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4 August 2026

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Sri Lanka: Treatment of Tamils, including suspected members or supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE); treatment of non-Tamil supporters of the LTTE by the government (2024–July 2026)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

1. Overview

Minority Rights Group (MRG) indicates that there are 2 groups of Tamils in Sri Lanka: Sri Lankan Tamils, who descended from Tamil-speaking groups originating from southern India "centuries" ago; and Indian Tamils (*Malaiyaga Thamilar*), also known as "'Hill Country' or 'Up Country' Tamils," who descended from "comparatively recent work migrants" (2025-12). According to the 2024 Census of Population and Housing conducted by Sri Lanka's Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), there were 2,681,627 (12.31%) Sri Lankan Tamils and 600,360 (2.76%) Indian Tamils among a total population of 21,781,800 (Sri Lanka 2026-04-06, table 6.1.8).

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) notes that northern Sri Lanka is "overwhelmingly Tamil," while the eastern region has an "almost even split" between Tamils and Muslims, and a "sizeable" population of Sinhalese at "nearly one-quarter of the population" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.10). The 2024 Census provides the following data on the distribution of Tamil population by province:

Province	Sri Lankan Tamil	Indian Tamil
Western	6.3%	0.5%
Central	8.3%	15%
Southern	1.2%	0.4%
Northern	91.5%	0.3%
Eastern	38.1%	0.1%
Northern Western	2.7%	0.1%
North Central	0.9%	0%
Uva	6.9%	6.9%
Sabaragamuwa	6.5%	2.2%

(Sri Lanka 2026-04-06, table 6.1.9)

The same source notes that there were 243,856 Sri Lankan Tamils and 15,427 Indian Tamils residing in Colombo, out of a total population 2,375,415 (Sri Lanka 2026-04-06, table 6.1.11).

2. Treatment of Tamils

Sources indicate that Indian Tamils are the [translation] "most marginalized" group in Sri Lanka (France 2025-09-11, 13; Amnesty International 2026-04-21, 338), having faced "over two centuries of racial discrimination" (Amnesty International 2026-04-21, 338). Amnesty International notes that the group faces "limited access to land ownership, inadequate housing and exploitative working conditions" (2026-04-21, 338).

According to a report on the Tamil people by the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tamils in the north and east "common[ly] complai[n]" of economic marginalization in the region and a lack of economic opportunities (Netherlands 2024-06, 41). A commentary article by Alan Keenan, a senior consultant of the International Crisis Group for Sri Lanka, notes that the economy in the north and east has been "distort[ed] and weaken[ed]" by the "decades-long" military occupation of Tamil land, "recent" seizure of land owned or used by Tamils and Muslims [see section 2.1.2 of this Response], and the "strong presence" of the "virtually all-Sinhala" military in these regions [see section 2.1.1. of this Response] (Keenan 2025-09-05). According to the Bishop of Jaffna and the religious organization All Ceylon Hindu Congress, interviewed by France's Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides, OFPRA) for its February 2025 fact-finding mission in Sri Lanka, the government of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, elected in September 2024, increased funding for Tamil communities in the Northern province

(France 2025-09-11, 6, 16, 21). However, OFPRA adds that the lack of economic opportunities in the North and East remains [translation] "particularly glaring" (France 2025-09-11, 50).

