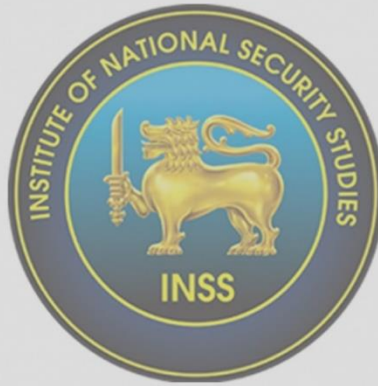


INSS

# NATIONAL SECURITY

PAPERS

Volume VII





**INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES**

**NATIONAL SECURITY PAPERS**

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) explores and researches on an array of issues pertaining to the national security of Sri Lanka. This book is a compilation of such valuable academic work produced by the staff of INSS doing their tenure of employment over the past few years. The aim of this publication is to build awareness on pressing national security issues and threats, challenging Sri Lanka and proposes analysis and recommendations to decision makers and public leaders for addressing those challenges as viewed by authors of each paper. The journal of national security papers will no doubt meet research needs and as such are compiled with authentic materials with quality content on various facets of national security. All papers included in this publication have already been published elsewhere either online or in printed form in newspapers or publications of other academic organizations and have been reproduced by obtaining the final draft sent for its initial printing by each author.

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Institute of National Security Studies

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Institute of National Security Studies (INSS)  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, “SUHURUPAYA”, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka.

Contact No: +94112879087

Fax: +94112879086

Email: [inss.srilanka@gmail.com](mailto:inss.srilanka@gmail.com)

Web: [www.inss.lk](http://www.inss.lk)

## FOREWORD



As the Overlooking Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), it gives me great pleasure to share a few words about the 7<sup>th</sup> Volume of our publication, titled “National Security Papers Vol. VII.” In this edition of our National Security Papers Vol. VII, we present a diverse array of articles that have been published or presented elsewhere in either seminars/ conferences or in newspapers/ websites. This volume comprehends 20 papers on a wide range of security issues and it needs to be mentioned that this book is the eventual outcome of the INSS staff members.

The first article, “The Interplay of Climate Change & Water Shortages in Sri Lanka’s Ecosystems” by Darshika Sewwandi emphasized the interrelation between climate change and water shortages and its’ impact on Sri Lanka’s ecosystem. The article highlights Sri Lanka’s vulnerability in the face of climate change and emphasizes numerous consequences of decreasing water availability. In mitigating the climate change related issues in Sri Lanka, the article suggests that Sri Lanka needs to adopt a holistic risk management framework that includes awareness, education, and cooperation at both national and international levels.

The second article titled “Analysis of Money Laundering in Sri Lanka: A National Security Saboteur” by Charani Patabendige has been published in the International Journal of Security Studies and Practice. This study examines whether Sri Lanka’s present legal regime is adequate to combat and mitigate money laundering and inquired whether current anti-money laundering laws can ensure the national security of Sri Lanka. The article moreover highlights the relationship between money laundering and national security and the institutional framework relating to anti-money laundering in Sri Lanka. She has authored seven papers of this volume on online falsehoods, challenges faced by UN Peacekeepers, new face of warfare, extremism in the digital age, women and violent extremism, air connectivity, air diplomacy, and national security in Sri Lanka -India relations. Out of them, one research article was published in a Sri Lanka Military Journal and three articles have been presented at the national and international research conferences.

W. D. S. Madhavi, an Intern (Research) at INSS in her article emphasizes the impact of the doctors’ brain drain on health security in Sri Lankans. This article underlines push and pull factors that affect to the doctors’ brain drain. The article suggests that the Sri Lankan government must work more efficiently to manage the current situation of limitless migration of doctors and implement the necessary

actions to strengthen Sri Lanka's healthcare system without collapse.

Commander Amila Prasanga has authored three papers in this volume on Indo-Pacific maritime security, climate change and its impact on food security and, climate change vulnerability in developing countries in the Indian Ocean Region. The first article explores the strategic impact of military drone proliferation on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region. In this study, he examines the current landscape of military drone proliferation in the Indo-Pacific, the strategic implications of drone proliferation on maritime security and, shifts in naval doctrines, force projection strategies, and asymmetric warfare dynamics. The second article of the author suggests that the collaborative solution to address the grave threats in the face of climate change. The third article explores the relationship between climate change and human security and it concludes emphasizing the necessity of integrated approaches that address social, economic, and environmental dimensions in the context of climate change in Sri Lanka.

The fifth article titled "Sri Lanka as an Educational Hub" by Thamindu Devinda Intern (Research) examines the role of Sri Lanka as an educational hub for developing the Sri Lankan economy as well as the connection between economic development and national security. The article also makes recommendations including the increase of budget allocation for education, working to improve the global ranking of state universities and educational collaboration with regional and international universities to develop Sri Lanka as an international educational hub.

Kalpani Gunethilake has authored two articles in this volume on economic insecurity as a grave threat to national security and the importance of political stability. The first article highlights the interplay between economic security and national security. Moreover, it analyses the current economic landscape of Sri Lanka. The next article, "Sri Lanka's Economic Development and National Security: Political Stability Essential" explores the current political landscape of Sri Lanka and the impact of political stability on economic development and national security.

The next article, "Economic Security via the Green Lens: Blue Economy Strategies for Economic Development in Sri Lanka" by Madhushi Sandamini looks at the blue economy strategies for economic sustainability in Sri Lanka. The article emphasizes that Sri Lanka's blue economic growth is still in a concealed layer. For that, the article suggests the need of national initiatives with an ocean economy aimed at protecting and overseeing Sri Lanka's blue resources.



Chandani Dissanayake in the tenth article, “Dangerous Drug Trade on Social Media: What factors do we need to know about this national security threat” explores the new trend of dangerous drug transaction of organized criminal groups and its grave impacts on national security of Sri Lanka. The article comes to the conclusion that policy changes and legislative reforms are needed to strengthen the peace and security of country.

The article titled, “Free Trade Agreement: A way Forward in National Security of Sri Lanka” authored by Wathsunu Rajinda Jayathilleka underlines the potential impact of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in enhancing the national security prospects of Sri Lanka. The article explores the relationship between Free Trade Agreement and national security. It further highlights the benefits of FTA which leads to an increase of the production and opportunities in the domestic market of Sri Lanka.

The next article, “Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and its Global Applicability” by Shashika Lakshan, Intern (Research) highlights the R2P as a doctrine which emerged in 2000s with the intention of preventing atrocity crimes. The article concludes that R2P should be applied with pure intention of preventing mass crimes rather than using personal agendas and interests.

Rivindu Samadhith Perera, Intern (Research) in his article highlights the timely important non-traditional security threat. The article sheds light on the profound implications of peak time traffic as a vital threat to national security of Sri Lanka. In conclusion, it provides recommendations such as enhancing the use and purchase of electric vehicles and public transport modes to reduce the traffic congestion.

I hope this collection of articles provides insightful timely analysis of important traditional and non-traditional security threats. I congratulate all the authors for their hard work and welcome the readers to go through this book which offers a rich exploration of various facets of national security of Sri Lanka.

Colonel M. B. B. Nalin Herath RSP  
**Overlooking Director General & Acting Director (Research)**

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# The Interplay of Climate Change & Water Shortages in Sri Lanka's Ecosystems

By Darshika Sewwandi

*Published on Colombo Telegraph, 29th October 2023*

## Introduction to the Interplay

Climate change is a long-term change in the way temperatures and weather behave. These changes can happen on their own, like when the sun's energy changes or when a volcano erupts. Since the 1800s, human actions, especially the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas, have been the major cause of climate change. In its Sixth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says that South Asia is one of the "global hotspots of high human vulnerability" in a warming world. Sri Lanka is a tropical island in the Indian Ocean. Climate change has always affected it, and the Global Climate Risk Index puts it in the top ten countries most likely to be hit by extreme weather. Climate change is already having long-term effects on Sri Lanka, based on how things are right now. This is clear from the fact that there is not enough water right now, which happens when the water demand is higher than the supply.

## Impact of Climate Change on Water Scarcity

Scientists say that from March to September, Sri Lanka gets about 2,500 millimeters of rain each year. (Island 2023) As climate change is having an effect, this amount and the time it was received were changed. So, they think that Sri Lanka will soon run out of water, including drinking water. The two months before, there was not enough water. Water shortages have a big effect on food security and economic security in the world today. In the past, farmers frequently started cultivation during rainy seasons. They frequently train during seasonal rainfalls. However, the anticipated rainfall was not delivered during the previous month, leaving their agriculture in a serious situation due to a lack of water. Since rice is the main food in Sri Lanka, this has had a direct influence on the economy of the country.

## Consequences for Ecosystems

Climate change, along with environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, pollution, supply chain disruptions, and other economic problems, are the main causes of risks that affect all sectors and levels, from individual households to whole businesses. These changes have a big effect on wild animals because they don't have enough water to drink or a place to live, which can lead to dehydration, malnutrition, or even death. Since the last few months, the water level in the *Udawalawa* reservoir has been slowly going down, which has had some serious effects. Most of the wild animals that lived there had trouble because of it (Ceylon Today, 2023). When there is less

water available, the number of fish and amphibians decreases. Predators that eat these species may find their food sources shrinking, which could cause their numbers to drop as well.

A lack of water leads to effects through the food chain and has the worst effect on Sri Lanka's water supplies. Although farmers and researchers may be able to adapt some agricultural techniques and technologies or develop new methods, some changes will be difficult to manage; hence, farmers face problems like rising temperatures, drought and water stress, diseases, and extreme weather during farming. Sri Lanka's lack of water has large, interconnected effects on the environment. It is not only threatening the survival of wildlife but also the changes in biodiversity and the benefits that ecosystems provide to both nature and people. Getting rid of water shortages in a sustainable way is important not only for people's health but also for keeping Sri Lanka's rich and varied natural resources safe.

### **Vulnerable communities**

Climate change has different effects on different facets of society. Long-term changes in the climate and rapid extreme weather events like droughts pose major risks to all people in Sri Lanka and their lifestyles. Women, children, the elderly, and people with low immunity to diseases are especially vulnerable and affected. Human health problems can make people die earlier, make it harder to get food, and make people less productive at work.

### **Government initiatives**

Article 27 of the Constitution says that the government is duty-bound to protect ecologically sensitive areas and nature. Because of this, they must come up with ways to reduce the impacts of climate change and hold awareness programs to educate the public about the problem. Respondents' inaction goes against international environmental law principles such as sustainable development, intergenerational justice, precautionary action, public interest litigation, polluter pays, and public trust, which are now part of Sri Lankan law. The United Nations Development Program's Sustainable Development Goal No. 13 says that we need to move quickly to fight climate change and its effects. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement says that countries can work together to lower greenhouse gas emissions around the world by trading carbon on an international level.

The Paris Agreement is a turning point in the multilateral process for dealing with climate change because, for the first time, it brings all nations together under a legally binding agreement to fight climate change and adjust to its effects. As a member of the United Nations and the Paris Agreement, Sri Lanka has to take steps to adjust to climate change and lessen the effects of climate change. But if Sri Lanka doesn't do

what it's supposed to under international law, the country will have to deal with restrictions on foreign trade and other problems. So, the governments of Sri Lanka and Singapore will agree on how to work together on carbon neutrality within the framework of the Paris Agreement.

To deal with the effects of climate change, the Sri Lankan government has set up several offices, such as the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, and Forestry, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and the Ministry of Estate Housing and Community Infrastructure. These ministries and bodies, like the Central Environmental Authority, Sri Lanka Disaster Management Centre, Coast Guard Authority, and Marine Environment Protection Authority, are working to put local mitigation measures into place. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for Climate Change Impacts in Sri Lanka was made by following the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) broad set of rules. In 2016, Sri Lanka joined the UNFCCC by signing the Paris Agreement. This is a legally binding international deal on climate change. So, this agreement urges all the countries that signed it to work together more to make it easier for people to adapt to climate change and to reduce the possible effects of climate change. Some steps have been taken by the government to deal with climate change.

### **Global Examples**

Most of the countries in the world have signed the Paris Agreement, including big sources of greenhouse gases like China and India, both now and in the future. These countries are already taking steps to deal with climate change, and they are becoming more aware of the chances for them and their people to build a future with no carbon emissions and a growing, green economy.

Some governments in the world have taken several steps to deal with these problems. With help from the European Union and the World Bank, local governments in Solomon Island set up a project to provide a water source that can handle changes in the weather. To do this, they improved the water treatment facilities, built two reservoirs, and fixed the water pipes so that they could identify leaks. Because of these, they could reduce water loss by 30% and increase the amount of water they could provide and their security. As a result of these, they could reduce water loss by 30% while increasing supply capacity and security.

### **Recommendations**

Since security is not only about physical aspects, it is important to address soft security threats as well. The Sixth Assessment Report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the international body for

assessing climate science, states that “without rapid, deep, and sustained mitigation and accelerated adaptation actions, losses and damages will continue to increase and will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations. Irrespective of all the measures taken by the government, there needs to be effective allocation and integration among the many ministries since one ministry is not capable of handling this problem on its own.

