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	2014	2015		
Internet Freedom Status	Partly Free	Partly Free	Population:	20.7 million
Obstacles to Access (0-25)	15	14	Internet Penetration 2014:	26 percent
Limits on Content (0-35)	20	13	Social Media/ICT Apps Blocked:	No
Violations of User Rights (0-40)	23	20	Political/Social Content Blocked:	No
TOTAL* (0-100)	58	47	Bloggers/ICT Users Arrested:	No
			Press Freedom 2015 Status:	Not Free

* 0=most free, 100=least free

Key Developments: June 2014 – May 2015

- The defeat of Mahinda Rajapaksa in the 2015 presidential election and the progressive politics of his successor, Maithripala Sirisena, have strengthened internet freedom (see **Introduction**).
- Political websites that were formerly censored are now freely accessible, including ex-ile-run news website *TamilNet*, the first to be blocked by the previous regime (see **Blocking and Filtering**).
- Over the last year, there has been a considerable decline in rights violations, including violence, prosecutions and intimidation (see **Violations of User Rights**).
- Digital activism and public engagement with critical political and socioeconomic narratives has increased on social media as access increases each year (see **Digital Activism**).

Introduction

Internet freedom improved considerably in Sri Lanka following the defeat of Mahinda Rajapaksa in the January 2015 presidential election. After almost 10 years in power, the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) now finds itself on the opposition benches. Soon after swearing in as the 6th Executive President of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena formed an interim government with the United National Party (UNP) and appointed its leader, Ranil Wickremesinghe, as prime minister.¹ A commitment to a fair and open society was clearly outlined at the inception of the interim government. Both President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe promised to run a government that stays clear of blocking websites, intimidating journalists, and other draconian practices that characterized the previous government's relationship with online and traditional media, including the curtailment of editorial freedom.

In line with these assurances, all websites earlier blocked by the previous government were accessible by May 2015, including the exile-run news website *TamilNet*, blocked since 2007 for reporting on civilian casualties of the military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which ended in May 2009.² Digital activism through online news websites, blogs and citizen media initiatives continues to strengthen as more people use the internet to access news, opinion and engage with diverse sources of information. In the lead up to the presidential election, Facebook and Twitter were used to launch voter education campaigns.

After months of political bargaining, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in parliament in April 2015. The amendment strengthened checks and balances on the executive presidency, restored term limits to the presidency, and empowered independent commissions. The Right to Information (RTI), which was included as an action point for President Sirisena's first 100 days, was declared a fundamental right. However, RTI legislation – drafted, amended and approved by the cabinet following considerable public debate – was not presented and passed in parliament during the coverage period of this report. Moreover, concerns still exist about the transparency of the regulatory framework for ISPs and the independence of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC). Legal and regulatory reform is still needed to consolidate the opening for internet and media freedom witnessed in the past year.

Obstacles to Access

Internet penetration in Sri Lanka continues to increase every year due to affordable internet rates provided by ISPs. Moreover, an increasing segment of the population has turned to smartphones in order to access the web. While low digital literacy continues to be an obstacle to widespread ICT use, it is encouraging to note that the number of people able to use a computer is increasing, with a rise from 20 percent in 2009 to 24 percent in 2012. The independence of Sri Lanka's Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) continues to be in question, even under a new government, after President Sirisena appointed his permanent secretary as the head of the commission.

1 Maithripala Sirisena is the 6th Executive President of Sri Lanka and the 7th Overall President.

2 "TamilNet Blocked in Sri Lanka", *BBC Sinhala*, June 20, 2007, <http://bbc.in/1YfSL5b>. Local internet users reported it was patchily accessible through some fixed-line and mobile broadband networks. See, Sanjana Hattotuwa, "Tamilnet.com Accessible Once More in Sri Lanka via SLT ADSL," *ICT for Peacebuilding* (blog), August 5, 2010, <http://bit.ly/1iRKRP5>.

Availability and Ease of Access

Internet penetration was at 26 percent in 2014, up from 22 percent in 2013, as a continually expanding economic sector and growing youth population drove demand for online services.³ Mobile penetration rose from 96 to 103 percent in the same period. At the same time, according to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, the country's total internet connections grew by 68 percent due to an 86 percent increase in mobile internet connections in 2014.⁴

Internet connectivity is becoming more affordable, with the cheapest broadband connections priced at just under US\$5 a month. In September 2014, Dialog offered free access to its Wi-Fi network for a period of one month.⁵ As of 2015, Dialog operates over 2,500 pay-to-use Wi-Fi hotspots around the country exclusively for its subscribers.⁶⁷

Free access to the internet was a major campaign promise of President Sirisena and was featured in his manifesto for the presidential election. A few months after his election, the interim government announced the availability of free Wi-Fi at 26 public locations around the country. The Information Communications and Technology Agency (ICTA) – the state agency responsible for implementing the plan – announced that free Wi-Fi would eventually be available at over 1,000 public locations.⁸

While Wi-Fi coverage appears to be increasing every year, technology experts have voiced concerns about the reliability of speeds delivered through public Wi-Fi spots.⁹¹⁰ ISPs are attempting to address the issue of speed with new and improved services. SLT introduced carrier-grade public Wi-Fi technology, allowing enterprises, institutions and other private sector entities to access island-wide hotspots with a username and password.¹¹ While two IT parks are currently open in Jaffna and Mannar, in 2014 the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology announced that 10 more IT parks would be constructed around the country in order to boost the IT sector and public access to ICTs.¹²

Increasingly affordable handsets and data packages have boosted mobile internet use, particularly among young people.¹³ In the third quarter of 2014, Sri Lanka's mobile phone imports reached 1 million units, while the shipments of smartphones increased by 100 percent. The overall growth rate for the market has been consistent year on year, which has in turn contributed to an increase in the use of smartphones to access the internet. At present, it estimated that over 20 percent of the pop-

3 International Telecommunication Union, "Percentage of Individuals Using the Internet, 2000-2014," <http://bit.ly/1cblxxY>.