A joint report [1] by the UNDP and the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) [2] estimates that 6 in 10 people in Sri Lanka (approximately 12.34 million) are "multidimensionally vulnerable," meaning that they are "deprived in at least" 3 of the 12 indicators related to education, "health and disaster," and living standards measured by the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index [3] (OPHI & UNDP 2023-09-29, 11, 33). The same source adds that 10.13 million of those considered vulnerable are rural residents "notably concentrated" in the Eastern, North and North Central provinces (OPHI & UNDP 2023-09-29, 11). A report [4] on the gender-specific impacts of climate insecurity authored by Adelphi Research [5] and commissioned by UN Women and a joint program between the UNDP and the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) further indicates that the "[p]erceived disparities" in services, especially in the North and East, have "eroded trust in institutions and exacerbated post-conflict [6] grievances" (Adelphi Research 2025-05, 28). For instance, the source indicates that Tamil farmers perceive Sri Lanka's national crop calendar as an example of "systemic marginalization," since the calendar is designed around the weather and irrigation systems of the South and Central regions, placing farmers in the East, including Tamil farmers, at a "disadvantage" (Adelphi Research 2025-05, 71). The same source adds that since government support, such as the distribution of fertilizer, water, and seeds, is tied to the calendar, it "often arrives too early or late for Tamil farmers," leading to "feelings of exclusion" (Adelphi Research 2025-05, 71).

Adelphi Research indicates that "[m]any respondents" described an "epidemic" of drug and alcohol use in the North and East, impacting boys and young men "directly," while girls and women are affected "indirectly" through "increased violence, divorce, and rape"; in addition, "[s]everal" respondents noted the "complete absence of police action or judicial

prosecutions for drug-related crimes" (2025-05, 41). Citing "in-country sources," DFAT adds that criminals operating in the North, including those involved in the drug trade, are protected by the police, which makes people reluctant to report crimes or seek police protection (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.9).

2.1. Treatment of Tamils by the Authorities

Citing "[i]n-country Tamil sources," DFAT indicates that Tamils continue to experience "human rights challenges," although "the level of state harassment and mistreatment had decreased significantly since 2015" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.7). According to "[c]onfidential sources" cited in the Dutch report that covers the period between October 2014 and April 2024, the human rights conditions of Tamils have "improve[d]" since October 2014, with "[f]ar fewer abuses" occurring (Netherlands 2024-06, 6, 40). Citing "[m]any" confidential sources, the same source points to the following developments:

> - Authorities turning their attention towards the Muslim community following the 2019 Easter attacks [7]; and
> - Authorities further changing their focus towards activists critical of the government following the 2022 Aragalaya protests [8] (Netherlands 2024-06, 40).

Keenan notes that while President Dissanayake, elected in September 2024 and his subsequently elected coalition, the National People's Power (NPP) alliance, campaigned on combatting impunity and fostering peaceful coexistence, the first year in office has been a "[d]isappointment," particularly to Tamils and Muslims in the Northern and Eastern provinces who have seen "little tangible progress" (2025-09-05). In a similar vein, an annual report by Human Rights Watch on the events of 2025 notes that the Dissanayake administration made "little progress in implementing human rights commitments" (2026-02-04). The same

source adds that Dissanayake's campaign promise to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) [9] was instead followed by an increase in its use by police from a total of 38 cases in 2024 to 49 in the first 5 months of 2025 (Human Rights Watch 2026-02-04).

DFAT notes that the PTA has "historically" been used against Tamils suspected to have links to the LTTE (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 4.39). Human Rights Watch similarly notes that Tamils "face threats of baseless terrorism allegations" (2026-02-04). For further information on the PTA, including its use against political opponents, see Response to Information Request LKA202632 of July 2026.

According to Freedom House, police and security forces have been involved in "extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, custodial rape, and torture, all of which disproportionately affect Tamils" (2024-02-29, Sec. F3). In contrast, according to the Kilinochchi reconciliation centre of Sri Lanka Unites [10], as interviewed by OFPRA during its fact-finding mission, arrests of Tamil youth are becoming [translation] "increasingly rare," as there is "relatively low" participation in "active and visible" activism by this group (France 2025-09-11, 47). Citing its interview with the NGO Association for Relatives of the Enforced Disappearances (ARED), OFPRA notes that [translation] "only" 2 to 3 cases of "suspicious disappearances" have been reported in the Northern Province in the last 5 years (France 2025-09-11, 48). Citing its interview with an unnamed international organization, OFPRA notes that while abduction by intelligence agencies to [translation] "terroriz[e] certain sectors of the population" was a practice that once existed, it is no longer in use (France 2025-09-11, 48).