To overcome these significant challenges, the management of innovative approaches and an in-depth understanding of social and environmental issues are vital. It is important to adopt the proper risk assessment for Sri Lanka to mitigate the impacts of climate change. There are opportunities to scale up these existing mechanisms of risk assessment by closing existing gaps and implementing them properly. Key areas for improving the Sri Lankan risk management framework include awareness and education regarding the environment for the general public. For that, multi-stakeholder coordination, including local government, private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), proper decision-making processes, manipulating new and innovative risk management instruments, and connecting national and international organizations, such as the UN climate change convention, Countries ensure that water scarcity and climate change always have a dedicated discussion during multi-stakeholder planning activities in the country. This might include examples such as risk-informed workshops, targeted climate change risk assessments, and adaptation planning exercises for water management. As a technological solution, early warning systems need to be scaled up in the region to tackle water scarcity and compound climate change risks. The general public can play a significant role in solving the critical issue of water scarcity through various means. This may include adopting sustainable water consumption practices, supporting the development of advanced water filtration systems, implementing rainwater harvesting systems, working proactively to prevent leaks and other water inefficiencies, and installing low-flow toilets. These actions allow the public to address and contribute to the problem of water scarcity at the grassroots level.

## **Conclusion**

The impact of climate change on water scarcity in Sri Lanka is a pressing issue with far-reaching consequences for the nation’s environment, economy, and vulnerable communities. The changing rainfall patterns and decreasing water availability pose significant challenges to agriculture, wildlife, and the overall ecosystem. The Sri Lankan government has taken steps to address climate change through various ministries and initiatives, aligning with international agreements like the Paris Agreement. However, effective coordination among ministries and stakeholders is essential to tackle this complex problem comprehensively. Sri Lanka needs to adopt a holistic risk management framework that includes awareness, education, and

cooperation at both national and international levels. Addressing water scarcity in the face of climate change requires an integrated effort from all sectors of society, as well as a commitment to sustainable practices and international cooperation. Failure to take decisive action may lead to severe consequences not only for Sri Lanka but for the global community as a whole.



*U.G.A. Darshika Sewwandi is an Intern (Research) at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), the premier think tank on National Security established and functioning under the Ministry of Defence. The opinion expressed is her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute or the Ministry of Defence.*

# Analysis of Money Laundering in Sri Lanka: A National Security Saboteur

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige

*Published on International Journal of Security Studies & Practice, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023*

## Abstract

Money laundering is an unscrupulous, cross-border crime, with multiple perpetrators. The crime is not restricted to the grassroots level criminals, money laundering can also be perpetrated by white-collar criminals. Laundering money is a complex multi-tiered process since it involves multiple perpetrators and transnational nature. When considering the Sri Lankan context, it is evident that money laundering has posed a threat to the country's national security across multiple domains, including economic, political, social, and human security. This article examined whether Sri Lanka's present legal regime is adequate to combat and mitigate money laundering and inquired whether current anti-money laundering laws can ensure the national security of Sri Lanka. The article used secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and reports. In addition, legal instruments as well as case laws were used. The author found that despite institutional frameworks and a rigid legal system, there are gaps that jeopardize Sri Lanka's national security and offers recommendations that can be utilized to mitigate and prevent money laundering.

**Key words:** legal regime, money laundering, national security, Sri Lanka

## Analysis of Money Laundering in Sri Lanka: A National Security Saboteur

The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) defined the term "money laundering" as "the processing of criminal proceeds to disguise their illegal origin to legitimize the ill-gotten gains of crime" (Central Bank Sri Lanka, 2006). The money laundering process has three stages: Placement, Layering, and Integration. In the placement stage, ill-gotten money is placed into the legitimate financial system. In the layering stage, the placed money is broken into several transactions resulting in a complexity that makes it difficult to determine whether a crime has been committed and to identify the perpetrators. The final stage is integration where the ill-gotten money is mixed (or laundered) with legitimate money. In the past, money laundering was often discussed in the context of the illegal drug trade. However, money laundering crimes are wide-ranging and include tax evasion, bribery, fraud, human smuggling, and weapons trade.



### **Legal Framework: Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) No. 05 of 2006 and Amendments**

This is the primary law that addresses the prevention of money laundering. Section 2 of the PMLA delineates the scenarios in which an offence is considered to have been committed under its provisions. These circumstances include:

1. When an individual commits an offence while being a resident in Sri Lanka. In such cases, if a person residing within the country violates any provisions of the Act, it is considered an offence.
2. When an institution is employed for the commission of an offence under the Act, and this institution is conducting its business in Sri Lanka. Moreover, it should be either incorporated or registered within Sri Lanka or outside the borders of Sri Lanka. If these conditions are met, any offence committed through such an institution is deemed to have been committed under the Act. 3.
3. When an act itself constitutes an offence, and it is a branch of a bank that is incorporated under this Act. If this offence takes place within the confines of Sri Lanka, it falls under the purview of the Act and is considered an offence as defined therein.

This Act applies to natural persons including an individual or a body of persons, and financial institutions, which are juridical. Furthermore, the Act surpasses Sri Lanka's domestic boundaries, which means it is extra-territorial. Similar laws are found in other countries as well. For instance, in the case of *R v Rogers* 2014, "the court determined that the Act's jurisdiction extends to cases where the conduct occurred outside the UK [United Kingdom], and there were no allegations of money laundering against the defendant in that foreign jurisdiction. The court justified this decision by stating that the 'offence' of money laundering is par excellence an offence that knows no national boundaries. Therefore, the Act was deemed sufficiently expansive to confer jurisdiction in such situation." Section 3 of the PMLA stipulates that

any individual who directly or indirectly partakes in any transaction involving property derived or acquired, directly or indirectly, from unlawful activities or the proceeds of such activities, or who receives, possesses, conceals, disposes of, brings into Sri Lanka, transfers out of Sri Lanka, or invests in Sri Lanka any property derived or acquired, directly or indirectly, from unlawful activities or their proceeds, with knowledge or reason to believe that said property originates from unlawful activities or their proceeds, shall be charged with the crime of money laundering. . .

The Act not only criminalizes the money laundering activity, but it also criminalizes the mens rea and those who are indirectly involved in a money laundering scheme. For example, as reported by (Sanjeewa, 2018), close associate and financial handler of the well-known criminal figure Makandure Madush, along with the wife of notorious drug kingpin Devundara Chamil, were apprehended by the police. Investigations revealed that the associate, Akila, was deeply involved in Madush's drug-related financial affairs exposing her as an accomplice committing predicate offences. Additionally, Ishanka Savithri, associated with Akila, was found with 2,590 milligrams of heroin, and possessions including a car, an Apple iPad, and an iPhone were confiscated. In addition, Balasuriya and Sugathapala (2020) reported that the mother of Janith Madusanka de Silva, aka 'Podi Lassi', was arrested for handling money derived from illegal drug trafficking. Separately, a 40-year-old woman was apprehended in Boralessgamuwa for aiding a Mount Lavinia drug trafficker. She was involved in a heroin trafficking case in Horana that encompassed over 1.5 kg of heroin and seven bank accounts engaging in transactions exceeding Rs.140 million. These are examples where spouses and close associates were arrested for having knowledge of crimes committed by the offenders.

Notably, the offence of conspiracy is not included in the PMLA, which is a deficiency in Sri Lankan law, whereas laws in the United Kingdom (UK) do include conspiracy. The UK Proceeds of Crime Act (2002) defines money laundering as an act which constitutes an offence under sections 327-962 and includes attempt, conspiracy, aiding, abetting, counselling, and procuring the commission of the offence; all principal offences in the UK. In addition, UK laws address non-reporting offences and tipping-off offences under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Sri Lanka does not include similar provisions as the UK and this is a grave drawback.

Unlike in Sri Lanka, other countries also include conspiracy as an act of committing money laundering. In the 2006 case of the United States of America v. Luis A. Flores an attorney who was willfully blind to the illegal source of the client's money was convicted of conspiring with the client to commit money laundering by opening bank accounts and conducting financial transactions for the client. In the 2016 case of R v Joseph Ashman and others, "The wife and sister of a prolific drug smuggler, who was responsible for importing 4.5 tons of cannabis resin into the UK, have been convicted of laundering more than £300,000 proceeds of crime." One of the strengths of the Act is the ability to apprehend predicate offences as well. In the 2016 case of Director of Public Prosecutions v Elladius Cornelio Tesha and others, the courts found that "It is permissible to charge both money laundering and its predicate offending." Sri Lanka has the same provision; however, there is a detrimental effect because the offender may be convicted of the predicate offence rather than money laundering, which is difficult and seldom proven.



Sri Lanka's PMLA Section 3 establishes the penalties for laundering money which are a fine not less than the value of the property in respect of which the offence is committed and not more than three times the value of the property in respect of which the offence is committed; to rigorous imprisonment for not less than five years and not exceeding twenty years; or to both fine and imprisonment. In the 2016 case law of *State v Arthur Chikukwa* the court decided that "There was no duplication of punishment in charging an accused with both fraud and money laundering arising out of the fraud, the accused was guilty of both fraud and money laundering."

It is not only the money generated from deceitful means but also property acquired from money laundering that can be confiscated. Under PMLA, during any legal proceedings it will be assumed until proven otherwise that any movable or immovable property acquired by an individual that has been derived or realized, directly or indirectly, from any unlawful activity, or if it comes from the proceeds of any unlawful activity. Therefore, a defendant is culpable if (a) in the case of money it cannot be proven or could not have been part of the known income or receipts of that person, or if it cannot be shown that it represents money to which their known income or receipts have been converted, or (b) in the case of property other than money, it cannot be proven or could not have been acquired with any part of the individual's known income or receipts, nor does it constitute property that is or was part of their known income or receipts, or if it cannot be shown that it represents property to which any part of their known income or receipts has been converted. The term "property" in this context encompasses any kind of property, currency, or asset, whether movable or immovable, tangible or intangible, regardless of its location in Sri Lanka or elsewhere. Moreover, the PMLA includes legal documents or instruments in any form whatsoever including electronic or digital form, evidencing title to or interest in such assets.

In the event that a group of persons is proven to be involved in money laundering, every director or other officer of that body shall be guilty of money laundering: such persons are considered members of an unincorporated body, such as an association or club. However, there is a defence available if such an act is committed without his/her knowledge and he/she exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of the offence. When it comes to assets including property, the assets of any person found guilty of the offence of money laundering shall be liable to forfeiture of property due to the "commission of the unlawful activity" (Prevention of Money Laundering Act). By forfeiture, ownership rights to a property are lost as the property is seized by the government or law enforcement agencies. This is witnessed in Sri Lanka, especially with underworld goons and drug kingpins, where the assets of spouses or family members are frozen. Makadure Madush's and Wele Suda's cases are such examples.

As per section 7 of the PMLA, whenever the police have reasonable grounds that a person has accrued wealth that cannot be justified, a police officer not below the rank of Superintendent of Police could issue a “freezing order” for a maximum of seven days prohibiting any transactions concerning such person’s bank accounts, property and investments. The prosecuting officers could make further applications before the High Court to extend the freezing order under section 8 of the Act for an additional period of up to one year. Amidst such a freezing order the police, through the Attorney General, should prosecute the offenders if there are satisfactory grounds for framing a charge sheet. Similarities are found in other countries as well. One of the more interesting instances involved the 2020 case of *Hajiyeva v National Crime Agency* in which the “Unexplained Wealth Order” was found and was upheld by the Court of Appeals.

One of the cardinal features of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act is found in Section 16 of the Act, which overrides confidentiality obligations if money laundering is determined to be involved. The disclosure of confidential information under the Act is not considered to comply with the provisions of the Act and shall not be deemed in contravention to confidentiality obligations or restrictions. Banks and other financial institutions have an undeniable duty to employ practices like Know Your Customer (KYC) and report suspicious transactions. However, there have been shortcomings in implementing these measures in Sri Lanka.

**Table 1: Sri Lanka’s Institutional Framework Relating to Anti-money Laundering**

Entity	Responsibilities
Attorney General’s Department	Carries out legal proceedings and offers guidance to law enforcement and other affiliated organizations regarding inquiries as well as legal documents. Money laundering cases are prosecuted by the department on indictment before the High Court.
Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL)	Certain CBSL departments are tasked crucial responsibilities. The Department of Banking Supervision regulates bank licensing and oversight under the Banking Act of 1988. Under the framework of the Financial Transactions Reporting Act No. 6 of 2006, the Financial Intelligence Unit assesses and shares financial reports with law enforcement agencies. The Department of Supervision of Non-Bank Financial Institutions ensures

	adherence to the Finance Companies Act, overseeing deposit-taking entities except licensed commercial and specialized banks. The Exchange Control Department manages government foreign exchange operations and oversees moneychangers, reinforcing effective financial vigilance.
Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption	Has the authority to examine cases related to bribery or corruption which involve government employees and to provide instructions to the Attorney General's Department regarding violations under the Bribery Act and the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Law, No. 1 of 1975.
Department of Cooperative Development, within the Ministry of Food Security	Has oversight of rural banks and thrift and credit cooperative societies.
Department of Immigration and Emigration	Collaborates with other organizations to identify individuals as they cross Sri Lanka's borders regarding Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the financing of Terrorism.
Department of Inland Revenue	Responsible for tax collection and the prevention and identification of tax evasion and avoidance operating under the Inland Revenue Act of 2006 and subsequent revisions. Additionally, it is the sole entity overseeing casinos at present.
Insurance Board of Sri Lanka	Regulates and supervises the insurance industry through the Act of Insurance Industry 2000.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	In the context of Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT), takes the lead in managing Sri Lanka's involvement with international frameworks, including those established by the UN Security Council.
Ministry of Finance and Planning Sri Lanka Customs	Shapes economic policies, approves foreign funding, and oversees the CBSL. The External Resources Department authorizes foreign funds, while Sri Lanka Customs enforces the

	Customs Ordinance, with the power to seize goods and impose penalties.
Ministry of Justice	Supervises the Attorney-General's Department as well as the court system, and manages the execution of justice and law reform policies, plans, and programs. The Secretary to the Minister of Justice serves as the central authority for matters related to mutual assistance.
Non-Government Organizations Secretariat	Primarily responsibility for overseeing the nonprofit sector, including tasks like registration, outreach, and supervision
Office of the Chief of National Intelligence	Functioning under the Ministry of Defence, this unit oversees the coordination of Sri Lanka's counter-terrorism efforts and other national security threats, with some role in investigations, and is the competent authority for UNSCR 1267 obligation
Registrar of Companies/Registrar General Department	Responsible for registering legal entities under the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007, overseeing legal arrangements as per the Trust Ordinance No. 9 of 1917, and managing notaries in line with the Notaries Ordinance.
Secretary to the Ministry for Defence	This is the competent authority designated for United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1373 obligations who is appointed by the Minister for External Affairs, in consultation with the Minister for Defence.
Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)	Operating under the Ministry of Finance, the SEC oversees and regulates the operations of the capital market in Sri Lanka. It also holds the authority to issue directives, conduct inspections, and revoke licenses within the sector.
Sri Lanka Police	The Criminal Investigation Division (CID) manages various criminal inquiries, including predicate crimes and money laundering, with two financial investigation units. The Terrorist

	Investigation Division (TID) focuses on probing terrorist activities as well as financing. The Narcotics Bureau addresses drug-related crimes, occasionally sharing data with CID or TID. Further, Interpol Bureau maintains international law enforcement connections, aiding domestic investigations. The Human Trafficking/People Smuggling Division investigates such cases, occasionally referring this information to CID or TID.
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### **Gaps, Loopholes and Weaknesses**

In addition to the drawbacks mentioned in the previous section, many other factors hinder the justice process. Police use outdated information-gathering techniques that result in a lack of quality intelligence and severely hinders the ability to identify and prosecute perpetrators. If state-of-the-art investigatory mechanisms were to be employed, there would be many more convictions. It is also important to extend confiscation measures to third parties. Presently, confiscation is impossible if the wrongdoer is dead. Furthermore, insufficient resources, trained personnel, lack of competency, and technological expertise have a detrimental effect. In addition, the lack of adequate and updated research and training hinders the justice and effectiveness of the anti-money laundering regime.