4 "Sri Lanka's mobile internet usage grows 85.8-pct in 2014:CB", The Official Government News Portal of Sri Lanka, May 9th, 2015, <http://www.news.lk/news/business/item/7557-sri-lanka-s-mobile-internet-usage-grows-85-8-pct-in-2014-cb>

5 "Dialog announces free Wi-Fi offer," *DailyFT*, Sept 22, 2014, <http://www.ft.lk/2014/09/22/dialog-announces-free-wi-fi-offer/>.

6 "Wi-Fi Hotspots in Sri Lanka", Dialog, <http://www.dialog.lk/personal/broadband/wi-fi/>

7 "Dialog's Giving Everyone Free Wi-Fi. For 30 Days," *Readme*, September 22, 2014, <http://readme.lk/dialogs-giving-free-wi-fi-30-days/>.

8 The Official Government News Portal of Sri Lanka, "Free Wi-Fi from today at 26 public locations in Sri Lanka," news release, March 30th, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1KjuEJj>.

9 Rohan Samarajiva, "Morning after: Thinking through Sri Lanka President's free Wi-Fi promise," *LirneAsia*, February 28, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1iRO7Kr>.

10 Yudhanjaya Wijeratne, "Why Yahapalanaya's Train Wi-Fi might not be as cool as you think," *Readme*, February 28, 2015, <http://readme.lk/free-wifi-train-stations/>.

11 "WLT Wi-Fi hotspots for the first time in Sri Lanka", *The Sunday Times*, May 25, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1KT873m>.

12 Indunil Hewage, "Ten more ICT parks this year", *Daily News*, May 2, 2014, <http://www.dailynews.lk/?q=business/ten-more-ict-parks-year>.

13 Bandula Sirmanna, "Smart phones catch the eye of Sri Lankan Youth", *The Sunday Times*, October 20th, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1QIHp4G>.

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ulation in Sri Lanka use smart devices.¹⁴ Monthly subscriptions for mobile data packages can run as low as US\$3 a month. In early 2014, Sri Lanka's mobile market surpassed the 100 percent subscriber penetration milestone.¹⁵

Low digital literacy represents a major barrier to ICT use. Although Sri Lanka's literacy rate is approximately 91 percent,¹⁶ only 20 percent of the population was comfortable using computers in 2009.¹⁷ However, the 2012 census reported that this figure had increased to 24 percent.¹⁸ A higher percentage of young people (47.2 percent among the 10-15 age group) used computers in comparison to older age groups, according to the census. Digital literacy is lower in rural areas, where the high cost of personal computers limits access for lower-income families, schools with digital facilities lack corresponding literacy programs, and software is often incompatible with the Sinhala and Tamil languages. The ICTA has sought to address this imbalance as part of an e-Sri Lanka project by establishing rural community centers to promote ICT access and services.¹⁹ Some local journalists criticized aspects of the development, saying high-value contracts were awarded based on cronyism, while some facilities complained of faulty equipment.²⁰

Restrictions on Connectivity

Sri Lanka has access to multiple international cables, but the majority of the landing stations for these cables is controlled by Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT), the majority state-owned ISP. Lanka Bell, a private operator, controls only one landing station. SLT does not allow other telecommunications companies to connect to landing stations using their own fiber network and instead imposes price barriers by making competing players lease connectivity from SLT at significantly higher prices.²¹ The state's control over the internet architecture in the country is problematic, especially when non-price barriers emerge, such as delays in responding to private companies' requests for increased capacity.

There were no large-scale connectivity interruptions during the coverage period of this report, although they have occurred in the past. SLT temporarily severed internet and 8,000 mobile phone connections in the predominantly Tamil-speaking north and east in 2007, which was then the center of the conflict with the LTTE and is still a militarized zone.²² In April 2015, the military confirmed that it had released 1000 acres of land from high-security zones (HSZs) in the Northern province.²³ However, militarization and the existence of other HSZs remains a serious concern.²⁴

14 "Sri Lanka's mobile phone shipments reached 1mn units in 3Q: Smart phone shipments up 100 pct: Report", LBO, December 25th, 2014.

15 "Sri Lanka's internet user penetration low, mobile broadband segment increasing – market report," *ColomboPage*, November 11, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1guhFW6>.

16 UNICEF, "Sri Lanka Statistics," accessed July 2013, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sri_lanka_statistics.html.

17 Department of Census and Statistics, "Computer Literacy Survey – 2009," http://www.statistics.gov.lk/CLS/BuletinComputerLiteracy_2009.pdf.

18 2011-2012 Sri Lanka Census, Department of Census and Statistics, <http://statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat?CPH2011/index.php?fileName=FinalPopulation&gp=Activities&tpl=3>

19 Nenasala, "Establishment of Nenasalas," accessed July 2013, <http://bit.ly/1W4XODp>.

20 "ICTA Responds to Business Times report on e-government project," *The Sunday Times*, January 6, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1bmHPwO>.

21 Helani Galpaya, *Broadband in Sri Lanka: Glass Half Full or Half Empty?* (Washington, D.C.: infuse/The World Bank, 2011), <http://bit.ly/1izou0Y>.

22 "Cutting off Telecoms in Sri Lanka Redux...", *Groundviews*, January 30, 2007, <http://bit.ly/1OzcQ29>.

23 "Sri Lanka releases 1000 acres of land from high security zones in Jaffna," *ColomboPage*, April 11th, 2015, http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15A/Apr11_1428691768CH.php

24 "Sri Lanka accused of waging 'silent war' as Tamil land is appropriated by army," *The Guardian*, May 28th 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/may/28/sri-lanka-army-land-grabs-tamil-displacement-report-oakland-institute>

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The war also caused severe lags in infrastructure development for the northern and eastern provinces. Since the war's conclusion, the government has made up some of this ground, thereby boosting the regions' economic growth. The process of development, however, has been criticized for causing issues with respect to land ownership that threaten to further marginalize the local Tamil community.²⁵ More positively, census data identified heavy internet usage in post-war minority districts in 2011 and 2012, citing Vavuniya in the Northern Province as the district with the country's highest household internet usage.²⁶