2.1.1. Military Presence in Tamil Regions

The December 2025 MRG report indicates that despite the changes in government, the northern and eastern regions continue to face "disproportionate security presence and surveillance" (2025-12).

According to DFAT, there is a ratio of 1 security personnel to every 6 civilians in the Northern Province (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 2.74). Tamil Guardian, a news website that covers Tamil issues and provides "insight from the Tamil point of view," notes that the presence of military personnel in Tamil regions "remains widespread and persistent" (2025-04-24). The same source adds that the military participates in cultural festivals, distributes aid and delivers education campaigns; their presence in civilian spaces, such as schools and public health centres, is viewed by "many as intimidatory" (Tamil Guardian 2025-04-24). The Dutch report indicates that the "large-scale military presence" in Tamil regions has "contributed greatly to the enduring sense among the Tamil population that the authorities distrus[t] them and [are] keeping an eye on them," making them feel "limited in their ability to express themselves publicly" on issues deemed "sensitive" for authorities, such as topics related to the civil war (Netherlands 2024-06, 42).

2.1.2. Land Acquisition by the Authorities

Sources indicate that land acquisition is a "source of tension" between the authorities and the Tamil community (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.9) or serves to "reinforc[e] long-standing grievances" (MRG 2025-12). DFAT states that the military seizes land belonging to the Tamil community in the North and East (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.9). It adds that civilian government institutions, such as the departments of archaeology, forestry, and wildlife conservation have increasingly become involved, working with Buddhist clergy or the military to seize land, including holy Hindu sites (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.9). MRG notes that such action is facilitated by "security zoning, military occupation and the use of archaeological and forestry designations, often without meaningful consultation or adequate compensation" (2025-12).

Al Jazeera indicates that President Dissanayake made campaign promises to withdraw from military-occupied territory in Tamil regions (2025-05-24). However, Keenan notes that [as of September 2025] the Dissanayake administration had yet to go "beyond initial symbolic moves," such as returning "small parcels of land" (2025-09-05). Tamil Guardian indicates that in March 2025, the official gazette announced the state seizure of "over" 5,900 acres of land in "Tamil-majority" districts, including Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Mannar, in the Northern Province (2025-05-27). The same source adds that following "intense backlash," the government revoked the gazette in May 2025 (Tamil Guardian 2025-05-27). According to Agence France-Presse (AFP), following a petition by a former Tamil legislator, the Supreme Court stopped the government from acquiring "nearly" 6,000 acres of land in the North in June 2025 (2025-06-27). In its report [11] on land seizure in the Trincomalee District of the Eastern Province, the US-based Oakland Institute, a policy think tank that advocates for the rights of farmers, pastoralists, and Indigenous people worldwide (The Oakland Institute n.d.), notes that Tamils who demand the return of their land face "threats" from police and military intelligence (2024-09-12, 3, 16). The source adds that those who take legal action face "ongoing delays" that incur a "high cost" and render such actions "unfeasible for many" [see section 4 of this Response] (The Oakland Institute 2024-09-12, 22). According to an OFPRA interview with the Kilinochchi reconciliation centre of Sri Lanka Unites, in January 2025 the police photographed and recorded residents of Mullaitivu in the Northern Province who were protesting state occupation of land; [translation] "[s]hortly after" this, "several" residents faced "police house visits" and were "interrogated and threatened" (France 2025-09-11, 59).

