions include:
 - Community awareness programs on climate justice
 - Documentation of climate-related human rights violations
 - Youth-led advocacy on environmental accountability
 - Strategic litigation and policy engagement on environmental rights, where appropriate

9.5 Strategic Organizational Direction for 2026–2028

- R2L will develop a **new three-year Strategic Plan (2026–2028)** focusing on:
 - Human rights protection and accountability
 - Economic justice and social protection
 - Digital rights and media freedom
 - Transitional justice and institutional reform
 - Climate justice and disaster resilience
- The strategy will emphasize:
 - Strong governance and compliance
 - Data-driven programming
 - Institutional sustainability
 - Cross-sector partnerships and youth leadership
- This long-term direction will guide **program growth, fundraising priorities, and national advocacy positioning**.

9.6 Right to Life Human Rights Center's media coverage

Our websites

Right to Life: <http://www.right2lifelanka.org/>

Aithiya: <http://www.aithiya.lk/>
<http://www.aithiya.lk/>

Daily Reporter: <https://www.dailyreporter.lk/>

SLCAT: <http://www.slcatt.org/>



Aithiya



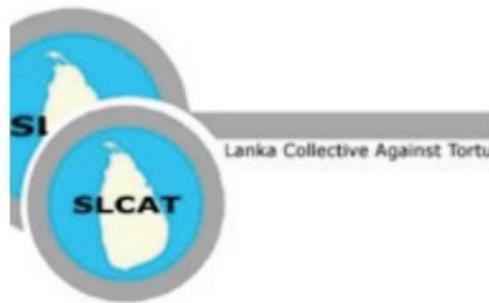
Daily Reporter

872 followers • 10 following



Right to Life Sri Lanka

3.5K likes • 3.7K followers



SLCAT

1K likes • 1K followers



Aithiya Udesha Madyawediyo

841 likes • 916 followers



Our Facebook Pages

Right to Life Sri Lanka - <https://www.facebook.com/r2lsrilanka>

Aithiya - <https://www.facebook.com/aithiya.lk>

SLCAT - <https://www.facebook.com/SLCATMedia/>

Aithiya - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063714575259>

Daily Reporter - <https://www.facebook.com/dailyreporter.lk>

9.7 Our international partners

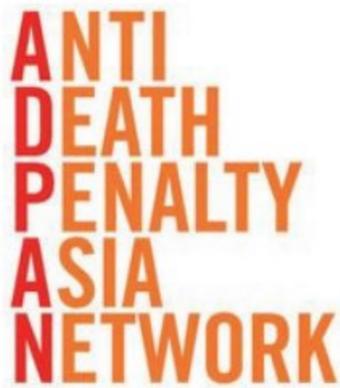
- Asian Human Rights Commission



- Asia Forum



- Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network



- OMCT



- IRCT





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