Politicization is another prevalent factor. The public lose faith in the justice system when influential figures are capable of influencing decisions. One of the key drawbacks is that nonprofit organizations go unregulated and unsupervised. Due to unsupervised funds and lack of beneficial ownership, ascertaining the identity of the owner complicates matters. Similarly, the informal value transfer system is a major hardship. As cited by Thennakoon (2016) from the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN),

informal value transfer systems are any system, mechanism, or network of individuals that receives money with the intention of transferring funds or an equivalent value to a third party in a different geographic location, regardless of whether it is in the same form, is classified as an Informal Value Transfer System (IVTS). Examples of IVTS include the Hawala system in the Middle East and Asia, Fei-Chin in China, HuiKuan in Hong Kong, Pei Kwan in Thailand, Hundi in Pakistan and India, Undiyal among Sri Lankan Tamils, the black market peso exchange in Colombia, and Padala in the Philippines.





### **Money Laundering and Sri Lankan Experience**

Money laundering is not an unusual occurrence in Sri Lanka. Various drug kingpins, underworld goons, religious extremists, and terrorists are laundering money on a large scale. Although the Sri Lankan militarily defeated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) the LTTE's international networks remain intact. It is important to mention that LTTE, its front cover, and sympathetic organizations are still being tried and convicted for money laundering. In 2018, SWI reported that

In its indictment, the OAG had accused the people of violating the Swiss Penal Code by raising funds for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) between 1999 and 2009. After its nine-year investigation, the OAG suspected the accused of financially supporting the World Tamil Coordinating Committee (WTCC). But in June 2018 the Federal Criminal Court found that the hierarchical link between the LTTE and WTCC could not be sufficiently established. The judges also felt there was not enough proof to consider the LTTE a criminal group. In April the OAG appealed against the verdict, insisting that the accused had supported a criminal group. In a decision published on Tuesday the Federal Court upheld the previous ruling, noting that Article 260 in the Swiss Penal Code was designed to combat organized crime of a mafia nature. Since then it has also been applied to terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda or the Islamic State (IS) terrorist militia. (Tamil Tigers)

This is an example of the prevailing national security menace to Sri Lanka where terrorism can occur at any time. Furthermore, the Easter Sunday Attack in 2019 was funded by laundered money. According to Subramanian (2020), “Zaharan was both a beneficiary and an agent of a well-studied trend that has, for a couple of decades, been shaping Sri Lankan Islam. From Saudi Arabia, rich patrons send money and clerics to build new mosques and seed Wahhabism”. Subramanian goes on to mention that

Zaharan had possibly received an education in terrorism in India; that he had set up safe houses in Sri Lanka to train his men; that the money for at least one such house came from Inshaf. This house, near Wanathavilluwa, was disguised as a poultry farm . . . [the intelligence official said that] There was a lagoon on one side . . . A direct run from South India. All these explosives and chemicals could have come through that sea route.

These examples vividly portray how property and assets are acquired by dirty money.



### **Money Laundering and National Security**

The relationship between money laundering and national security is intricate and significant, with far-reaching effects on various aspects of a country's safety. Money laundering directly jeopardizes different dimensions of security, including economic, political, social, and human security. Therefore, it is essential to examine these diverse facets of insecurity within the context of money laundering. Money laundering poses the most threat to economic security. The funds generated through illicit activities are funneled into legitimate channels, causing fluctuations that disrupt the stability of financial markets. Consequently, this results in reduced economic growth, reduced capital outflow, and a weakened sense of investor confidence. Money laundering also affects political security by infiltrating political systems. It fosters corruption, bribery, and manipulation among politicians, eroding public trust in government officials and undermining the political landscape. The social security domain is also adversely affected as money laundering fosters social instability through organized crime and violence. Additionally, it perpetuates human rights abuses by generating funds through human smuggling, trafficking, and extortion. Furthermore, money laundering poses a threat to a nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as it can fuel terrorism and separatism. Terrorist groups and extremists generate funds through illicit financial transactions, creating strategic vulnerabilities for countries like Sri Lanka, which are susceptible to illegal financial flows.

Considering all these factors, money laundering emerges as a saboteur of Sri Lanka's security. It not only finances criminal activities but also weakens the country's stability and integrity, presenting severe risks to overall security. Thus, combating money laundering becomes a critical imperative to safeguard the nation's well-being. Effective measures and international cooperation are vital to address the extra-territorial nature of money laundering and mitigate its damaging impact on Sri Lanka's security landscape.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is crystal clear that money laundering is detrimental to all security spheres and includes militaristic aspects and nontraditional security threats. Sri Lanka has a satisfactory legal regime and a solid institutional framework to combat and minimize money laundering. Yet, there is room for development to dissuade and thwart national security threats. In light of that, several recommendations are made:

1. Sri Lanka must align its anti-money laundering framework with international standards.
2. Money laundering is an offence that is constantly evolving with advances in technology such as digital currency, therefore, the PMLA must adapt accordingly.

3. Establish an interagency platform consisting of relevant ministries, security forces, and private entities as deemed appropriate.
4. Establish mutual legal assistance channels with other countries to share expertise and experience. Information exchange will be essential to preventing or mitigating money laundering.
5. Create public awareness of money laundering and its security repercussions.
6. The government must invest in research and development and conduct related training programs for officers.
7. The government should better regulate and supervise nonprofit organizations to verify beneficial ownership.
8. Introducing legislation for asset recovery is imperative.
9. Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions should be taken under the purview of the anti-money laundering framework.

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*Charani Patabendige is a Research Assistant and Acting Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute*

## Doctor's Brain Drain: Health Security Concern in Sri Lanka

By **W. D. S. Madhavi**

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Brain drain is recognized as a global issue and the term conveys the immigration of highly educated and knowledgeable individuals to other nations. At present brain drain is a trending tragedy in the developing world. According to the Human Flight Brain Drain Index (2022), the majority of developing countries are grappling with this problem, and every country in South Asia is ranked among the top ones worldwide. In South Asia, Afghanistan has been identified as the third worst-affected nation, while India is ranked twenty-second. In the Sri Lankan context, the brain drain value is 7.6 index points by 2023, and Sri Lanka is ranked 20th globally while holding the 9th place position in the South Asian region. Brain drains as a national threat that presents a generation hungry for massive success of which we just heard and are yet to experience.

Moreover, National security has been reinterpreted by non-traditional threats that go beyond traditional challenges. The concept of security was brought into rostrum in the 1994 Human Development Report, emphasizing security with people is most ideal rather than territories as well as development rather than weapons. Therefore, the current disclosure addresses security challenges related to every aspect in the society including economy, health, environment and etc. According to Katheryn and Elta (2020) health is a sort of security components, which is vital to establish security well-being in a country. As a new pillar of national security, health security has brought about the threshold on national insecurity due to health disasters in modern world and health changes such as brain drain of healthcare professionals.

### Doctor's Brain Drain in Sri Lanka

There is a significant brain drain out of Sri Lanka today and it affects practically every sector including the educational sector and the health sector. However, it heavily has contributed to Sri Lanka's health sector's collapse. According to the Annual Health Bulletin for 2020, Sri Lanka has 150,273 healthcare workers, including lab technicians, radiographers, therapists, and medical attendants. Amongst the total, 2730 medical specialists, 21,450 doctors, 1564 dentists, 46,385 nurses, and 8525 midwives. Statistics from the Ministry of Health (MOH) show that in 2018, 240 medical experts who had been educated during the previous two years returned to Sri Lanka, whereas 267 potential specialists had left the country to pursue their education abroad. In terms of the year 2019, 290 future medical professionals had left Sri Lanka

for overseas training, whereas 262 of them had returned after their training had taken place just one or two years earlier. Thus, 191 potential medical specialists had also left the country. This poses a serious threat to Sri Lanka's state of health. According to the Ministry of Health (2023) when a doctor travels abroad, they engage in an agreement that after getting their foreign training, they would return to Sri Lanka to serve for four years for each year of their overseas training. If the foreign training lasted two years, the professional would have to serve the nation for eight years. Doctors who travel abroad without notifying their patients must face costs. A doctor will receive a Vendor on Premise (VOP) notice and be blacklisted if they quit the practice unexpectedly. Considering data, this contract did not actually take effect. As a result, according to the Ministry of Health, the exodus of medical professionals has had a substantial influence on the healthcare sector in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Ashoka Gunarathne of the Specialist Doctor's Association reportedly stated at the press conference (2023), Sri Lanka now employs only 2,000 consultants, or 50% of the number required. The ideal number of consultants in Sri Lanka would be 4,000. According to Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) data in a year, (period 30.08.2022 – 30.08.2023) 526 medical officers on long term foreign leave, 200 doctors reportedly left without informing relevant authorities, 197 medical officers who left the job and 71 medical officers retired. The medical workers who left the country without informing the appropriate authorities have prompted the Sri Lankan health ministry to take action. It's should be all eye are open for this matter, otherwise it could seriously threaten the public's health security in Sri Lanka.

### **Push and pull Factors**

According to Young (2020), brain drain can occur due to geographic, organizational, and industrial factors and there are several pull and push factors for doctors to leave the country. However, in Sri Lanka, the circular and repetitive distress incurred in the past due to various situations such as the 88/89 rebels, the 30-year internal war, and terrorist assaults have resulted in a harmful brain drain. Hence, the severe and significant brain drain occurring in Sri Lanka right now, is primarily due to political and economic factors like the country's economic downturn, political unrest, human rights violations, bureaucracy, lack of national development policies, bribery and corruption, lack of employment opportunities, generally at low levels of social freedom, high-income tax, lack of future vision, high energy prices, and a lack of jobs in their chosen fields. The country's hyperinflation has prevented medical pay from rising, making it difficult for doctors to make ends meet. Additionally, the government's policies and plans have let doctors down in every aspect.

As an example, salary is a major factor in keeping healthcare workers. The Former President of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA), Prof. Karunathilake claimed

that while there is a misunderstanding that doctors have profitable private practices, the truth is that less than 30% of them do so, and not all of them are financially successful. Doctors are now even more financially disadvantaged as a result of the latest tax amendments. The former President of Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) stated that it is critical to address these financial issues in order to recruit and keep skilled medical specialists. Due to the significant income disparity, tax system, socio-political context, people are becoming increasingly frustrated and looking for opportunities elsewhere.

Not only the destination country's favorable salary rates, predicted increased quality of life, freedom or independence but also the growing need for workers in the host country for a better future is a common attitude and a dream among many educated adolescents from urban and rural background. Moreover, several pull factors are also suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO) to address the issue of doctors leaving the country. WHO suggests a multidimensional strategy that includes financial, non-financial incentives, and legislative measures. Addressing macro-level factors such as the political and economic climate, safety, and security is necessary to create an environment that motivates doctors to remain and serve.

Additionally, other advantages such as better housing, suitable educational opportunities for their children, and better transit options in remote regions must be offered. Further, legislative procedures must be put in place to guarantee the fair and impartial hiring and placement of doctors in the public sector. However, due to this unrestricted migration of doctors, Sri Lanka's health sector and overall health security are currently in a very critical state therefore, the government needs to address this crisis. The push and pull elements should first be determined by the government and should take the lead in putting policies into place that will lessen push factors. Otherwise, Sri Lanka's healthcare system will be gradually decimated.