ICT Market

SLT commands more than 50 percent of the market and has the largest fiber-optic national backbone.²⁷ While the broadband market is competitive, there is no legal requirement for SLT to sell backbone access to its competitors. The second largest player, Dialog Axiata, allows wholesale access to its fiber-optic rings, which are concentrated in populated cities.²⁸

With over 9 million subscribers,²⁹ Dialog Axiata is the largest mobile service provider, followed by Mobitel (over 5 million),³⁰ Etisalat (3.8 million), Airtel-Bharti Lanka (1.8 million) and Hutchison Telecommunications (1.4 million).³¹ So far, only Dialog Axiata, Mobitel, Sri Lanka Telecom and Lanka Bell offer 4G LTE broadband services.³² In November 2014, SLT, in partnership with Chinese telecom giant Huawei, launched the country's first 100G network, which would provide 8 terabits per second transmission capability through a fiber-optic network.³³

Regulatory Bodies

As a national regulatory body, the TRC's actions have consistently lacked transparency and independence.³⁴ Over the years, the TRC's interventions to restrict online content and pronouncements on strengthening online regulation have been partisan, extralegal, and repressive.³⁵ Under a constitutional amendment forced through by the Rajapaksa regime and ratified in 2011—which also removed presidential term limits—the president was able to appoint the heads and members of all

25 M.A. Sumanthiran, "Situation in North-Eastern Sri Lanka: A series of serious concerns," *dbsjeyaraj* (blog), October 23, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1Ozd3Cs>.

26 Rohan Samarajiva, "Sri Lanka census data show heavy household Internet use in post-conflict minority districts," *IrneAsia*, December 30, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1W4YqJh>.

27 Galpaya, *Broadband in Sri Lanka: Glass Half Full or Half Empty*.

28 Galpaya, *Broadband in Sri Lanka: Glass Half Full or Half Empty*.

29 Dialog Axiata PLC, *Q1 2015 Results*, May 13, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1JdtIEG>.

30 "Mobitel finalizes terms of Hutch takeover, report says," *TeleGeography*, February 11, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1izpDpo>.

31 The customer base figures for Etisalat, Airtel and Hutchison received from sources in each company (according to customer churn rates for June/July 2015).

32 "Dialog launches first mobile 4G-LTE service in Colombo," *Daily FT*, April 2, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1gukvRx>; Duruthu Edirimuni Chandrasekera, "Etisalat to head start on 4G," *The Sunday Times*, February 10, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1KswESY>; "Lanka Bell Launches 4G Connectivity," *Explore Sri Lanka*, April 2014, <http://exploresrilanka.lk/2014/04/lanka-bell-launches-4g-connectivity/>.

33 "Sri Lanka Telecom Builds 100G Network with Huawei," *Light Reading*, November 10th, 2014, <http://ubm.io/1KTDKC1>.

34 Under the Telecommunications Act No. 21 of 1994, the Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology has sole discretion in issuing licenses and imposition of license conditions based on the recommendations of the TRC.

35 "Colombo Telegraph blockade: TRC clueless," *Daily FT*, August 27th, 2013, <http://www.ft.lk/2013/08/27/colombo-telegraph-blockade-trc-clueless/>; Sarath Kumara, "Sri Lankan government prepares new Internet restrictions," *World Socialist Web Site*, February 15, 2010, <http://bit.ly/1QkpyA3>.

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commissions, subverting legislative guarantees for the independence of the TRC and other statutory institutions.³⁶

In April 2015, President Sirisena and his interim government were able to undo this stranglehold on democratic processes by introducing and ratifying the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which empowered independent commissions in the country and restored term limits to the presidency.³⁷ The passage of the amendment in parliament was considered a significant step toward strengthening democracy in the country and overturning the authoritarian politics of the Rajapaksa regime.

During his presidency, Rajapaksa cemented control of the TRC by appointing his permanent secretary as its chairman. Following his election victory, President Sirisena followed his predecessor's footsteps by appointing his permanent secretary, P. B. Abeykoon, as the head of the TRC.³⁸ In addition, President Sirisena appointed M. M. Zuhair—a former member of parliament and diplomat—as the Director-General of the TRC. While no blocks on news websites have taken place so far during President Sirisena's administration, the political appointments to the TRC do give cause for concern. In February 2015, after Rajapaksa's defeat, a businessman lodged a complaint at the Financial Crimes Investigation Division (FCID) against the former chairman and former director-general of the TRC for the alleged misappropriation of TRC funds. At the end of the coverage period, evidence was being collected for further action.³⁹

Limits on Content

News websites that were previously blocked under President Rajapaksa's rule are now accessible. The loosening of content restrictions on online media came about after the election of President Sirisena and his promise to end the authoritarian practices of his predecessor. Encouragingly, the unblocking of websites extended to TamilNet—the first website to be blocked by the previous government—which is now accessible across all ISPs. Digital activism remains vibrant in Sri Lanka, with a number of citizen media sites and new sites freely publishing content on political and socioeconomic issues in the country.

Blocking and Filtering

Local and international freedom of expression groups have documented dozens of websites blocked at different times in Sri Lanka since 2007, though the interventions lack a legal framework or judicial oversight.⁴⁰ Following his victory in the 2015 presidential election, President Sirisena moved quickly to dismantle the censorship regime imposed by his predecessor. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe assured journalists that they would be free to report on issues in the country without the fear of abduction and that authoritarian practices like internet censorship would not occur under the new government.⁴¹

36 "Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution," October 2010, [http://www.priu.gov.lk/Cons/1978Constitution/18th%20Amendment%20Act\(E\).pdf](http://www.priu.gov.lk/Cons/1978Constitution/18th%20Amendment%20Act(E).pdf).

37 T. Ramakrishnan, "Sri Lanka adopts 19th Amendment", *The Hindu*, April 29, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1JzDID1>.

38 Telecommunications and Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka, "Chairman and the Director-General Assume Duties," <http://bit.ly/1Qkqg7P>.

39 Nirmala Kanangara, "Alleged Misappropriation of TRC funds," *Sunday Leader*, October 11th, 2015, <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2015/10/11/alleged-misappropriation-of-trc-funds/>.