2.1.3. Monitoring and Surveillance by the Authorities

According to confidential sources cited by the Dutch report, authorities monitor individuals who are critical of them or individuals who are deemed to be a "threat to national security," including "certain groups of Tamils" such as former LTTE members, those advocating for the disappeared Tamils, journalists, and human rights activists (Netherlands 2024-06, 48). DFAT similarly indicates that security forces monitor and question those perceived to support "Tamil statehood" or who engage with "politically sensitive issues related to the war" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.13). A report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) covering events between October 2024 and July 2025 notes the OHCHR has observed

> continued patterns of surveillance, intimidation and harassment of families of the disappeared, community leaders and civil society actors, especially those working on accountability for enforced disappearances and other conflict-related crimes, land seizures and environmental issues, and those working with former combatants in the north and east Sri Lanka. (UN 2025-08-28, para. 25)

According to the Dutch report, being monitored "mainly" involves "home visits by security forces, calls to come to the police station or military camp for questioning, phone calls from officials and home visits to family members or acquaintances" (Netherlands 2024-06, 48). While it was "more intense in the past, particularly before 2015," monitoring by authorities persists (Netherlands 2024-06, 48). OHCHR states that since August 2024, Sri Lankan security forces have "harasse[d]" or "intimidate[d]" "seven human rights defenders and families of the disappeared in north and east Sri Lanka who had engaged" with UN or international actors (UN 2025-08-28, para. 26). The same source indicates that the Terrorism Investigation Division questioned 3 other human rights defenders regarding their "alleged" participation in events and protests both in-country and overseas, including in sessions of the

UN Human Rights Council in Switzerland, while another defender "allegedly" received "veiled death threats" from a police officer after travelling to Europe (UN 2025-08-28, para. 26).

Tamil Guardian states that in early 2025, the government extended its decade-old ban on "several" Tamil diaspora groups, including the National Council of Canadian Tamils (NCCT) [12], claiming that these groups support "'terrorism-related activities'" (2025-02-24). Tamil Guardian further indicates that the ban makes communication with these groups illegal, "stifl[ing]" ties between Tamils in Sri Lanka and diaspora groups (2025-02-24). DFAT notes that the authorities "are known to monitor links to foreign groups, including proscribed Tamil diaspora groups" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.14).

2.1.4. Commemorations of the Civil War

DFAT notes that while Tamil commemorations of the civil war were restricted in the past, commemoration events in 2022 and 2023 took place "without incident" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.15). Citing in-country sources, DFAT adds that security monitoring at such events was "minimal" with the exception of one event in November 2023, as reported by Human Rights Watch, that resulted in the arrests of 9 Tamil participants under the PTA (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.15). Citing a confidential source, the Dutch report indicates that authorities found commemoration activities to be "less and less problematic," provided that no LTTE symbols are displayed (Netherlands 2024-06, 54). According to OHCHR, "[i]n general," groups in the northern and eastern regions have been able to "organize or participate in memorialization initiatives unimpeded" (UN 2025-08-28, para. 35). Al Jazeera states that the 2025 commemoration events had been "largely unobstructed," except for one event in the east that faced "police disrupt[ion]" (2025-05-24).

2.1.5. Access to Government Employment

Sources indicate that Tamils face "discrimination" in government employment (Freedom House 2024-02-29, Sec. F4; Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.8), but not as a result of "official policy" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.8). Citing in-country sources, DFAT notes that this is due to language barriers, for Tamils who lack proficiency in Sinhala or English (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.8). The same source adds that the number of Tamil-speakers working for the police or military remained small despite government incentives (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.8). According to OFPRA's interviews with the All Ceylon Hindu Congress and the NGO Transparency International, 90% of police officers are Sinhalese (France 2025-09-11, 31). According to the North Eastern Monitor, an online news source focusing on the Tamil-majority provinces (North Eastern Monitor n.d.), "[s]everal" Tamil youths who applied to government positions received correspondence regarding their application in Sinhalese, which they do not understand (2025-11-15). The same source indicates that while both Sinhala and Tamil are official languages in Sri Lanka, "several" government departments are unable to implement the bilingual language policy (North Eastern Monitor 2025-11-15).

3. Treatment of Tamil Citizens Who Are Suspected Members or Supporters of the LTTE

The information in the following paragraph was provided by Australia's DFAT:

At the end of the civil war in 2009, LTTE members were detained "on a large scale." "Most" of those who remained in Sri Lanka underwent rehabilitation programs to support their reintegration into society. The "majority" of former LTTE members who were detained have been

released. "Most" former LTTE members who did not take part in rehabilitation programs have either left Sri Lanka or "had only marginal links" to the LTTE. (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.74, 3.80).