### **Pros and cons**

Brain drain leads to both pros and cons in a country in various ways. The gravity of positive and negative consequences varies from nation to nation due to development disparities and other sorts of domestic issues in the mother country. In considering the benefits to the countries, such as the reduction of unemployment, the remittances that help developing nations, and the skills and contacts that migrants bring back with them. When seen generally in a country like India, migration always has positive economic, political, and social effects. Indians and persons of Indian origin hold significant positions, like Satya Nadella, Kamal Harris, and Rishi Sunak etc. It assists them in maintaining their nation's name as a brand name. Nevertheless, great Indian cultural effects are currently generalized worldwide due to the shared culture of migration of Indians in various parts of the globe where evidentially, yoga and Indian



cuisine could be taken as examples. Further, the dispersion of Indians around the globe would definitely assist the government of India to enhance diplomatic relations and impose modest strategies to develop ties with other countries. Thus, Singapore could be taken as an example of diplomatic ties maintained with Modi's Look-East strategy which houses a large number of Indians in the country. When it comes to the Sri Lankan healthcare sector, there are a number of positive impact of doctors migrating, such as it will help promote the Sri Lankan brand by showcasing the expertise of our country's medical professionals when they offer their services to other nations. Additionally, Sri Lankan medical education can enhance its reputation worldwide.

Today, there is a growing trend among doctors in Sri Lanka not to return after studying abroad. The ratio of doctors returning to Sri Lanka is only 4:1. Therefore, it can be noted that there is a real danger of Sri Lanka losing its massive number of doctors, which would have a significant impact on its health sector. Not just one field but all fields are suffering greatly from the current brain drain in Sri Lanka as most of the sectors are interconnected. In the current context, medical faculties in universities are in danger of closing their department as a result of the shortage of professors.

The Rajarata University, Faculty of Medicine, Dean Dr. P.H.G Janaka Pushpakumara emphasized, that nowadays academic activities are grappling with many challenges because of the shortage of lectures. Further, according to the Christian Science Monitor news organization, doctor's migration has a direct impact on the quality of medical education in Sri Lanka. Senior doctors with decades of experience in the medical field, guided medical students previously and transmitted their skills to students. However, more experienced doctors are leaving the country at the moment and raising an issue of who is going to teach the future medical professionals because we can't produce doctors overnight. Another drawback of it is that the health sector has suffered significantly due to uncontrolled departure of doctors, and as a result, the medical professionals in this country are also struggling tremendously. However, while experts and officials struggle to come up with solutions, a large number of doctors and other professionals are now departing the country. The consequences will be felt for years to come if Sri Lanka is unable to stop the migration or replenish its supply of medical professionals. Further, this also raises doubts about Sri Lanka's ability to control it due to the lack of doctors in the country if it were to face a situation such as the Covid epidemic again. In addition to that, the shortage of doctors affected patients directly. Patients are having to wait longer for appointments, fill out more paperwork, go to more clinics for treatment, and pay more money, all of which result in less quality treatment since doctors are overworked. As an example, the Anuradhapura Teaching Hospital recently had to close temporarily. Sixty patients can



be treated at once, but because nine of the hospital's doctors, including four pediatricians, have left the service, patients who were there at the time had to be transferred to other hospitals. Considering the aforementioned information, a significant question regarding Sri Lanka's medical education and quality of health in the future appears. The government should take action to prevent this situation because prevention is always better than cure.

### **Solutions and Recommendations**

There is a great necessity to develop a mechanism to provide alternatives for push factors related to doctor's brain drain. Doctors should be kept from leaving the country in the first instance in order to avert the disaster. Prior to offering effective solutions, the factors that have affected it must first be accurately identified. However, the government has made a number of efforts to make things better situation thus far. The Ministry of Health recognized the grave nature of the circumstance and the demand for immediate action. According to MOH, the Government has taken measures to improve the intake of doctors and plans to send about 1,500 doctors to rural districts starting on July 27. In addition, until a Cabinet decision, the age of retirement for doctors in medicine has been temporarily raised to 63 years. According to agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Minister pledged that recruitment efforts will continue after September. The severe lack of healthcare personnel would be addressed by the creation of a comprehensive national programme. Further, there is no doubt that medical education in Sri Lanka is widely recognized throughout the world. Therefore, Sri Lanka should be capacitated to enroll and train foreign students in medicine while also making an enormous profit. Although Sri Lanka keeps running these programs, they still need to be expanded. The university infrastructure should also be enhanced in comparison to that. The authorities must do anything necessary to keep the high standard of free healthcare that existed in Sri Lanka from collapsing. Finally, the government must work more efficiently to manage the current situation of limitless migration of doctors and implement the necessary actions to strengthen Sri Lanka's healthcare system without collapse.



*WDS Madhavi is an Intern (Research) at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), the premier think tank on National Security established and functioning under the Ministry of Defence. The opinion expressed is her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute or the Ministry of Defence.*



# The Strategic Impact of Military Drone Proliferation on Indo-Pacific Maritime Security

By Commander Amila Prasanga

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## Introduction

The rapid proliferation of military drones in the Indo-Pacific region has become a crucial feature of contemporary maritime security dynamics. Unmanned aerial systems (UAS), commonly known as drones, have revolutionized the way naval operations are conducted, presenting both challenges and opportunities for [regional security](#). Understanding the strategic impact of this technological advancement is essential for shaping effective policies, strategies, and operational concepts in the Indo-Pacific region.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the deployment and utilization of military drones across the Indo-Pacific region. Various countries in the region have invested heavily in developing and acquiring these unmanned systems, aiming to bolster their defense capabilities and gain a competitive edge in the maritime domain. This proliferation has resulted in a diverse range of drone technologies and capabilities being deployed in the region, transforming the [strategic landscape](#). The strategic implications of military drone proliferation in the Indo-Pacific region cannot be underestimated. Drones have reshaped traditional naval operations, offering advanced surveillance, reconnaissance, and strike capabilities. Their ability to operate in contested areas, gather real-time intelligence, and project power with minimal risk to human lives has fundamentally altered the [dynamics of maritime security](#). Understanding the strategic impact of drone proliferation is vital for assessing regional power balances, potential conflicts, and cooperative security efforts.

This comprehensive analysis aims to unveil the strategic impact of military drone proliferation on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region. Through a combination of in-depth research and empirical analysis, this paper seeks to achieve several objectives. First, it assesses the current landscape of military drone proliferation in the Indo-Pacific, including the types of drones deployed and the countries involved. Second, it explores the strategic implications of drone proliferation on maritime security, investigating shifts in naval doctrines, force projection strategies, and asymmetric warfare dynamics. Furthermore, the study examines the challenges and opportunities for Indo-Pacific navies in integrating drones into their operational frameworks. Finally, it provides actionable recommendations for policymakers and

military leaders to effectively respond to the strategic impact of drone proliferation. By shedding light on the complex interplay between drone technology and maritime security, this paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of the evolving regional security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific.

### **Overview of Military Drones in the Indo-Pacific Region**

The Indo-Pacific region has witnessed a significant diversification in the types and capabilities of military drones deployed by various countries. These UAS encompass a wide range of platforms, including reconnaissance drones, combat drones, and unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs). These drones possess varying capabilities such as long-range surveillance, real-time data gathering, target identification, precision strikes, and electronic warfare capabilities. Some advanced drones even feature autonomous capabilities and [stealth technology](#), further enhancing their effectiveness in the maritime domain.

Several major countries in the Indo-Pacific region have been actively engaged in the [proliferation of military drones](#). These include regional powers such as China, the United States, India, Japan, and Australia. Each country has its unique motivations for drone development and deployment. China, for instance, has focused on expanding its regional influence and protecting its maritime interests, while the United States has aimed to maintain its naval supremacy and support its allies. India, Japan, and Australia have sought to enhance their maritime capabilities and bolster their strategic postures in the region. The deployment of military drones in maritime operations in the Indo-Pacific region has witnessed notable trends and patterns. Countries have increasingly utilized drones for surveillance and reconnaissance missions to gather intelligence, monitor maritime activities, and safeguard territorial waters. Additionally, drones have been employed for maritime domain awareness, border surveillance, anti-piracy operations, and maritime interdiction. The integration of drones into naval task forces and their coordination with other assets, such as surface vessels and submarines, has become more prevalent. Furthermore, there is an increasing emphasis on the development of [swarming capabilities](#), enabling multiple drones to operate collaboratively and autonomously, which has the potential to significantly impact future maritime operations.

Understanding the types, capabilities, and motivations behind military drone proliferation in the Indo-Pacific region is essential to comprehend the evolving dynamics of maritime security. Analyzing current trends and patterns of drone deployment provides valuable insights into the changing strategies and capabilities of regional actors. This knowledge serves as a foundation for assessing the strategic implications and potential challenges posed by the increased utilization of military drones in the Indo-Pacific maritime domain.



### **Strategic Implications of Drone Proliferation on Maritime Security**

The proliferation of military drones in the Indo-Pacific region has necessitated significant shifts in naval doctrines and operational concepts. Traditional naval strategies are being reevaluated and modified to incorporate the capabilities offered by drones. This includes the development of [new concepts of operations \(CONOPS\)](#) that maximize the advantages of drones in intelligence gathering, surveillance, and strike missions. Navies are increasingly integrating drones into their operational frameworks, redefining the roles and responsibilities of naval assets and personnel.

One of the most significant strategic implications of drone proliferation is the enhanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities they provide. Drones equipped with advanced sensors and imaging systems can gather real-time data, monitor maritime activities, and detect potential threats with a [high level of precision](#). This enables naval forces to maintain a comprehensive situational awareness, identify potential risks, and make informed decisions in a timely manner. The integration of drones into ISR operations has significantly expanded the coverage and effectiveness of maritime surveillance, enhancing overall maritime security. The integration of drones in maritime security has also impacted traditional naval assets and force projection strategies. Naval forces are adapting to the changing strategic landscape by incorporating drones as force multipliers, allowing for more efficient and flexible operations. Drones can extend the reach of naval assets, provide a persistent presence in contested areas, and contribute to deterrence efforts. This shift in force projection strategies has led to a [reevaluation](#) of the size, composition, and capabilities of naval fleets.

The proliferation of military drones in the Indo-Pacific region presents both challenges and opportunities for naval force modernization. While drones offer numerous advantages, their integration into naval operations also brings forth challenges. These include technological limitations, training requirements for drone operators, cybersecurity concerns, and legal and ethical considerations. Additionally, the [rapid advancement](#) of drone technology necessitates continuous investment and adaptation to remain at the forefront of naval capabilities. However, successfully leveraging the opportunities presented by drone proliferation can enhance naval effectiveness, improve response capabilities, and contribute to regional maritime security. Understanding the strategic implications of drone proliferation on maritime security is crucial for naval forces operating in the Indo-Pacific region. By adapting naval doctrines, capitalizing on enhanced ISR capabilities, reevaluating force projection strategies, and effectively addressing challenges and opportunities, navies can effectively navigate the evolving security landscape and contribute to the maintenance of regional stability.

### **Geopolitical Dynamics and Regional Security**

The proliferation of military drones in the Indo-Pacific region has intensified competition among countries, while also fostering [opportunities for cooperation](#). As countries invest in drone technology, there is a rivalry to develop and deploy advanced drones to gain a competitive edge. This competition has led to an increase in defense spending, technological advancements, and the pursuit of innovative operational concepts. However, the shared challenges and potential benefits of drone technology also create opportunities for cooperation. Countries may collaborate on research and development, information sharing, joint exercises, and the establishment of common standards and protocols for drone operations.

The widespread adoption of military drones in the Indo-Pacific region also has the potential to impact power dynamics and regional balance. Countries that effectively integrate and leverage drone capabilities may enhance their military effectiveness, influencing the [balance of power](#) in the region. Drones can provide a force multiplier effect, enabling smaller countries to project power and assert their interests. This could potentially lead to shifts in regional alliances, strategic alignments, and the redistribution of influence. The strategic implications of drone proliferation extend beyond the capabilities of individual countries and have implications for the broader regional security architecture.

The emergence of military drones as a critical component of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region has significant implications for strategic partnerships and alliances. Countries that possess advanced drone capabilities may strengthen existing partnerships and alliances by providing support, sharing knowledge, and conducting joint operations. Additionally, the integration of drones into existing cooperative frameworks, such as information sharing networks, maritime security initiatives, and multilateral exercises, can enhance the effectiveness of regional security cooperation. However, differing technological capabilities and [strategic interests](#) related to drone proliferation may also create challenges in forging and sustaining partnerships and alliances.

Understanding the geopolitical dynamics and regional security implications of military drone proliferation is essential for policymakers and military leaders in the Indo-Pacific region. The competition and cooperation surrounding drone technology, its impact on power dynamics and regional balance, and the implications for strategic partnerships and alliances shape the regional security environment. By analyzing these dynamics, countries can navigate the changing landscape, assess potential risks and opportunities, and make informed decisions to maintain stability, foster cooperation, and address shared security challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

### **Ethical and Legal Considerations**

The proliferation of military drones in the Indo-Pacific region raises ethical and legal concerns regarding targeted killings and the [use of force](#) in maritime operations. Drones equipped with precision strike capabilities have been utilized for targeted killings, raising questions about the legality and morality of such actions. The use of lethal force through drones in maritime operations requires a careful examination of legal frameworks, including international humanitarian law, human rights law, and the law of armed conflict. It is essential to establish clear guidelines and criteria for the use of force, ensuring transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal standards.

The increased deployment of military drones for surveillance activities in the maritime domain raises [privacy and human rights](#) concerns. Drones equipped with high-resolution cameras and sensors can collect vast amounts of data, including images and information about individuals and communities. The indiscriminate or unauthorized use of drones for surveillance can infringe upon privacy rights and violate human rights. It is imperative to establish robust safeguards, oversight mechanisms, and regulations to protect privacy rights, ensure data security, and mitigate potential abuses.

The use of military drones in the Indo-Pacific region necessitates adhering to international norms, promoting transparency, upholding human rights, and engaging in dialogue and cooperation. In doing so, countries can mitigate risks, build trust, and foster a conducive environment for the sustainable and ethical use of drones in maritime security operations. Compliance with these norms and frameworks is crucial to prevent misunderstandings, minimize the risk of conflict escalation, and maintain regional stability. Countries should actively engage in discussions and cooperation to develop common standards, share best practices, and enhance understanding of the legal implications of drone use in maritime security.