40 Centre for Policy Alternatives, "Chapter 4: Restriction of Content on the Internet" in *Freedom of Expression on the Internet*, (November 2011), <http://bit.ly/1F4D1Mf>.

41 Jason Burke and Amantha Perera, "Sri Lanka's new president promises 'no more abductions, no more censorship,'" *The*

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Despite consistent censorship under the previous government, blocks on websites were not properly coordinated or comprehensive, with some targeted websites available at times on one or more ISPs and at other times completely inaccessible. Officials cited ill-defined national security measures to legitimize this censorship, though websites were blacklisted for content related to human rights issues, government accountability, corruption, and political violence. During Mahinda Rajapaksa's presidency, censors targeted opposition news sites and independent news, including Tamil websites, sites run by Sri Lankans in exile, and citizen journalism platforms, though usually without acknowledging a political or legal motive. As with the previous government, the current political order restricts access to pornography.⁴²

Officials have the power to direct the TRC to blacklist content.⁴³ Under the country's telecommunications act, ISPs must apply to the Ministry of Mass Media and Information for a license according to specifications laid out by the TRC, who can make recommendations regarding whether or not a license is granted. The ministry can also impose conditions on a license, requiring the provider to address any matter considered "requisite or expedient to achieving" TRC objectives.⁴⁴ It is not clear if the TRC can impose other financial or legal penalties on uncooperative telecommunications companies. To date, however, no company is known to have challenged TRC requests or sought judicial oversight.⁴⁵

Examples of websites briefly blocked in the past under President Rajapaksa's government include Tamil-language news websites and online content by Human Rights Watch and Transparency International.⁴⁶ During the coverage period of this report, two more websites, the *Sri Lanka Mirror* and the *Independent*, were temporarily blocked, apparently for publishing news items that were critical of the previous government.⁴⁷ The *Colombo Telegraph* website was blocked several times,⁴⁸ including in March 2014,⁴⁹ and remained inaccessible until the end of 2014.⁵⁰ Following assurances given by President Sirisena about the unblocking of websites, all three became accessible across ISPs, as did the exile-run news website *TamilNet*, censored since 2007 for its support of the Tamil rebels.⁵¹

There is no independent body in Sri Lanka that content providers can turn to if they are censored. Instead, they must file a fundamental rights application with the Supreme Court to challenge blocking or other restrictions. Lack of trust in the country's politicized judiciary and fear of retaliatory measures represent significant obstacles for the petitioner.⁵² In December 2011, one settled out of

Guardian, January 10th, 2015, <http://gu.com/p/44n3t/stw>.

42 Indika Sri Aravinda, "Police seek mobile porn ban," *Daily Mirror*, May 12, 2010, <http://bit.ly/1Ygc4Cb>.

43 Insights – Verité Research, "Is blocking websites making telecom share prices vulnerable?," *Daily Mirror Business*, July 31st, 2014, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/50418/is-blocking-websites-making-telecom-share-prices-vulnerable>.

44 Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Freedom of Expression on the Internet*, 30.

45 'Dialog CEO Hans Wijesuriya: "No surveillance program in Sri Lanka, but telecoms have to comply"', *The Republic Square*, September 28, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1QkqZOZ>.

46 Reporters Without Borders, *Internet Enemies*, March 12, 2009, <http://bit.ly/tus9bB>.

47 Ranga Sirilal, "Sri Lanka blocks two more websites critical of government: rights group," Eds. Shihar Aneez and Ruth Pitchford, *Reuters*, May 21, 2014, <http://reut.rs/1sVwKWV>.

48 Dave Rush, "TRC deny blocking Colombo Telegraph," *The Republic Square*, August 27, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1guo361>.

49 Article 19, "Sri Lanka: Colombo Telegraph Silenced," press release, March 7th, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1LAqAEz>.

50 "They need to reveal on what official instructions or court order they are implementing this illegal censorship." – "UNP slams govt, service providers over internet censorship", *Ada Derana*, March 8, 2014, http://www.adaderana.lk/news.php?nid=26008&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter.

51 Local internet users reported it was patchily accessible through some fixed-line and mobile broadband networks during that time. See, Sanjana Hattotuwa, "Tamilnet.com Accessible Once More in Sri Lanka via SLT ADSL".

52 International Crisis Group, "Sri Lanka's Judiciary: Politicised Courts, Compromised Rights," *Asia Report No.172*, June 30, 2009, <http://bit.ly/1KsA8oz>.

court, agreeing to several TRC conditions—such as removing links to blocked content—in return for restored access.⁵³

The absence of clear laws and conflicting official statements also complicate the process of launching legal challenges. In 2011, officials acknowledged blocking at least five locally hosted news websites,⁵⁴ including the *Sri Lanka Mirror* and *Lanka-E-News*, citing concerns about defamation in the wake of stories about corruption and human rights violations that implicated high-ranking officials. One official accused the sites of publishing “character assassinations” of the president, while another said they were blocked for failing to register with the media ministry.⁵⁵ Members of the local Free Media Movement brought a fundamental rights petition challenging the Ministry’s grounds for blocking unregistered sites—which has no legal basis—but the Supreme Court rejected it in 2012.⁵⁶

Content Removal

Documented cases of content removal are few and far between. According to Google’s Transparency Report, the previous government made two requests for the removal of content over a five-year period. Google complied with the most recent, submitted in December 2013, which it categorized as hate speech.⁵⁷ There were no requests from the government for the restriction of content on Facebook during the coverage period of this report.

Media, Diversity, and Content Manipulation

Despite the history of restrictions, there are still diverse, accessible sources of information online in English, Sinhala, and Tamil, including on socioeconomic and political issues. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and international blog-hosting services were accessible and widely-used for the anonymous or pseudonymous critique of governance, development, and human rights abuses during the coverage period of this report, though authorities have temporarily blocked website domains on blog platforms in the past.⁵⁸

Citizen media site *Groundviews* and its sister site *Vikalpa*—which feature opinion, news, investigative journalism, photography, art and short videos generated by citizens—publish content that would otherwise not be covered by the mainstream media.⁵⁹ In 2014, *Groundviews* announced the launch of *Maatram*, a new citizen journalism initiative that publishes reportage and other content aimed at Tamil readers across Sri Lanka and within the diaspora.⁶⁰ Another website, the *Republic Square*, which started up in mid-2013, was a widely-read news platform that appeared to stop reporting after the

53 S.S. Selvanayagam, “Website previously blocked now permitted to operate by SC,” *DailyFT*, December 16, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1NFYH3Q>.