According to a 2025 Sri Lanka country security report by the US Department of State's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), the threat from the LTTE is "currently minimal" (US 2025-08-25). DFAT notes that while the LTTE "no longer exists as an organised entity" and is not known to have conducted attacks since 2009, the authorities "remain highly alert" to their "potential re-emergence" and to Tamil separatist activities in general (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.75, 3.76). Citing in-country sources, the same source adds that while "some sympathy" remains for the LTTE, the Tamil community is "fully committed" to the political process and no longer support "militancy" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.75). The OSAC report notes that while the LTTE was "largely eliminated," "sympathetic elements remain" in Sri Lanka and abroad (US 2025-08-25). A list of designated persons and groups originally published in the official gazette in 2014, and amended in 2025, includes the following statement:

> Despite the military defeat of the L.T.T.E in Sri Lanka its front organizations and structures continues to remain active overseas promoting L.T.T.E ideology of creating a mono ethnic separate state of Tamil Eelam through terrorist means. Time to time observed several resurgences attempts within the country with assistance from pro L.T.T.E groups operating overseas (Year 2012-2020). (Sri Lanka 2025)

DFAT states that "small numbers" of arrests of "suspected" supporters of LTTE and/or Tamil statehood "periodically occur" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.76). Citing confidential sources, the Dutch report notes that arrests of individuals attempting to revive the LTTE occurred on "a small scale"; the confidential sources perceived these arrests as the result of either "an overreaction to actions characterised by the authorities as pro-

LTTE," such as commemoration of victims of the civil war, or as a "justifi[cation of] their extensive military presence in the north and east" (Netherlands 2024-06, 26). According to OFPRA, those who organize social initiatives in support of the people in the North and East and of war victims may be suspected of attempting to revive the LTTE (France 2025-09-11, 55).

Sources indicate that a Tamil rapper was detained on 2 June 2026 under the PTA for posting a video of a performance online (Sri Lanka Brief 2026-06-08; Tamil Guardian 2026-06-15), as the police deemed the video to "glorif[y]" the LTTE (Sri Lanka Brief 2026-06-08) or to promote or revive the LTTE (Tamil Guardian 2026-06-15). According to the Tamil Guardian, the rapper's lawyer argued that while the song references lions and tigers, that in and of itself does not demonstrate support of the LTTE (2026-06-15). The same source adds that on 12 June, following domestic and international protests, the Attorney General withdrew the charge under the PTA to instead proceed with a "lesser offence" under the penal code; parliamentarians also raised the issue (Tamil Guardian 2026-06-15). The source states that the rapper was released on bail on the same day, while the investigation was ongoing (Tamil Guardian 2026-06-15).

Citing the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) [see section 4 of this Response], OFPRA indicates that former LTTE members who served a prison sentence or have been [translation] "rehabilitated" face "constant and strict surveillance" and "could be arrested at the slightest misstep" (France 2025-09-11, 43). Citing in-country sources, DFAT indicates that former LTTE members are monitored by military intelligence personnel and/or undercover police officers through home visits, phone calls, and summonses for questioning at the police station (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.86). DFAT adds that the in-country sources disagreed over the extent of such monitoring, with some reporting that it was "extensive," others noting that it was "low-level and had decreased over time," and still others indicating that the level

depended on the government in power or the individual officer in charge (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.86). Some confidential sources interviewed for the Dutch report described the monitoring as "'intensive surveillance'," while others noted "'regular visits'" by security personnel (Netherlands 2024-06, 45).