### **Technological Challenges and Opportunities**

The integration of drones into naval operations and command structures presents both challenges and opportunities. Effectively incorporating drones requires the development of compatible communication systems, [data integration protocols](#), and command and control mechanisms. This integration enables seamless coordination between manned and unmanned platforms, ensuring optimal utilization of resources and enhancing operational effectiveness. Navies must invest in developing interoperability standards, establishing efficient workflows, and adapting their organizational structures to fully leverage the capabilities of drones in maritime security.

The widespread adoption of military drones necessitates the training and skill development of drone operators and support personnel. Operating drones in a maritime environment requires specialized knowledge and expertise. Drone operators must possess a comprehensive understanding of the equipment, software, and [mission-specific requirements](#). Furthermore, support personnel, including maintenance technicians and data analysts, must be adequately trained to ensure the [reliability and effective](#) utilization of drone systems. Investing in training programs, simulation exercises, and continuous professional development is essential to build a skilled workforce capable of maximizing the potential of drones in naval operations.

The proliferation of military drones in the Indo-Pacific region has significant impacts on [defense industrial](#) capabilities and technology transfer. As countries develop and deploy drone systems, there is a need for domestic production capabilities, including research and development, manufacturing, and maintenance facilities. The acquisition and integration of drone technology may also involve technology transfer agreements between countries. These agreements have implications for national security, intellectual property rights, and industrial collaboration. Careful consideration of these factors is crucial to ensure sustainable defense industrial capabilities and to facilitate responsible technology transfer in the context of drone proliferation.

Navigating the technological challenges and opportunities associated with military drone proliferation requires proactive measures and strategic planning. By focusing on the integration of drones into naval operations and command structures, investing in training and skill development for personnel, and carefully managing defense industrial capabilities and technology transfer, countries can capitalize on the potential of drones to enhance maritime security. This will enable navies to effectively address emerging threats, improve operational efficiency, and maintain a competitive edge in the Indo-Pacific region.

### **Future Trajectories and Recommendations**

The future trajectories of drone technology and deployment in the Indo-Pacific region hold significant implications for maritime security. Anticipated developments include [advancements in drone capabilities](#), such as longer endurance, increased payload capacity, and improved autonomy. Additionally, the integration of [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) and machine learning algorithms is expected to enhance drone performance and decision-making capabilities. Understanding these anticipated developments is crucial for navies and policymakers to stay ahead of the curve and effectively adapt their strategies and operational concepts.

To address the strategic impact of military drone proliferation on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region, several policy recommendations can be put forth. First, navies and policymakers should prioritize the development of comprehensive regulatory frameworks and guidelines that ensure responsible and accountable use of military drones. This includes guidelines for the use of force, data protection, privacy, and compliance with international legal norms. Second, investments should be made in research and development, innovation, and acquisition programs to keep pace with evolving drone technologies. Navies should consider the procurement of advanced drones and the development of indigenous drone capabilities. Third, fostering regional cooperation and dialogue among Indo-Pacific navies is essential. Establishing information sharing mechanisms, conducting joint exercises, and promoting collaboration on drone-related research and development can enhance regional security and interoperability.

In the context of evolving drone technology and its impact on maritime security, collaborative efforts and information sharing are crucial for enhancing regional security in the Indo-Pacific. Navies should establish platforms for sharing best practices, lessons learned, and intelligence related to drone operations. This can facilitate a common understanding of emerging threats, enable the development of effective countermeasures, and enhance regional situational awareness. Additionally, regional security frameworks, such as ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum), ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA) can serve as platforms for dialogue and collaboration on drone-related security issues.

Finally, understanding future trajectories and providing recommendations is vital for Indo-Pacific navies and policymakers to navigate the strategic impact of military drone proliferation on maritime security. Anticipating developments in drone technology and deployment, formulating policy recommendations, and fostering collaborative efforts and information sharing will contribute to a more secure and stable Indo-Pacific region. By proactively addressing these aspects, navies can harness the potential of military drones while mitigating associated risks and challenges, thereby shaping the future of regional security dynamics.

## **Conclusion**

The strategic impact of military drone proliferation on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region necessitates proactive approaches. Navies and policymakers must recognize the transformative nature of drones and their implications for regional security. It is crucial to stay ahead of technological advancements, adapt operational concepts, and develop comprehensive regulatory frameworks. Proactive measures include investments in research and development, capacity-building programs, and



collaborative efforts among navies. By taking a proactive approach, navies can effectively address emerging challenges and leverage the opportunities presented by drone proliferation. While this analysis has shed light on the strategic impact of military drone proliferation on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region, further research is needed. The evolving nature of drone technology and its implications require continued monitoring and analysis. Future research should delve into specific aspects such as counter- drone measures, the impact on non-state actors, and the role of drones in asymmetric warfare. Additionally, interdisciplinary studies involving experts from the fields of law, ethics, technology, and international relations would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

In conclusion, proactive approaches, informed by research and analysis, are vital in addressing the strategic impact of military drone proliferation on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region. By embracing the opportunities, managing the challenges, and adhering to ethical and legal principles, navies and policymakers can effectively harness the potential of drones while maintaining regional stability and security. Continuous monitoring and further research will ensure that strategies and policies remain adaptive and responsive to the evolving dynamics of drone proliferation in the Indo-Pacific region.



*Commander Amila Prasanga is a Military Research Officer at the Institute of National Security Studies, the premier think tank on National Security established and functioning under the Ministry of Defence Sri Lanka. The opinion expressed is his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute or the Ministry of Defence, Sri Lanka.*



## Sri Lanka as an Educational Hub

By **Thamindu Devinda**

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The changing dynamics in the modern world, mainly, rely upon economic imperatives, which States emphasise on internal and external manifestos. Economy is a word that is being heard every day; a concept that carries a huge meaning. Reading daily newspapers, listening to and watching daily news and ‘economy’ is a word that never would be left without being heard and discussed, certainly more than one time a day. It can be defined as a “complex system of interrelated production, consumption, and exchange activities that ultimately determines how resources are allocated among all participants” (Kenton, 2023). A strong and effective economy works to retain and grow jobs and investment within a country (Clickner, 2012) which provides citizens with employment opportunities and increased living standards. In addition to that, it generates higher tax revenues which benefits the government (Pettinger, 2019) and allows government to use the revenues to provide the public good and services such as healthcare, social protection, education and basic public services (Sen, 2021). On the other hand, education is known as the backbone of a country, which plays a vital role in achieving sustainable development, as well as in strengthening social, cultural and integral development. It produces responsible citizens enriched with domestic values, who eventually contribute to the quality of the country’s workforce. In this way, the educational system of a country contributes to the development of the country (Alawattegama, 2020) and it shows that these two components are deeply connected and inter-related pillars that need consideration of any State in the world. This article is focusing on analysing the role of Sri Lanka as an educational hub for developing the Sri Lankan economy as well as the connection between economic development and national security.

### **Economic background**

Sri Lanka is known as a country with considerably superior social welfare in comparison to those of most countries with comparable income levels (Karlik et al. 1996). Addressing the economy of Sri Lanka, service, industries and agricultural sectors remain the largest contributing sectors (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2022).

At present, the country is experiencing a critical economic condition where inflation has resulted in the increasing level of prices of goods and services, including essential commodities. Inflation is not limited only to developing countries but also to others as well. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in 2022, Sri Lanka’s inflation rate was 57.2% whereas the global average of inflation remained at 10.1% (Ratnasabapathy, 2023).

## Educational

Being a South Asian country, Sri Lanka holds a leading position in the region in terms of literacy rate, gender parity and school enrolment rate as the Government provides free education from the primary level to university level without any marginalisation. (Ahmed, 2023). As a result of the free education policy, Sri Lanka has been able to achieve one of the highest literacy rates in the developing world, which is at 92% (Macrotrends, 2023) and above the world's average rate; 86% (Macrotrends, 2023). Despite the high literacy rate, as a result of the ongoing economic crisis, the increased rate of youth unemployment, and the competitiveness of State university entrance, an increasing number of Sri Lankan students migrate to other countries in search of better educational opportunities and thereafter obtain employment and residency visas in these countries (Weeraratne, Weerasekera and Bandara, 2022). Because of this, Sri Lanka loses a significant amount of human resources as well as around three billion USD a year, which roughly equals to 2.24% of the country's total economy. Hence, it is very important to address this issue and develop the path towards establishing Sri Lanka as an educational hub, which will help in reducing the number of Sri Lankan students who migrate for foreign education.

## Potential

At the global level, educational institutions are significant in generating economic advantages through domestic and international sources. Sri Lanka, being geographically centralised in South Asia, produces enough advantages to function as a central educational hub in the region and some of those advantages are as follows;

- **Sri Lanka's geographical location** – Sri Lanka's geographical location inking in the centre of the Indian Ocean with a significant stretch of a maritime boundary provides a great opportunity for Sri Lanka to implement maritime educational centres with international standards to attract international students, especially those who are from landlocked countries. CINEC Campus, the Ocean University of Sri Lanka, Mahapola Port and Maritime Academy and the Maritime Studies Division of University of Moratuwa are such examples and further establishment of such educational institutions with much more advanced technologies would greatly contribute towards achieving Sri Lanka's goal to rise as an educational hub.
- **International Climate Change University (ICCU)** - the President of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe proposed the idea of establishing a climate change university in Sri Lanka. According to the president, this will support “green, blue studies and provide room for scientists, environmentalists, researchers, policymakers, development practitioners and visiting researchers worldwide” (CFC Sri Lanka, 2023).

- **Higher literacy rate** - Sri Lanka has a literacy rate of 92% at present, which is higher than that of most other countries in the region, as well as the average global literacy rate (Macrotrends, 2023). This depicts the quality of Sri Lanka's education despite the economic difficulties and capacity to provide intellectual support while disseminating knowledge imperatives through educational centers.
- **Research opportunities** - Sri Lanka's unique geographical location, diverse culture and cultural heritage provide excellent opportunities for students to research in fields such as environmental sciences, social sciences, marine technology and archaeology.
- **Affordability** - When compared with top educational destinations in the world such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Russia, and the United States, Sri Lanka has the ability to provide quality education at a lower cost, which international students from Europe and North America would find significantly lower (Keystone, 2019).
- **Opportunities to explore** - Even though the country is small in size, it is the proud owner of a vast number of tourist destinations as well as a diverse society and culture. For any student, especially from the West, who is looking forward to travelling and gaining unique, indigenous experiences while studying in a foreign country, Sri Lanka can be their ideal destination. Having a rich culture, a diverse society, a rich wildlife experience, and many historical and religious destinations, Sri Lanka can provide foreign students with unforgettable experiences and memories (Keystone, 2019).

### **Initiative**

The president of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremasinghe said, "You are allowing billions of US dollars to go out, at least three billion USD. So not only can we retain that three billion USD, but if we do it right, we will be able to attract another 10 billion USD. We must do that" (The Sunday Times, 2022). Sri Lanka as a developing country is currently in a critical situation due to the ongoing economic crisis and developing the country into an educational hub would greatly help in increasing the economy which will invariably benefits for the sustainable development of the country.

Australia is one of the best examples of a country in which education significantly contributes to its economic development. International education has contributed over 37.6 billion AUD to Australia's economy in 2018 – 19, marking higher education as the country's third-largest export earner (Lucas, 2023). Considering Australia as an

example, it is not impossible for Sri Lanka to develop itself into an educational hub if the necessary steps are being taken properly. If Sri Lanka could earn an additional 10 billion USD per year by providing education for international students, it in return could significantly contribute to Sri Lanka's economic development. As of October 2023, Sri Lanka's total economy is 74.85 billion USD (IMF, 2023) and according to the above-mentioned numbers, Sri Lanka can increase its GNI by at least 7.48% if the plan to develop itself as an educational hub works out well.

### **Connection**

A Strong Economy is always the foundation of a strong country (The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2021). If the economy is declining, it leads to people's suffering, social unrest and political instability and even lowers the strength of the country's security. In the same way, if the economy is strong, all the other aspects of the country become strong, including the national security of the country. National security protects the economy of the country, while economic development could provide protection for national security. They are actually two sides of the same coin that a country should handle with a holistic approach (The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2021).

### **Conclusion**

Education is considered a fundamental human right, which every citizen in the world is entitled to. In the context of Sri Lanka, the country holds a leading position in the region in terms of literacy rate as a result of the Sri Lankan Government providing free education. At present, Sri Lanka's literacy rate is at 92%. As a way to overcome the current economic crisis in the country, the Sri Lankan President initiated the idea of developing Sri Lanka into an international educational hub. As it was mentioned in the speech by the president, if Sri Lanka could earn an additional 10 billion USD per year by providing education for international students, it in return could significantly contribute to Sri Lanka's economy.

### **Way forward**

Developing Sri Lanka as an international educational hub is not an easy task. Given the crisis in the country, it may take a lot of effort. Following are some recommended steps that the Sri Lankan government can follow, especially to improve the quality of education in the country and to attract foreign students.

Increase budget allocation for education – The Sri Lankan Government has allocated only 6.3% of the 2023 budget for education, which is Rs 232 billion and in the South Asian region, Sri Lanka is only above Bhutan in terms of budgetary allocation for education (The Sunday Times, 2022). Hence, it is necessary to increase the budgetary allocation to improve the quality of education.