54 At least one of these sites – www.lankaenews.com – continues to be periodically blocked in the country.

55 Charles Haviland, “Sri Lanka blocks websites for ‘maligning’ president,” *BBC News*, November 7, 2011, <http://bbc.in/1W520Db>.

56 Bob Dietz, “Sri Lanka Supreme Court Slams Door on Websites,” *Committee to Protect Journalists* (Blog), May 17, 2012, <http://cpj.org/x/4bb2>.

57 Google, “Sri Lanka,” *Google Transparency Report*, accessed June 10, 2015, <https://www.google.com/transparencyreport/removals/government/LK/?hl=en>.

58 “More Websites Including ghs.google.com Blocked in Sri Lanka?,” *ICT for Peacebuilding* (blog), July 29, 2009, <http://bit.ly/1JdwUjC/>.

59 “#UPRLKA: Complete Tweet Archive and Related Visualisation Around Sri Lanka’s UPR Review,” *Groundviews*, November 2, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1gupD89>.

60 “Announcing the launch of Maatram: Citizen journalism in Tamil,” *Groundviews*, January 20, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1W52ngY>.

presidential election in January. The *Colombo Post*—an online news platform run by journalists in Sri Lanka—started in late 2014 and has gradually become a popular source of news about politics and socioeconomic issues in the country. The platform appeared to have temporarily shut down operations in February 2015, but resumed reporting in mid-March.

In 2012, the media ministry under the previous government directed the cabinet to approve an amendment to the notorious Press Council Act No.5 of 1973, making news websites subject to the same draconian content regulation as traditional media. However, the amendment failed to define what constitutes “news,” providing leeway for authorities to scrutinize a wider range of online platforms like blogs or social media.⁶¹ The act prohibits the publication of profanity, obscenity, “false” information about the government or fiscal policy, and official secrets. It also allows the president-appointed council to impose punitive measures on the violators of its provisions, including possible prosecution. The legislation was dormant under previous administrations until President Rajapaksa reactivated it after the end of the war. Strenuous objections from the international freedom of expression community failed to prevent the government from extending the restrictions to digital media.⁶² A week after this announcement, the media ministry also proposed an amendment to institute a hefty registration fee of LKR 100,000 (US\$790), plus an annual renewal fee of LKR 50,000 (US\$395), costs which threatened to inhibit the emergence of new websites and force existing ones out of operation.⁶³ According to the final cabinet decision, the registration fee was approved at LKR 25,000 (US\$190) and the annual renewal fee at LKR 10,000 (US\$75).⁶⁴ In spite of media freedom guarantees, the current government has not rescinded the registration directive imposed by its predecessors. The media ministry still overlooks the registration of news websites, although it does not appear to be strictly enforced.

In May 2014, former President Mahinda Rajapaksa reaffirmed his intent to regulate social media and stated that the government would take the necessary steps to prevent the internet from being used to cause “social and political unrest.”⁶⁵ Under President Sirisena and the new interim government, no attempts had been made to regulate social media as of May 2015.

During Rajapaksa’s presidency, officials actively encouraged self-censorship “on matters that would damage the integrity of the island,” and many mainstream news websites complied, increasing the importance of citizen journalism and exile-run sites in the media landscape.⁶⁶ Online platforms of the main state-run newspaper and broadcasting network supported former President Rajapaksa when he was in power and the UPFA government.⁶⁷ These and official government websites have waged smear campaigns against UPFA critics in the past.⁶⁸ Under President Sirisena, however, tra-

61 “On the registration of ‘news’ websites in Sri Lanka,” ICT4Peace, July 15, 2012, <https://ict4peace.wordpress.com/2012/07/15/on-the-registration-of-news-websites-in-sri-lanka/>.

62 Bob Dietz, “Defense tools for Sri Lanka’s online onslaught,” *Committee to Protect Journalists Blog*, July 25, 2012, <http://cpj.org/x/4edd>; Electronic Frontier Foundation, “Media Skeptical over Press Council Act Amendments,” IFEX, July 30, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1F4FF4t>.

63 “Rs.100,000 to be Charged from News Websites,” *Daily Mirror*, July 12, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1KoO9zk>.

64 Office of the Cabinet of Ministers – Sri Lanka, “Registration of News Casting Websites – Amendment to the Sri Lanka Press Council Act No 05 of 1973,” press brief, August 8, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1W53wFf>.

65 P.K. Balachandran, “Social Media To Come Under Watch in Sri Lanka,” *The New Indian Express*, May 23, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1KsDtE1>.

66 Dinidu de Alwis, “Media should exercise self-censorship-Lakshma Yapa,” *Ceylon Today*, March 23, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1F4G9HU>.

67 Milinda Rajasekera, “Namal’s disclosure of family embarrassment,” *The Island*, December 21, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1FPJgy8>.

68 World Organization Against Torture, “Sri Lanka: Smear campaign against Ms. Sunila Abeysekera, Ms. Nimalka Fernando, Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu and Mr. Sunanda Deshapriya,” March 27, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1LAs55A>; Committee to Protect Journalists, “In Sri Lanka, censorship and a smear campaign,” July 14, 2009, <http://cpj.org/2009/07/in-sri-lanka-censorship-and->

ditional and new media outlets have become vocal critics of both sides of the political divide, freely expressing opinions and publishing reports that would have never been tolerated under Rajapaksa's administration. In reaction to reports published about the government and the economy, Minister of Finance Ravi Karunanayake requested that media institutions and journalists avoid abusing the "media freedom that prevails under the new government".⁶⁹ Overall, the practice of self-censorship by journalists and media institutions appears to be diminishing in response to the interim government's commitment to media freedom.