The information in the following paragraph was provided in a 2024 OHCHR report:

Based on interviews with 8 individuals in cases dated "as recently as January 2024," there is a "clear pattern" of Tamils, "primarily men who had been involved in protests over disappearances, land/environmental rights or the commemoration of war victims" and who had ties to the LTTE, being monitored or photographed and then arrested by officers of the Criminal Investigation Department or Terrorist Investigation Division. The men were "blindfolded and gagged" by officers at night, then taken to a detention facility, where they were "interrogated" for 3 to 5 days on their ties to "ex-LTTE cadres abroad, fundraising, the individuals behind the protests and any attempts to regroup LTTE." The interviewees reported experiencing "sexual torture, including rape, having had their testicles squeezed, forced nudity and having had their breasts bitten, either during interrogation or in the holding cell." "Nearly all the interviewees" were released following their relative paying a bribe to a security forces member, "often" through an "intermediary." The interviewees subsequently fled Sri Lanka (UN 2024-08-27, para. 27, 28, 29).

3.1. Treatment of Relatives of Former LTTE Members

According to OFPRA's interview with ARED, activists whose family includes former LTTE members are [translation] "more likely to be monitored or threatened" (France 2025-09-11, 55−56). Citing confidential sources interviewed in February 2024, the Dutch report notes that former

LTTE members' relatives who were "visibly active" in protests or commemoration of the civil war experienced "monitoring and harassment by the authorities" (Netherlands 2024-06, 46). The confidential sources added that these individuals had "'frequent' or 'regular'" visits from the authorities; some described it as "'intensive surveillance'," although arrests or detentions happened "infrequently if at all" (Netherlands 2024-06, 46).

4. Recourse

DFAT indicates that while Tamils have access to the legal system and other types of state protection, the language barrier can hinder access in practice (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.8). The same source adds that "[m]ost" police officers, including those in Tamil-populated areas, are Sinhalese; "[m]ost" officers in the north-east do not speak Tamil (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.8). Citing in-country sources, DFAT states that approximately 20% of police officers in the north are Tamil (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.8). Citing confidential sources, the Dutch report notes that Tamil police officers "mainly" occupy "lower positions" (Netherlands 2024-06, 42). Sources indicate that there is stigma attached to Tamils working for the police (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.8) or the military (Netherlands 2024-06, 42). According to OFPRA's interview with the All Ceylon Hindu Congress, Tamil speakers who communicate with the police in English are criticized for not speaking Sinhalese (France 2025-09-11, 32).

Citing in-country sources, DFAT notes that the police are "reluctant to investigate complaints involving state actors, including the military" and face "political pressure and interference" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.11). The same source adds that officers who "resisted" that pressure had "at times" been reassigned and "[h]igh-profile" officers who investigated crimes related to security forces or the family of the former

prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa have been "harassed or forced to flee the country" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.11). The OHCHR notes a "[l]ack of accountability" for human rights violations, "particularly" for cases in which security forces personnel were involved, and adds that the lack of "meaningful progress in "many" such cases illustrates Sri Lanka's "unwillingness or inability" "to prosecute and punish alleged perpetrators" (UN 2025-08-28, para. 38).

DFAT notes that individuals who have experienced harm or mistreatment can seek redress through the legal system, including through a fundamental rights petition submitted to the Supreme Court; however, since the Supreme Court is located in Colombo, those residing in "more remote areas" may find it "impractical and financially prohibitive" to submit a case (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.14, 5.15). Sources indicate that the legal system is "highly inefficient" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.17) or that the judiciary faces "significant case backlogs and delays," which undermines its efficiency (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2026, 12).

The HRCSL is a government entity whose mandate includes the investigation of "any" complaints of fundamental rights violations, including "imminent" violations, and the granting of redress, including compensation (Sri Lanka n.d.). A 2023 HRCSL annual report notes that the public may submit a complaint in Tamil, Sinhala or English (Sri Lanka [2023], 24). The same source adds that complaints can be submitted in person to the HRCSL head office, regional or sub-office, by telephone or email, or online on the HRCSL website (Sri Lanka [2023], 24). DFAT notes that the HRCSL has presence nationwide through 10 regional offices (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.23). The same source adds that "some" individuals feel more comfortable filing complaints with the HRCSL than with the police (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.25). According to Freedom House, independent commissions have been "slow" to investigate complaints against the police and military due to backlogs

and lack of resources (2024-02-29, Sec. F3). DFAT similarly notes that the HRCSL faces challenges with resources (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 5.25).