Work on improving the global ranking of State universities – Sri Lankan State universities provide a high-quality education and it has been proven well. Despite the quality of the education, not a single Sri Lankan State university is ranked between the top 1,000 universities in the world (Dias and Eliatamby, 2020). Academic reputation is not the only factor which is considered when ranking a university in the global level. Academic reputation including many other factors such as employer reputation, portion of international faculty, portion of international students, staff to student ratio, research productivity and international collaboration are taken into account when ranking universities in the global level (Abeysekera, 2020). Global ranking of a university plays a significant role in attracting foreign students. Hence, it is important to focus not only on the academic reputation, but also the other mentioned factors and work on improving the global ranking of Sri Lankan universities.

Educational collaboration with regional and international universities – To provide quality education for both Sri Lankan and foreign students, Sri Lankan universities can collaborate with regional and international level universities. This could also include the introduction of exchange university programmes which allows students to gain a global experience in education.

Focus on expanding the university programmes that have global job opportunities – An educational hub must provide programmes that allow students to explore global-level job opportunities. It is significant that almost every Sri Lankan university provided programmes in fields such as engineering and technology, tourism, healthcare, computer science and maritime education which provide students with global job opportunities. Expanding and improving such programmes through further specialised institutions would greatly contribute in increasing the quality of these programmes.



*Thamindu Devinda is an Intern (Research) at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*

# Exploring the Link: Economic Insecurity as a Growing Threat to National Security

By **Kalpani Gunathilaka**

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Economic security and national security are comprehensive concepts open to various interpretations across diverse academic fields, as well as in science, culture, policy, and society. It is crucial to understand the connection between these two concepts due to their significant impact on a nation's security.

## **Econ. security & Nat. security**

Economic security is a crucial element of overall wellbeing, hinging on stability and predictability. Its interpretation varies, with the International Labour Organisation defining it as basic social security, encompassing health, education, dwelling, information, and work-related security. The International Committee of the Red Cross sees it as the sustainable and dignified fulfilment of essential needs. In essence, economic security denotes the ability of individuals to consistently meet their fundamental needs. Insufficient resources for necessities like food, shelter, and healthcare lead to economic insecurity. This condition has a profound impact on happiness and contributes to societal growth and stability. Nations providing high economic security to citizens tend to exhibit higher levels of happiness.

Economic security also assumes significance in the realm of non-traditional security, addressing issues like climate change, resource scarcity, infectious diseases, human trafficking, and large-scale migration. Economic insecurity emerges as a significant non-traditional threat to national security. National security itself is multifaceted, encompassing aspects like defence, counter intelligence, foreign relations, international and internal security. The United Nations defines it as a state's ability to protect its citizenry, while the United States Department of Justice outlines a comprehensive framework involving defence, intelligence, and counter terrorism efforts. K.R. Holmes's "What is National Security?" extensively examined the components of national security, and defined national security as the comprehensive protection of the entire nation. Emphasising its top priority in shielding the nation and its citizens from external threats, he highlighted the role of the armed forces and safeguarding state secrets. Holmes broadened the scope, asserting that national security encompasses not only defence but also the protection of economic, geopolitical, and other interests.

### **Interplay between econ. security & nat. security**

In the era of globalisation and the increasing economic interconnection observed in recent decades, the nexus between the economy and national security has grown progressively intricate. The wellbeing and adaptability of our nation's economy are now intricately linked to our national security. Definitions of national security now encompass a substantial economic dimension, making it difficult to separate the lines between economic considerations and matters of national security. Various economic factors and characteristics unique to each country play a pivotal role in shaping their national security. These factors and attributes can encompass a heavy reliance on international trade within vital sectors, minimum restrictions on foreign direct investment, deficits in essential skills like digital literacy, science, engineering, and information and communications technology, as well as a significant dependence on the importation of raw materials. It is imperative to acknowledge that security constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for prosperity, and that conversely, prosperity is a fundamental prerequisite for security.

When a country's economy is stable and secure, it helps to safeguard the nation's security. However, if a country's economy experiences prolonged instability, characterised by soaring unemployment, high inflation, dwindling foreign exchange reserves, sluggish economic growth, and increased poverty, it damages the economic and social wellbeing of its people. This, in turn, creates social unrest within the country, which poses a threat to internal security and, consequently, national security. Social unrest creates vulnerabilities that external parties may exploit, especially when a financially unstable country experiences public dissatisfaction with its governance. Hence, external threats can emerge during such precarious circumstances. According to various definitions, national security encompasses dimensions beyond economic security, including health related security, social and political security, military security, geopolitical security, environmental security, educational security, food security, cyber security, and the challenges of terrorism and extremism. However, it is essential to underscore that economic hardships in a country can exacerbate all these dimensions, ultimately jeopardising national security. Despite its pivotal role, the economic aspect of national security remains under emphasised and lacks the attention it rightly deserves.

### **The current state**

The Sri Lankan economy is grappling with an unprecedented crisis driven by a confluence of internal and external factors. The aftermath of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks drastically reduced the tourism income, a significant revenue source. The subsequent onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 exacerbated the economic collapse, escalating healthcare expenses, leading to a surge in unemployment, and reducing foreign remittances. In 2021, a policy decision to ban chemical fertiliser



affected the agricultural sector, jeopardising food security. The Russia-Ukraine war which began last year (in 2022) further compounded issues, disrupting the import and export of vital goods like petroleum, wheat, and chemicals, crucial for Sri Lanka's economy. Foreign exchange shortages from debt repayment, reduced tourist earnings, and diminished remittances led to a decline in importing essential goods, causing crises in medicine, fuel, and power. This multifaceted crisis has inflicted a long-term economic downturn, escalating unemployment, inflation, diminished foreign reserves, increased foreign debt, social unrest, declining remittances, and a collapse in tourism. All sectors face immense challenges, forcing the closure of emerging businesses due to financial constraints, with employers struggling to meet the payroll amidst rising living costs. The economic landscape is destroyed by a complex web of interconnected issues, demanding comprehensive and strategic interventions for recovery.

### **How does econ. insecurity threatens nat. security?**

During times of economic downturn, the impact is felt by the entire population, regardless of their wealth. However, the extent of this impact can vary, typically resulting in a more pronounced effect on lower and middle-income individuals rather than the affluent. Their standard of living declines during these challenging periods, and prolonged economic difficulties prevent them from meeting their fundamental needs like food, housing, and access to healthcare and education. Additionally, they are forced to give up their aspirations due to a lack of financial resources, which can lead to disappointment with the government in power, potentially driving social unrest. In response, people may rise against the government, advocating for a change in the leadership in the hope of a better future.

The case of the “aragalaya” (a public movement that sought the ouster of the previous Government led by then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa) in Sri Lanka serves as a notable example of this phenomenon. According to the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) in May of this year (2023), the “aragalaya” is a consequence of an economic crisis burdening the population. They argue that Sri Lanka's economic trajectory in 2022 contributed to a political crisis in the country, stemming from mismanagement and controversial policies that caused an unprecedented economic crisis. Between March and July 2022, Sri Lankans took to the streets to voice their discontent with the existing Government at the time, and what was different about these protests was that they were not tied to a specific political party or a single organised group. People from various backgrounds, including different ethnicities, religions, ages, and genders, participated in these demonstrations, as highlighted by the CPA in their analysis of the “aragalaya”. When economic crises and social unrest coincide, it creates an environment conducive to both internal and external terrorist attacks. Various extremist groups and entities with aggressive intentions towards our nation



seize the opportunity during such times, attempting to exploit the social unrest to infiltrate and sow discord within the country.

As economic security is intricately linked to all aspects of national security, a country requires adequate financing with economic stability to safeguard all dimensions of national security. Without economic security, it becomes challenging for a nation to maintain its overall security. Hence, a stable and robust economy is a fundamental pillar in ensuring the comprehensive security of a country, as it underpins the resources and capabilities needed to address a wide array of security challenges and to protect its citizens' welfare and interests.

### **Conclusion and way forward**

Economic security has become an increasingly vital aspect of national security, and these two dimensions are inherently interconnected. Where there is no economic security in a country, its national security is definitely threatened. Therefore, it is imperative to take proactive measures to ensure economic security, thereby strengthening the overall national security. A strong economy serves to protect the people, uphold their way of life, and sustain the people's power. Rebuilding economic strength domestically and upholding the international economic system will not only enhance security but also advance prosperity and peace. As a significant suggestion to safeguard economic stability, the promotion of tax reform is necessary in creating a fairer, simpler, and pro-growth tax code, encouraging the generation of higher wage jobs and providing tax relief to middle income families. Reducing business tax rates also enhances the competitiveness of corporations. Furthermore, the improvement of infrastructure is another avenue for bolstering economic security. This involves collaboration between the government and private industry to enhance seaports, airports, roads, railways, waterways, and telecommunications. These improvements contribute to environmental wellbeing, national competitiveness, and an enhanced quality of life. According to the weekly economic indicators released by the Central Bank (16 June, 2023), national debt has surged to Rs. 27,849.2 billion by the end of January 2023, representing a significant long term threat to Sri Lanka's prosperity and thereby, to national security. By adopting measures such as reducing spending, modernising the tax system, improving government efficiency, and enhancing global competitiveness for businesses, the economy can expand, making the existing debt more manageable. It is essential to follow high standards in trade and investment agreements pertaining to intellectual property, agriculture, digital trade, labour, and environmental concerns. Sri Lanka should seek partnerships with other nations to expand export markets, encourage free market competition, and stimulate growth in the private sector. Government entities must also enhance their understanding of global science and technology trends and how these trends may influence or undermine programmes and strategies. These steps can be instrumental in boosting

the economy while also ensuring economic security within the country, consequently safeguarding the overall security of the nation.



*Kalpani Gunathilaka is a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*

# Combating Online Falsehoods: Striking Balance between Freedom of Expression and National Security in Sri Lanka

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige

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## Abstract

In ancient times, war was militaristic. It was about weapons, bullets and barricades. However, at present, war is fought by way of information. In the digital age, fighting a war and winning a war are challenges. Online falsehoods are a threat that any country faces. The deliberate twisting of stories, hiding the truth, divulging sensitive information, misleading the public, and arousal of suspicion leads to devastating circumstances. Sri Lanka is a victim of online falsehoods. Therefore, the research problem looks into how Sri Lanka can effectively balance the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression with the need to protect national security in the face of online falsehoods and manipulations, considering the inherent conflict between these two concerns. This is finely depicted in the post-war context of Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is important to identify the degree of falsehoods. In light of that, the government is tasked with striking a balance between national security and freedom of expression. There should be no liberty to entertain online falsehoods under the pretense of national security. Sri Lanka has guaranteed freedom of expression by the Constitution, the supreme law of the country. Nonetheless, the Constitution has given prominence to national security by restraining the right of freedom of expression. These two concerns are inclined to conflict with one another. Therefore, the research problem is the need to dissuade this conflict to neutralize the battle even though the task is inherently grueling. The research has attained the objectives and answered regarding online falsehoods, and the threats incurred by it to national security, freedom of expression, and the impact on national security. Moreover, the means and ways to strike a balance between national security and freedom of expression and in the end, the research has provided recommendations to mitigate and combat online falsehoods. The research is qualitative in nature and has utilized secondary sources to achieve a better analysis. In the end, the research has attempted to prove the need to mitigate and combat online falsehoods whilst abiding by freedom of expression and national security concerns in Sri Lanka.

**KEYWORDS:** Freedom of Expression, National Security, Online Falsehoods, Sri Lanka

## Introduction

The new war in the world has changed. In the modern world, war does not only happen by way of weapons. The traditional strategy of war has shifted to information warfare. The wide availability of social media, cost-effectiveness, information literacy and timely nature of online platforms have become a haven for terrorists, ill-motivated politicians and profit-driven individuals. They utilize online platforms to create and disseminate false information, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. In Sri Lanka, this was witnessed during COVID-19 Pandemic, in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday Attack, and the conduct of LTTE and its international networks. Undoubtedly, online falsehoods and manipulations have become apex threats to national security as it results in twisting reality, modifying the original content and inciting hatred.

When denigrating and preventing online falsehoods, it is important to identify what amounts online falsehoods should persist, which is a strenuous task. According to Singapore's Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA), falsehood is, "a statement of fact that is false or misleading". It is imperative to note that, falsehoods do not cover opinions, criticisms, satire or parody. In that case, public authorities, private entities as well and the public, in general, must understand and practice information literacy. It is "the ability to find, evaluate, organize, use and communicate information in all its various formats, most notably in situations requiring decision making, problem-solving, or the acquisition of knowledge".

Government should not act arbitrarily, illegally, maliciously and beyond its scope to suppress the freedom of expression. The reason is that government is duty-bound to protect and promote freedom of expression, which is guaranteed as a fundamental right in the 1978. Constitution of Sri Lanka, the supreme law of the country. In addition, Sri Lanka has also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees the freedom of expression. Nonetheless, there are limitations to the right of freedom of expression in the interest of national security. These limitations include constitutional limitations and limitations stipulated in the Public Security Ordinance (PSO) and Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Unlike Singapore and Vietnam, Sri Lanka does not have an Act on Protection from Online Falsehoods. Therefore, Sri Lanka has to resort to the available laws and judicial precedents to serve justice, as well as to set precedents to prevent existing as well as future harm. In light of that, Sri Lanka must identify online falsehoods and criminalize them as it risks national security. The research focuses on and will explore online falsehoods and the threats incurred by them to national security and the freedom of expression and the impact on national security. Furthermore, the research attempts to strike a balance between national security and freedom of expression. In the end, the research will provide recommendations to combat online falsehoods whilst abiding

by the law.