In early 2013, hate speech against the Muslim community spread online when a Sinhala Buddhist extremist group gained a considerable following on social media.⁷⁰ The group's violent rhetoric led to attacks on mosques and Muslim-owned businesses, as well as isolated incidents of assault.⁷¹ No legal action was taken against the group's members, and prominent public officials—including the president's brother, Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa—openly supported them.⁷² Some of the relevant social media pages have since been removed, and the intensity of online hate speech declined during the coverage period of this report, though without stopping altogether. There are still many pages on Facebook that continue to publish offensive material targeting Muslims and other groups.⁷³

Digital Activism

The internet has provided a great deal of scope for robust digital activism and engagement on political issues in Sri Lanka. In the lead up to the presidential election, the hashtag #IVotedSL was launched on Facebook and Twitter – a campaign that called on people to exercise their franchise on election day.⁷⁴ Twitter and Facebook profile photos as well as digital posters were developed and shared by thousands of users, publicizing the campaign and encouraging other users to take the pledge. Following the conclusion of the presidential election, another independent campaign was initiated by citizens on Facebook and Twitter—#icanChangeSL and #wecanChangeSL—to carry forward the interest of the #IVotedSL campaign and to sustain a meaningful dialogue about shaping a new country.⁷⁵

Violations of User Rights

Apart from one journalist who was questioned by the CID about his reports on anti-Muslim violence and his association with Al Jazeera, there were no significant reports of intimidation, prosecution or assault. Physical attacks and threats against journalists, including many linked to government actors,

[a-smear-campaign.php](#).

69 "Don't abuse the prevailing media freedom – Ravi," *Daily Mirror*, May 26, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1FPJ83K>.

70 Sanjana Hattotuwa, "Anti-Muslim hate online in post-war Sri Lanka," *Sanjana Hattotuwa* (blog), February 1, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1F4GA53>.

71 Charles Haviland, "The hardline Buddhists targeting Sri Lanka's Muslims," *BBC*, March 25, 2013, <http://bbc.in/1UYKiEe>.

72 D.B.S. Jeyaraj, "Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa Openly Supportive of 'Ethno Religious Fascist' Organization Bodhu Bala Sena," *dbsjeyara* (blog), March 10, 2013, <http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/17939>.

73 Shilpa Samararatunge and Sanjana Hattotuwa, "Liking Violence: A study of hate speech on Facebook in Sri Lanka," Centre for Policy Alternatives, September 2014, 67-202, <http://www.cpalanka.org/liking-violence-a-study-of-hate-speech-on-facebook-in-sri-lanka/>.

74 "#IVotedSL | Exercise your vote on the 8th!," *Groundviews*, January 2, 2015, <http://groundviews.org/2015/01/02/ivotedsl-exercise-your-vote-on-the-8th/>.

75 "icanChangeSL & #wecanChangeSL: Shaping a new Sri Lanka," *Groundviews*, February 4, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1zerhBo>.

gradually decreased in the aftermath of the civil war. While the failure to investigate past incidents cast a long shadow during President Rajapaksa's rule, the new government under President Sirisena has promised to initiate investigations into the murder and disappearance of journalists.

Legal Environment

While the right to freedom of speech, expression, and publishing is guaranteed under Article 14 (1) (a) of Sri Lanka's constitution, it is subject to numerous restrictions for the protection of national security, public order, racial and religious harmony, and morality. There is no constitutional provision recognizing internet access as a fundamental right or guaranteeing freedom of expression online. A culture of impunity, circumvention of the judicial process through arbitrary action, and a lack of adequate protection for individuals and their privacy, compound the poor enforcement of freedom of expression guarantees.

The Supreme Court has called freedom of expression from "diverse and antagonistic sources" indispensable to democracy.⁷⁶ In 2012, however, it rejected a fundamental rights petition brought by members of the local Free Media Movement questioning the media ministry's right to block websites for failure to register.⁷⁷ By doing so, it missed a critical opportunity to check the government's use of vague directives to control online content. After a complaint was made to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka about the blocking of two websites in May 2014, the commission said it would investigate, but that freedom of expression was subject to constitutional limits.⁷⁸

Several laws with overly broad scope lack detailed definitions and can be abused to prosecute or restrict legitimate forms of online expression. Computer crimes and intellectual property laws allow information contained within computers to be admissible in civil and criminal proceedings. Publishing official secrets, information about parliament that may undermine its work, or "malicious" content that incites violence or disharmony could result in criminal charges.⁷⁹ In 2011, the Ministry of Justice mooted a new obscene publications act to extend anti-pornography laws to electronic media, but did not correct the existing act's failure to define "obscene."⁸⁰ As of mid-2015, the Ministry has made no announcements regarding the legislation's implementation and it is unlikely that it will be carried forward given the change in government.

In April 2015, President Sirisena proposed new legislation to ban hate speech and material that could "exacerbate religious and ethnic tensions."⁸¹ This is interpreted as a move to counter growing religious extremism in the country, which has led to sporadic incidents of communal violence over the last two years. The legislation, to be included in the penal code, carries penalties of a two-year jail sentence and a fine.⁸² There are considerable concerns about the proposed law. A critical point is that it is not clear how hate speech is defined. Moreover, the overbroad provisions of the legislation could be

76 Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Freedom of Expression on the Internet in Sri Lanka*, (August, 2010), 54, <http://bit.ly/1gutuCa>.

77 Bob Dietz, "Sri Lanka Supreme Court slams door on websites," *Committee to Protect Journalists* (Blog), May 17, 2012, <http://cpj.org/x/4bb2>.

78 Waruni Karunaratne, "HRC To Study Complaint on Websites," *The Sunday Leader*, May 25, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1W55qWs>.

79 Respective legislation: Official Secrets Act No. 32 of 1955; Parliament (Powers and Privileges) (Amendment) 1997; Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act No. 48 of 1979.

80 Sandun A. Jayasekera, "Tough new laws against porn," *Daily Mirror*, October 24, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1KjljDE>.

81 Sanjaya Jayasekera, "Sri Lankan government to pass laws banning 'hate speech'," *World Socialist Web Site*, April 20, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1YglQxt>.