The 2023 HRCSL annual report indicates that it received a total of 9,714 complaints; the category with the highest number of complaints is violations to "personal liberty," including 987 complaints of arbitrary arrest and detention, 560 complaints of harassment and 546 complaints of torture, including torture while in custody (Sri Lanka [2023], 28). The Dutch report notes that the HRCSL does not publish data on the ethnicity of complainants; however, a confidential source indicated that Tamils were not "over-represented" in the data but further observed that this could be related to "their suspicion of official bodies" (Netherlands 2024-06 35). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The 2023 HRCSL annual report indicates that among the 8,692 cases concluded in 2023, the commission issued recommendations in 72 cases (Sri Lanka [2023], 34−35). Citing a confidential source, the Dutch report indicates that HRCSL recommendations include "criminal prosecution, the payment of financial compensation or disciplinary action" (Netherlands 2024-06, 34−35). The 2023 HRCSL annual report notes that out of the 72 recommendations that it issued, 25 involved personal liberty (Sri Lanka [2023], 36). According to the Dutch report, it is "not possible" to determine how many of these recommendations were followed (Netherlands 2024-06, 35).

5. Treatment of Non-Tamil Supporters of the LTTE by the Authorities

DFAT indicates that during the civil war, LTTE members and supporters were "almost all Tamil" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 3.12). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor of political science at the University of Ghent in Belgium, who has publications on Tamils in postwar Sri Lanka, noted that there "would not have been many" Sinhalese LTTE supporters, as they were treated as the LTTE's "primary enemy" (Professor 2026-07-09). In a follow-up interview in July 2026, when asked whether there are non-Sri Lankan Tamil supporters of the LTTE in the present day, the Professor responded that there are "many" Indian Tamils in the Northeast and "some" in the Central province who still support Tamil statehood and "still have sympathy" for the LTTE, but their support is for networks that pursue this ideology in a "non-violent manner" (2026-07-09). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an associate professor at Queen's University in Canada who conducts research on extremism, religion and politics and who has publications about Sri Lankan Tamils, stated that there are "rare cases" of non-Tamil persons who have "direct or sustained involvement" with the LTTE (Associate Professor 2026-07-08). The same source added that the "most visible example" is Adele Balasingham, an Australian who was married to the [late (*Daily News* 2022-06-02)] LTTE chief political strategist and negotiator Anton Balasingham, was active in the LTTE's women wing, and participated in the peace process (Associate Professor 2026-07-08). A 2022 article in the *Daily News*, a Sri Lankan "state-owned" newspaper (BBC 2024-10-04), notes that Adele Balasingham lives in the UK (2022-06-02).

The Associate Professor noted that while there are "some" non-Tamil supporters of LTTE, that label is "much more broadly" applied to critics of the Sri Lankan government, advocates of Tamil rights, and those who record and raise awareness of wartime abuses (2026-07-08). When asked whether there are cases of non-Tamils who have been labelled as

LTTE supporters by authorities due to activism or criticism of the government, the Professor responded that such "suspicions and accusations were applied in a blanket manner" especially in the post-war period; however, the Dissanayake administration "has been more nuanced and less hostile" (2026-07-13). For information on the treatment of activists and political opponents by the authorities, see Response to Information Request LKA202632 of July 2026.