### **Literature review**

According to, (Patabendige,2022), “At present, determining what a fact is and what is fake has become an arduous task. The reason is that social media is the biggest information- sharing platform. In the past, information/ communication was penned or inked, heard or watched, but now, the readers and spectators are able to interact and interpret. Therefore, it is crystal clear that war has changed from a physical aspect to an online space. As a result of wide availability, cost efficiency, productivity, and technical capability, social media has become eye candy, yet deceiving for users. Social media has become the lifeblood of information-sharing platforms. As much as it caters for the day today's needs, on the other hand, social media intrudes on personal space and results in privacy violations at certain points. Content created, generated, modified, and disseminated online does not end the way it started.” This research fully agrees with the author’s perspective and showcases how social media utilized to spread falsehoods and cause manipulations.

As mentioned by Hacıyakupoglu et al. (2018) in “Countering Fake News a Survey of Recent Global Initiatives”, “until today most of the proposed statutes criminalizing falsehoods have not directly addressed the cross-border nature of the offence.” However, when perusing Germany’s Network Enforcement Act, the Act mandated the need and the establishment of a local contact point so that transnational technical companies could cooperate. This not only highlights the nature of the offence but also depicts its effect of it, which is the offence, has no borders. The authors further mention the proposed Honest Ads Act; generally, the Act is framed in terms of protecting the domestic order of the United States and targeting the role of non-citizens. Further, to prevent the “contributions, payments and disbursements for electioneering communications, which is in the form of online advertising”. Agreeing with the authors, the researcher will portray the necessity of having separate legislation, which has extra-territorial application.

Jones, (2019) has mentioned in “Review of Online Disinformation and Political Discourse Applying a Human Rights Framework”, that “determining whether a message is appealing is likely to be read and shared is a matter which widely depends not on its veracity, but on four characteristics”. The characteristics mentioned by Jones are provocation of emotional response; the presence of a powerful visual component; a strong narrative and finally repetition. According to him, the most successful and problematic content engages moral outrage as well as ‘high-arousal’ of emotions, which are superiority, anger, fear as well as mistrust. To influence the behaviour of a person, the key measure is to capture the emotion. Firstly, even though the message is perceived as shocking and false, when repeated and reiterated, the so-called information becomes normal and acceptable as clearly explained by the author.

Therefore, in light of that, the researcher has discussed the methods of online falsehoods in the Sri Lankan context and their detrimental impacts. Solove (2013), in “The First Amendment as Criminal Procedure”, has mentioned that “Communicators will also be deterred if speech or association tends to get them placed on a watch list or in a situation such as getting subjected to additional airport screening”. Regardless of the additional burden, it is crucial to understand that, in terms of public safety and public benefit, precedence should be vested in national security. Since freedom of expression and national security, concerns are conflicting and contradicting, the research has explained them separately and weight them against one another and has attempted to strike a balance.

As stated by (Sirohi 2021) in “Pegasus in the Room: Law of Surveillance and National Security’s Alibi”, the right to privacy in the context of surveillance was first argued in 1996 in the case of People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) Union of India, the case was filed as a matter of Public Interest Litigation, which challenged the constitutional validity of Section 5(2) of the IT Act of 1885. The said Act allows interception by authorized agencies. The Supreme Court held that the provision conforms with the Constitution. However, the court did not take the right to privacy lightly. The court by shielding the right to privacy stressed the fact that to be intercepted by a public authority, two preconditions must be satisfied. The exceptions were ‘public emergency’ as well as the ground in the ‘interest of public safety. In this research, the researcher has analysed the exceptions to freedom of expression and its imperativeness.

According to (Han 2020), in “Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act Regulating Fake News to Maintain Public Trust in Singapore”, public trust does not lie solely in the management of falsehoods; it also vests in government’s capacity, accountability and willingness to engage in alternative perspectives. The author has further mentioned that ‘trust’, in the political process is not only about clarifying falsehoods regarding the government. It also extends to government’s will to engage the public in the policymaking process. The research will shed light on the duties of government. Research goes a step beyond and discusses the measures that government can utilize to prevent and mitigate threats by online falsehoods.

### **Research Methodology**

Online falsehoods and manipulations are apex threats to national security. Sri Lanka has guaranteed freedom of expression by the Constitution, the supreme law of the country. Nonetheless, the Constitution has given prominence to national security by restraining the right of freedom of expression. These two concerns are inclined to conflict with one another. The only way and the research problem the researcher has identified are the need to dissuade this conflict, to neutralize the battle even though

the task is inherently gruelling. To do so, the researcher has utilized a qualitative perspective, in which the researcher has critically analysed already existing sources and has arrived at a conclusion. The research has used secondary sources such as books, journal articles, proceedings and reports. The research is supplemented by an array of legislations including, the Sri Lankan Constitution 1978, Penal Code, Computer Crimes Act, Prevention of Terrorism Act and Regulations, Police Ordinance, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Act No. 14 of 1995 and Singapore's Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act.

## **Analysis**

### **Online Falsehoods and its threat to national security Falsehoods**

As mentioned in the introduction, with advanced technology information is readily accessible. Due to the free flow of information and availability, ascertaining the reliability of the information has become a crucial task. One such major hurdle is "falsehoods" happening in the online context. Even though there is no uniform definition for falsehoods, when perusing literature, there are different definitions provided. Pal & Banerjee, (2019) has mentioned that "online falsehood encompasses the phenomenon whereby unfounded and unverified online messages leave behind their digital footprint in the form of texts," As stated by Murillo (2019), a false statement is "far the broadest federal statute criminalizing 'lying' as per 18 U.S.C. § 1001, (United States Code) which makes it a crime to "knowingly and willfully. . . make any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation" in the course of "any matter within the jurisdiction of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch" of the federal government. There's no requirement that the statement is under oath." Here, the USC has revolved around false statements with Mens rea, which means when there is a guilty mind. Nonetheless, this definition on 'false are mentioned here for the benefit of explaining the gravity of falsehoods, which also has the elements of a false statement. However, the question arises as to whether there is a need to incorporate falsehoods as a strict liability crime, where the mental element is wholly disregarded.

According to the understanding of the researcher, so far, the versatile well-established definition provided for online falsehoods is the definition provided in, Singapore's Prevention of Falsehoods and Manipulations Act 2019. According to the Act, a "false statement of fact" is defined as a "false or misleading statement which a reasonable person would consider to be a representation of fact". Falsehoods are often synonyms and called misinformation, disinformation and false news. Even though these are not uniform, when explaining falsehoods, it is crucial to define others as well. Accordingly, Budgar, (2022) has stated that "Misinformation contains content that is false, misleading, or taken out of context but without any intent to deceive." Budgar,





(2022) further states, “Disinformation is false or misleading content purposefully created with an intent to deceive and cause harm. There are three factors behind disinformation. Firstly, political power or influence, secondly, profit or the desire to create chaos and the final factor is to confuse.” In addition, the term fake news can be factually incorrect information which is shared deliberately to disseminate misinformation. Such information looks credible and convincing and is able to grab the attention resulting in opinion. Individuals or a group of individuals can also create this news. The conduct will be a resultant effect of interests of their own; further, it can also be initiated and motivated by an external party/ third party. The source goes on to mention that the said misinformation is driven by various agendas including economic or political.”

Vasu et al., (2018) have mentioned how fake news may be understood as a range of phenomena. According to them, there are five categories of fake news, 'Disinformation' which is committed and distributed to weaken national security, which can also be state-sponsored disinformation campaigns. 'Misinformation' falls under two categories, which are rumours circulated for or maybe as a part of the political agenda by a domestic group or rumours and falsehoods, which are dissented without a broad political aim or intention and can be caused with or without malicious intent. The fourth category is for entertainment purposes such as comedy and satire. Finally, falsehoods can also be distributed with a motive of financial gain.

### **Impact on national security**

Even though seldom discussed, online falsehoods have become an apex threat to national security. The reason is online falsehoods can create misery, division and destabilize any country. Online falsehood is the basic platform which directs to a physical space catastrophe. If a lie is being circulated as to the government taking measures to cut the employees in the temporary category, without compensation, this will be a hot topic in the media. Consequentially, people including the youth will start making petitions and even go to the extent of organizing a riot. If public unrest escalates, the government will have to impose emergency laws and restrict freedom of expression. In addition, falsehoods during epidemic and disaster situations affect detrimentally to a country. For example, false danger alerts on a natural disaster and a death toll from an epidemic are a few examples. Another example of affecting national security can be seen when falsehoods occur during election campaigns where voters will be misled.

Falsehoods also result in ethnic disharmony leading to incitement of violence by riots, for example, in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday Attack in 2017, Sri Lanka underwent extremist activities that the country had ever undergone as an emergency. Falsehoods promote and result in religious extremist activities, radicalization as well



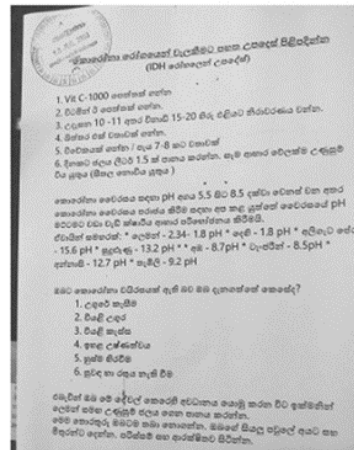
as terrorist activities. Moreover, falsehoods cripple the economy such as panic buying, thinking of a foot shortage and boycotting businesses based on ethnicity and religion due to hate and fear. In addition, falsehoods create unnecessary fear in the community as a result of false danger alerts and false intelligence news, which lead to the erosion of public faith in government. Furthermore, falsehoods undermine the democratic process. Gioe et al., (2021) have mentioned that, “fake news” only entered the American lexicon in 2016, they further stated that the receptivity of Americans to disinformation and misinformation resulted in the erosion of American democratic norms, which generated domestic chaos. Furthermore, both disinformation and misinformation have resulted in undermining the public trust in democratic organizations as well as affecting public esteem detrimentally. The authors bring out a pivotal point. According to them, “domestic strife resulting from foreign and domestic misinformation, disinformation campaigns was not identified as a threat in any US. national security strategy until very recently.” If the US did not recognize the threat posed by online falsehoods sufficiently, Sri Lanka being a country, which does not have adequate skill and know-how to combat the falsehoods faced, the result will be hazardous. The reason is ‘falsehoods’ are often committed online. Adding burden, these are extra- territorial crimes; therefore, stopping the piece of information is a mission, which is hard to be attained. Even though the false piece of information is taken down or corrected under a direction, by the time the actions are taken, it would have reached plenty of people. Looking at the discussion it is crystalline that a “lie”, which is intentional or not, if disseminated can create physical violence as well. The violence, agony and disturbances are national security threats, which put people’s lives at stake.

### **Impact of falsehoods on the national security of Sri Lanka**

All countries undergo falsehoods as the world is wholly digitalized; Sri Lanka too faced online falsehoods multiple times gravely and yet to face many more. For example, Gunawardene, N. (n.d.) “during the COVID-19 pandemic, the death toll was fabricated. In addition, it was observed that there were fake posts (images) on social media (WhatsApp as well as Facebook) that purported to share coronavirus preventive guidelines pretending to be issued from Infectious Disease Hospital. Following this, the public was asked to “strictly adhere” to approved COVID-19 guidelines; as these said recommendations in the “misleading posts have previously been debunked by health experts.” These falsehoods in a time of pandemic are known as “infodemic”. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “infodemic” is the ‘overabundance of information, this information can be accurate and some are not, which arises during an epidemic situation’. Therefore, it is evident that falsehoods, misinformation as well as disinformation affect health security, where people might undergo wrong health practices and measures, which would endanger the life of the individual as well as the country as a whole since the escalation of

wrongful practices, will make the government incapable of managing a health crisis.

මෙම තොරතුරු, ඔබටම නඩා නොගන්න. ඔබගේ සිහිපු පත්‍රිකේ තුළට නො ලියුරුණ  
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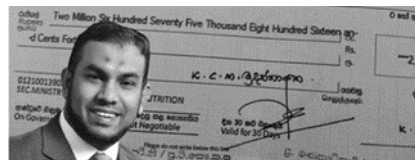
(Source: <https://factcheckafp.com/false-socialmedia-posts-purportshare-coronavirus-guidelines-sri-lankan-hospital>)

A few other examples, which depicted the gravity and the threat of online falsehoods, were seen in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday Attack in 2019. Many false danger alerts on the discovery of explosives and fake intelligence alerts roamed the country. As reported by Quinn, (2019) “Facebook and its properties such as Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger were immediately blocked by the government” to prevent a further catastrophe.

On the other hand, after the Easter Sunday Attacks in 2019, hatred towards Muslims emerged within the majority of Sinhalese who underwent an understandable fear factor for the extremist activity. In reality, a considerable majority discriminated against Muslims even though the Easter Sunday Attack in 2019 were a terror attack and not a communal activity. However, there were visible politically driven campaigns that intensified the fear and inculcated hatred resulting in unfair treatment towards Muslims. One of the key examples was Dr. Shafi who was falsely alleged of illegally sterilizing women. Later, he was reinstated with salary arrears upon failure to prove the said allegations.



(Source- <https://m.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid2678616292199618&id=100001538200897&se-ta.572157669512168&source57&refid=52&tnEH-R>)



Dr. Shafi awarded salary arrears; decides to purchase essential medicines for Sri Lanka.

Written by: Dhanu Rajan  
13 Jun 2022, 9:08 PM

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(Source- <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/06/13/dr-shafi-awarded-salary-arrears-decides-to-purchase-essential-medicines-for-sri-lanka/>)

Boycotting of Muslim businesses aftermath of the Easter Sunday Attacks in 2019 causing Islamophobia was another such example of online falsehoods.