82 "Sri Lanka to revise Penal Code to punish Hate Speech," *ColomboPage*, April 4, 2015, http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15A/Apr04_1428130017CH.php.

manipulated to restrict legitimate forms of expression. As of May 2015 the legislation had yet to be drafted and presented to parliament. However, media activists and journalists believe a law will be drafted after the parliamentary election in August 2015.

Under the former president's government, there was continuous obstruction to right to information (RTI) legislation, which would promote citizens' access to documents held by government agencies and ministries. The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission—a post-war commission of inquiry appointed by former President Rajapaksa in May 2010—recommended RTI legislation as a necessary step towards addressing past and ongoing rights violations.⁸³ However, UPFA parliamentarians rejected an opposition-backed bill in 2011.⁸⁴ As part of President Sirisena's 100-day program, the new government promised to introduce RTI legislation in order to entrench good governance and transparency within the public sector. While the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution recognizes RTI as a fundamental right, the parliament had yet to pass the legislation for it during the coverage period, which has been drafted and approved by the cabinet.⁸⁵ Civil society activists have flagged serious concerns about certain provisions of the act, specifically with regard to national security, protection for whistleblowers, and the lack of a clear provision with regard to what type of information, when revealed by authorities, could not be disseminated or published for public consideration.⁸⁶

Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities

No detentions were reported during the coverage period of this report, though in July 2014, the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) questioned Dinouk Colombage, a journalist who works online, for several hours about his coverage of anti-Muslim riots in the southern town of Aluthgama and his association with *Al Jazeera*. He was released without charge.⁸⁷

While the previous government was in power, internet users faced criminal charges in relation to their online activities. In one egregious 2012 example, CID officials raided the offices of the *Sri Lanka Mirror* and *Sri Lanka X News* on grounds of "propagating false and unethical news on Sri Lanka."⁸⁸ The journalists were released on bail the day after their arrest, though investigators later said their computers contained further grounds for prosecution, including content that violated the Obscene Publications Act—although the alleged obscenity was unpublished⁸⁹—failure to register the website, ridiculing the president, and evidence of an attempted coup.⁹⁰ While the case was finally set aside

83 The report further recommended that steps be taken to "prevent the harassment and attacks on media personnel and institutions." See, The Official Website of the Government of Sri Lanka, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation*, (2011), 197-8, <http://bit.ly/1ijEm78>.

84 "Govt. Rejects our Right to Know," *The Sunday Times*, June 26, 2011, <http://sundaytimes.lk/110626/Columns/political.html>.

85 Uditha Kumarasinghe, "Week in Parliament: 19th Amendment a victory for all", *Sunday Observer*, May 3rd, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1KjMax7>.

86 Lionel Guruge, "The 20th Amendment, Right to Information, and Audit Act," *The Sunday Leader*, May 31, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1guvURj>.

87 D.B.S. Jeyaraj, "Sri Lankan Journalist Dinouk Colombage Grilled by Police CID for 4 Hours About his Reportage of Aluthgama Violence and Relationship to Al Jazeera TV," *DBSJeyaraj* (blog), July 8, 2014, <http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/31635>.

88 "Websites propagating false news sealed—MOD," *Daily Mirror*, June 30, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1KTIWG0>.

89 Farook Thajudeen, "Pornographic material from Sri Lanka Mirror computers—CID," *Daily Mirror*, July 23, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1KsHtVf>.

90 Binoy Suriyaarachchi, "SL Mirror computers returned," *Ceylon Today*, September 18, 2012, <http://www.ceylontoday.lk/13044-print.html>.

due to the CID failing to conclude investigations, the journalists filed a fundamental rights petition with the Supreme Court citing illegal arrest and violations of their right to free expression.⁹¹

Surveillance, Privacy, and Anonymity

Extrajudicial surveillance of personal communications is prohibited under the Telecommunications Act No.27 of 1996. However, a telecommunications officer can intercept communications under the direction of a minister, a court, or in connection with the investigation of a criminal offence. There is no provision under the legislation that requires officials to notify users who are targets of surveillance, and many journalists and civil society activists believe their phone and internet communications are monitored. In late 2013, Dialog CEO Dr. Hans Wijesuriya denied the existence of a comprehensive surveillance apparatus in Sri Lanka but agreed that telecommunications companies “have to be compliant with requests from the government.”⁹²

Sri Lanka lacks substantive laws for the protection of individual privacy and data. Official statements lauding state surveillance make this absence a particular concern for internet users,⁹³ as do policies like website registration, which civil society groups fear could be used to hold registered site owners responsible for content posted by users, or to prevent government critics from writing anonymously.⁹⁴ Digital activists in Sri Lanka also believe Chinese telecoms ZTE and Huawei, who collaborated with Rajapaksa’s government in the development and maintenance of Sri Lanka’s ICT infrastructure, may have inserted backdoor espionage and surveillance capabilities.⁹⁵ In spite of the new government’s commitment to freedom of expression, transparency, and right to information, privacy advocates are still cautious about how existing surveillance technology could be utilized and intensified in the future. This is particularly relevant given that security surveillance in the north and east still continues.⁹⁶

A Ministry of Defense program to register mobile phone users for the purpose of “curbing negative incidents” was introduced in 2008 and revisited in 2010 after service providers failed to ensure that subscribers registered.⁹⁷ Real-name subscriptions are already normal procedure, but the call for registration in 2010 required further information, including photo identification and up-to-date residen-

91 T. Farook Thajudeen, “Sri Lanka Mirror case set aside,” *Daily FT*, September 19, 2012, <http://www.ft.lk/2012/09/19/sri-lanka-mirror-case-set-aside/>.

92 “Dialog CEO Hans Wijesuriya: “No surveillance program in Sri Lanka, but telecoms have to comply”.

93 “It’s ok for government to infiltrate online privacy of Sri Lankan citizens?,” *ICT for Peacebuilding* (blog), April 17, 2010, <http://bit.ly/1UYLuaC>.

94 Centre for Policy Alternatives, “Arbitrary Blocking and Registration of Websites: The Continuing Violation of Freedom of Expression on the Internet,” press release, November 9, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1guxKkU>.