According to the Associate Professor, there are "Sinhalese activists, journalists, leftists, and human rights advocates who supported Tamil self-determination or opposed Sri Lankan state violence" but are not LTTE supporters (2026-07-08). The same source pointed to the example of Viraj Mendis (Associate Professor 2026-07-08). According to media sources, Mendis was a Sinhalese person who supported Tamil rights and was involved in anti-deportation campaigns while studying in the UK, and who continued to defend the rights of Sri Lankan refugees after moving to Germany until his death in 2024 (BBC 2025-09-29; *The Guardian* 2024-08-30). The Associate Professor noted that "state-aligned media and nationalist actors" have "often" called individuals like Mendis "separatist or pro-LTTE" (2026-07-08).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Notes

[1] The OPHI & UNDP report is based on data from the National Citizen Survey 2022-2023, a survey assessing the vulnerabilities of Sri Lankans in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, and covering 25,000 households (OPHI & UNDP 2023-09-29, 25). The survey also

included a series of focus groups conducted in August 2023 nationwide that focused on women, informal sector workers, people living with disabilities and their caregivers, and youth (OPHI & UNDP 2023-09-29, 25).[back]

[2] The OPHI is a research centre based at the University of Oxford's Department of International Development that studies "multidimensional measurement of poverty and well-being to help guide effective policymaking around the world" (OPHI n.d.). [back]

[3] The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index measures the risk factors associated with "falling into poverty" by assessing the following 12 indicators: school attendance, male and female years of schooling, physical health condition, water source, food stock, disaster occurrence, adaptative capacity to disasters, employment status, precarious and informal employment, asset ownership, and debt status (OPHI & UNDP 2023-09-29, 20, 28–30). [back]

[4] The report by Adelphi Research was based on interviews with 167 people from 4 districts (Mullaitivu in Northern Province, Batticaloa in Eastern Province, Hambantota in Southern Province, and Badulla in Uva Province) that included government representatives, UN agencies, civil society organizations and community members, as well as on a literature review (Adelphi Research 2025-05, 14, 19). [back]

[5] Adelphi Research is a "global market research consultancy" providing assessments for pharmaceutical and healthcare organizations (Adelphi Research n.d.). The report was funded by Australia's DFAT (Adelphi Research 2025-05, 2).[back]

[6] The LTTE, a "militant" group fighting for "Tamil statehood," started a "guerrilla war" in 1983 (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 2.2). The LTTE had "de facto control" over "Tamil-populated" regions until government forces took back control of eastern Sri Lanka in July 2007 and the remaining LTTE-controlled areas in the north in January 2008 (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 2.2). The LTTE surrendered in May 2009 (Australia 2024-05-02,

para. 2.2). Over the course of the civil war, there were an estimated 100,000 people killed and "over" 900,000 people displaced (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 2.2).[back]

[7] On Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019, "Muslim extremists" conducted a series of "coordinated terrorist attacks" against hotels and Christian churches in the Western and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 2.70). [back]

[8] Anti-government protests, known as the Aragalaya protests, took place between March and July 2022, leading to the resignations of then-prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 2.72). For further information on the political situation in Sri Lanka, see Response to Information Request LKA202382 of August 2025. [back]

[9] The PTA contains a "broad" "definition of terrorism," allows arrests for undefined "'unlawful activities'," and permits detention without charge for up to 12 months provided that there is "sufficient evidence" (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 4.38). The PTA has been "routinely" used against those perceived to pose a "threat" to security in order to prolong detention, "often" without charge (Australia 2024-05-02, para. 4.38). [back]

[10] Sri Lanka Unites is a youth movement aiming to facilitate reconciliation in Sri Lanka, and whose activities include establishing reconciliation centres (Sri Lanka Unites n.d.a). These centres are a "hub for education, entrepreneurship and inspire youth to play an active role in promoting reconciliation and countering violent extremism" (Sri Lanka Unites n.d.b).[back]

[11] The Oakland Institute's report on land seizure is based on information obtained through field research conducted between January 2023 and March 2024, including interviews with residents, activists, government officials and representatives of political parties and NGOs, as well as government reports and other documents (The Oakland Institute 2024-09-12, 3).[back]

[12] The NCCT "represent[s], advocate[s] for, and advance[s] the aspirations of the Tamil people" and collaborates with all levels of governments in Canada and abroad (NCCT n.d.). [back]

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