95 ZTE Corporation signed an agreement with Mobitel to develop its 4G LTE network and carried out successful trials in May 2011, while SLT’s ADSL infrastructure is supported by Huawei. See, ZTE, “Sri Lanka’s Mobitel and ZTE Corporation Carry Out the First Successful 4G(LTE) Trial in South Asia,” news release, May 17, 2011, http://www.zte.com.cn/pub/en/press_center/news/201105/t20110517_234745.html; Ranjith Wijewardena, “SLT Tie Up With Huawei to Expand Broadband Internet Coverage,” *The Island*, September 29, 2006, <http://www.island.lk/2006/09/29/business11.html>; Sanjana Hattotuwa, “Are Chinese Telecoms acting as the ears for the Sri Lankan government?,” *Groundviews*, February 16, 2012, <http://groundviews.org/2012/02/16/are-chinese-telecoms-acting-as-the-ears-for-the-sri-lankan-government/>; “The President of Sri Lanka His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa holds discussions with Huawei Chairwoman Ms. Sun Yafang, Expressing thanks and acknowledgement on Huawei’s contribution to ICT industry and Education locally,” *Lanka Business Today*, May 27, 2014, <http://pr.huawei.com/en/news/hw-340356-ict.htm#Vg2CUvVhBc>.

96 Ruki Fernando, “Tamils in North & East remember those killed despite intimidation and surveillance,” *Groundviews*, May 20, 2015, <http://groundviews.org/2015/05/20/tamils-in-north-east-sri-lanka-remember-those-killed-despite-intimidation-and-surveillance/>.

97 Bandula Sirimanna, “Sri Lanka to tighten mobile phone regulations,” *The Sunday Times*, October 31, 2010, <http://bit.ly/1UYM0FC>.

tial details. Unregistered users risked disconnection if they failed to comply, though no cases were reported at the time.

Intimidation and Violence

There were no attacks on online journalists or internet users during the coverage period of this report.

Online reporters, like their counterparts in traditional media, were attacked by forces on both sides during Sri Lanka's civil conflict. Unsolved cases include the 2005 murder of *TamilNet* co-founder Dharmeratnam Sivaram, who was found dead in a high-security area outside parliament.⁹⁸ The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution urging the government to investigate war crimes in 2012, but the trend of violence against traditional journalists continued amid a culture of impunity.

International news reports and rights groups say soldiers acting on the orders of high ranking officials in the previous government were responsible for the notorious "white van" abductions of critics and activists⁹⁹—named after the vehicle often used to carry them out—a claim the previous administration denies.¹⁰⁰ *Lanka-E-News* journalist and cartoonist Prageeth Ekneligoda has been missing since January 24, 2010, after the website backed the political opposition in elections.¹⁰¹ Officials say he sought asylum overseas.¹⁰² The inaction on his case, combined with other methods of intimidation including arson attacks and legal harassment, forced *Lanka-E-News* and its editor out of the country.¹⁰³

In May 2015, President Sirisena restated that he intended to re-open investigations into all past murders and disappearances of journalists, including the case of Prageeth Ekneligoda.¹⁰⁴

Technical Attacks

Cybercrime is a growing problem in Sri Lanka, with illegal breaches of social media and email accounts becoming more common.¹⁰⁵ Cyberattacks have also targeted critics of Rajapaksa's regime in the past, though no incidents were reported during the coverage period.

During anti-Muslim riots in Aluthgama, hackers disabled websites and released over 340 govern-

98 Committee to Protect Journalists, "Journalists Killed, Sri Lanka: Dharmeratnam Sivaram," April 29, 2009, accessed January, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1KsU0YC>.

99 "A disappearance every five days in post-war Sri Lanka," *Groundviews*, August 30, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1YgI6qV>.

100 Krishan Francis, "Abduction squads in Sri Lanka target foes of powerful," *The Washington Times*, August 22, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1LAAeXF>.

101 T. Farook Thajudeen, "Prageeth Ekneligoda disappearance case still ongoing," *Daily FT*, December 24, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1iSm39L>; Bob Dietz, "UN Heard Ekneligoda's cry for help; husband still missing," *Committee to Protect Journalists* (Blog), May 21, 2011, <http://bit.ly/Gzv9o2>.

102 Chris Kamalendran, "Ekneligoda Case: Focus on ex-AG," *The Sunday Times*, December 11, 2011, http://sundaytimes.lk/111211/News/nws_24.html.

103 Bob Dietz, "Sandhya Ekneligoda speaks for Sri Lanka's disappeared," *Committee to Protect Journalists* (Blog), September 4, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1UYM1JJ>.

104 "Want to Re-Open Investigations on Attacks on Media: Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena," *NDTV/Press Trust of India*, May 30, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1QkO3NM>.

105 "681 SL cyber security incidents so far in 2011," *The Sunday Times*, October 16, 2011, <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/111016/BusinessTimes/bt31.html>.

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ment login details, including passwords, citing the unwillingness of the former president and his government to stop the riots and prevent violence.¹⁰⁶

The previous government recognized the need to strengthen its defensive capability, yet critics fear technology bought for this purpose could be used to restrict legitimate expression.¹⁰⁷ Following the implementation of the Computer Crimes Act in 2007, the government at the time established the Computer Emergency Readiness Team and Coordination Center (CERT|CC) in order to protect Sri Lanka's digital data. In July 2014, CERT|CC developed a security arm to protect the digital infrastructure of banks in the country.¹⁰⁸ There have been no pronouncements about further securitization of the web under the new government.

106 "Hackers hit Sri Lankan government websites after mob attacks", *Tamil Guardian*, June 20, 2014, <http://tamilguardian.com/article.asp?articleid=11312>.

107 Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Freedom of Expression on the Internet*, 42.

108 Data and Information Unit of the Presidential Secretariat of Sri Lanka, "CSIRT system launched in Sri Lanka to prevent cyber attacks on banks," July 2, 2014, http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca201407/20140702csirt_system_launched_sl_prevent_cyber_attacks_banks.htm.