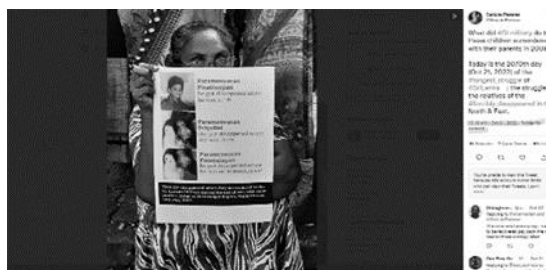
(Sources: <https://groundviews.org/2013/02/15/civil-society-organisationcondemn-anti-muslim-rhetoric-and-attacks-in-sri-lanka/>)

Another major hurdle Sri Lanka facing is LTTE and its international networks are accusing the government of breaching Tamils' rights. The false claim they are trying to convince the world is that Sri Lankan government fought a war against the Tamils. In reality, the war was against LTTE and it was not at any point against Tamils. LTTE and its international networks further accuse the government of committing international humanitarian law violations, human rights law violations, war crimes, genocide, causing inter-generational trauma and also taking away the Tamil Homeland. All these falsehoods are created and disseminated on social media

platforms.



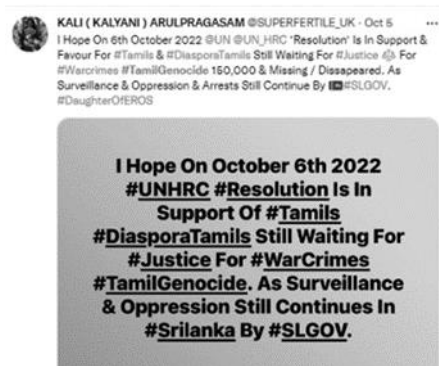
(Source: [https://twitter.com/hashtag/tamilgenocide?src=hashtag\\_click&f=live](https://twitter.com/hashtag/tamilgenocide?src=hashtag_click&f=live))



(Source: <https://twitter.com/SanjulaPietersz/status/1583317198973865984/photo/1>)



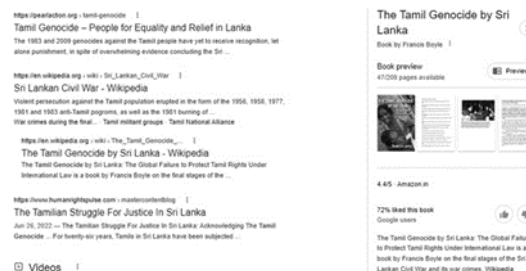
(Source: [https://twitter.com/hashtag/tamilgenocide?s=hashtag\\_click&flive](https://twitter.com/hashtag/tamilgenocide?s=hashtag_click&flive))



(Source: <https://twitter.com/hashtagtamilgenocide?srchashtagclick&flive>)

The resultant effects of these false claims have put Sri Lanka at stake. Resolutions including 46/1 Resolution and 51/5 L HRC are a few of such examples. Even though these resolutions are non-binding, they are authoritative in nature. Therefore, if Sri Lanka is refusing or denying the content mentioned therein, Sri Lanka must prove its innocence and negate these fictitious claims. In addition to these resolutions, Canada's Tamil Genocide Education Week Act established a law where, "May 12th to 18th of each month, the 'seven days each year ending on May 18th was proclaimed as Tamil genocide education week. During the period for a week, all ontarians are encouraged to "educate themselves about and also to maintain their awareness of the Tamil genocide as well as other genocides that have occurred in the history of the world."

These resolutions, MOUs, as well as laws, finely portray how a bogus claim, when constantly circulated becomes a precedent. In the end, due to these posts' circulation, the Sri Lankan government was labelled as a country, which has committed genocide. This can easily be found when the word 'Tamil Genocide' is googled or searched.



(Source: <https://www.google.com/genocide=tamil+genocide&aqs=chrome.0.35i39j46i263l3j69i60l-2j69i6me&ieUTF-8>)

In reality, Sri Lanka has not breached the Genocide Convention and Sri Lanka abided by International Humanitarian Law principles.

### **Freedom of expression, impact on national security and striking a balance**

The right to free expression is one of the important rights, which is recognized by the United Nations, it is also a fundamental right protected by domestic, regional as well as international instruments. One such example includes Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). To put it simply, freedom of expression means the ability to voice, hold opinions and seek and impart information as well as ideas verbally or in writing. This right is essential in any democratic country to attain a just and free society leading to the betterment of people. The right of free expression is an indispensable characteristic of a politically literate society. The public must be able to share their opinion, create dialogue, make decisions and elect their representatives. On the other hand, this right allows individuals to constructively criticize ill-motivated individuals and entities by creating awareness among the public. The right is also a vital requisite to oppose discrimination and ensure representation. Further, the right brings individuals and countries together by building consensus and learning from each other. The said right of freedom of expression cannot be arbitrarily restricted or limited due to discrimination. However, the right can be curtailed under certain strict and special circumstances.

Regardless of the imperativeness and the advantages associated with the right of freedom of expression, individuals as well as entities tend to misuse this right. Adding burden, as the technology in the digitalized world is sophisticated, information dissemination happens promptly. For those reasons, terrorists, extremists, radicalized individuals, politically ill-motivated individuals, profit-driven personnel and spies use the freedom of expression to engage in falsehoods, disinformation, hate speech and false news likewise. Therefore, it is evident that these two conflicting interests of freedom of expression against national security must be balanced. Due to its incompatible nature, freedom of expression is restricted under special circumstances. As per ECHR'S Article 10, the right to the freedom of expression is a right vested in any person, nonetheless, the same right can be intervened in circumstances including, if the act is prescribed by law or on the grounds such as public safety, to protect the health, to secure territorial integrity and to preserve national security. The Article and its exceptions came into discussion in the case of *Observer and Guardian v. The United Kingdom* (1991). As per *Thakur*, (2021) in addition, the intervention by domestic authorities was deemed appropriate and regarded as necessary for a democratic society; this view was upheld in the case of, *Tolstoy Miloslavsky v. The United Kingdom* (1995).



In the Sri Lankan Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country national security takes precedence just like in any other country. According to Article 15(7), “The exercise and operation of all the fundamental rights which are declared as well as recognized by Articles 12, 13(1), 13(2), 14 shall be subject to restrictions which may be prescribed by law”, the instances or the grounds are, when the matter is in the interests of national security, in an instance to preserve public order, when it is required to protect public health or morality when there is a need to secure due recognition and also in an instance to respect the rights and freedoms of others and when there is a need to meet the just requirements of the general welfare of a democratic society. The word “Law” in the Article includes the regulations that are made under the law for the time being related to public security. When it comes to Article 14, unlike in ECHR, freedom of expression in the Sri Lankan Constitution is only limited to citizens. As per 14(1), subsections a, b, c, g and h are subjected to limitations. Article 14 (1) states that “Every citizen is entitled to (a) the freedom of speech, an expression which also includes publication; 14(1) (a) is subjected to such restrictions which include, when the act is prescribed by law when in the interests of racial and religious harmony or when it concerns parliamentary privilege.



*Charani Patabendige is a Research Assistant and Acting Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*

# CHALLENGES FACED BY UN PEACEKEEPERS

By **C. L. C. M. Patabendige**

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Peace is a pivotal factor for any society to prosper and exist. Peace allows security, well-being, and stability. Peace is the bedrock of human rights which enables global cooperation. Peace facilitates justice, human rights, and sustainable development. Peace can be multifaceted; it can be positive or negative. Regardless of the nature of peace, societies attempt to accomplish peace for the benefit of the society. The United Nations (UN) was established in the year 1945 in aftermath of the World War II. One such primary mission of the United Nations is to maintain international peace as well as security. This mission is implemented by the United Nations through UN peacekeeping.

United Nations Peacekeepers are playing a crucial role in facilitating world peace. In an environment where the threat landscape is constantly changing, peacekeepers face inherent challenges as well as novel challenges when engaged with peacekeeping. It has therefore become essential to understand the challenges faced by peacekeepers. Afore it is crucial to look into what is UN peacekeeping, its history, successes, and failures. Consequentially, the challenges faced by UN peacekeepers will be explained and the opportunities of them as well.

According to (Tuvdendarjaa, 2019), “The United Nations does not have any permanent military or police force under its auspices. It conducts peacekeeping operations (PSOs) at a tactical level in support of its member states... When they serve under the United Nations, they are united by a commitment to maintain or restore world peace and security.” According to United Nations Peacekeeping, “Peacekeepers are civilian, military, and police personnel all working together. The roles and responsibilities of peacekeepers are evolving as peacekeeping mandates become more complex and multidimensional. Peacekeeping operations have developed from simply monitoring ceasefires to protecting civilians, disarming ex-combatants, protecting human rights, promoting the rule of law, supporting free and fair elections, minimizing the risk of land mines, and much more”. UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles, Consent of the parties, impartiality, and Non-use of force except in self-defense and defence of the mandate.

UN peacekeeping has been capable of facilitating peace, successful ceasefires, and armed conflicts. For example, according to (UNA-UK), “Sierra Leone, Côte d’Ivoire,





Timor-Leste, and Liberia, among others, could have had a far bloodier past, and no future, had it not been for the timely and effective intervention of blue-helmeted troops”. Nonetheless, there are also setbacks such as “failures to deploy (as in Rwanda), failures to act once deployed (as at Srebrenica), failures to operate safely (a cause of the cholera outbreak in Haiti) and failures to prevent abuse (most notoriously when it comes to sexual exploitation and abuse).”

It should be noted that UN peacekeeping is multidimensional. As per the United Nations, “multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security but also to facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law”. This showcases the diversity of peacekeeping missions as it is not only about acting in times of violence but addressing or attempting to successfully address the root causes of conflicts. For example, conflicts in any society are not generated overnight with a sudden sense of discontent or displeasure, most of them have entrenched grievances and inequalities. There are also encounters between governments and rebels, terrorists, radicalized individuals, and others.

This brings us to the necessity of perusing the challenges incurred by UN peacekeepers when peacekeeping. One of the cardinal reasons is the changing of the threat landscape. Causes of conflict can be vivid, it can be due to political, social, economic, ethnic, religious, or a combination of many. However, at present wars have taken a different trend, wars can be due to exclusivism, extremism, terrorism, religious fundamentalism, and radicalization with the goal of out-grouping others and feeling superior to their kind. According to (UNA-UK), “Many modern conflicts are low-intensity and irregular, with a lack of formal armies and with various competing groups. It is unfeasible for peacekeepers to maintain the traditional no-man’s land between opposing forces; UN peacekeepers now have to take a more proactive role. With this comes increased risk for UN forces – while they remain impartial, they do not remain neutral, and taking action to protect civilians has made them targets for attacks”. In addition, emerging threats such as terrorism and its physical effects of it have no ‘one fit model’. These cross-border threats coupled with Diaspora activities and funding by hostile nations will aggravate problems. Another hurdle peacekeepers should face is the sophisticated weapon usage by the conflicting parties.

In the past, peacekeepers have faced the grave threat of being targets. One such example as reported by (Goldberg,2016) is, “In Mali, it is UN peacekeepers and not the civilians they are meant to protect who have become the primary targets of a growing insurgency.” Another challenge is the amount of disinformation and

misinformation. According to (Trithart, 2022), “Over the past few years, a growing barrage of disinformation has targeted UN peacekeeping operations, particularly the missions in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Mali (MINUSMA), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). This includes false allegations that UN peacekeepers are trafficking weapons to armed groups, supporting terrorists, and exploiting natural resources.” In addition, there are also severe budget constraints, since countries have cut budget allocations. Since UN peacekeeping forces are dependent on funding, this results in a grave issue in maintaining troops. Another challenge faced by UN troops despite their success stories due to their presence in war-torn areas is requests for withdrawal by parties. Such an example is, the withdrawal of the peacekeeping mission in Mali which was done after a request from its military government to withdraw the troops. As reported by Al Jazeera, “MINUSMA has also suffered more than 300 fatalities, making it the deadliest UN peacekeeping operation. With a budget of \$1.2 bn, MINUSMA is also the UN’s most expensive mission. Despite this, Mali’s government has accused the mission of worsening the situation, leaving people distrustful of the UN in general”. Another major challenge for UN peacekeeping is the lack of political will by parties. It is only if political will is given the peace process becomes a success. According to (United Nations SC/15404, 2023), “A peacekeeping operation cannot succeed when there is insufficient political will for peace among the main stakeholders, when the people are not involved and when the resources, including financial, are lacking. “The success of the Mozambican peacemaking and peacekeeping processes were largely due to a combination of multiple factors, including the political will of the parties and the overwhelming support of the Mozambican people themselves; clearly defined goals; strong regional support and that of the UN Secretary-General, unity of the Security Council and the international community at large; and the financial resources made available.”. This finely depicts how the peace process involves all stakeholders and the necessity of including all parties. Where UN peacekeepers can do a commendable job, success of it and expected outcomes can only be accomplished if the local level and highly visible political atmosphere is stable.

A key challenge that exacerbates the already existing peacekeeping challenges is when we look from a gendered perspective. According to ([Bridges, 2020](#)), “Research has found that women on peacekeeping missions are often [ill-prepared](#) for the magnitude of their role in preventing sexual exploitation and violence, and training is an area in need of improvement if violence against women in peacekeeping is to be reduced, let alone eliminated.” It is also pivotal to mention that UN peacekeeping, its norms, and objectives are tarnished because of certain instances. For example, peacekeepers are alleged and detained for sexual abuses. According to ([Hernandez, 2020](#)), The initial reports of peacekeeper involvement in sexual misconduct surfaced during the UN mission in Cambodia in 1992. Subsequent

allegations emerged in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and East Timor. The frequency of these accusations has increased with the expansion of peacekeeping efforts. In 2006, 357 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving UN peacekeepers were reported, with 252 considered serious enough to warrant investigation. According to the [Child Rights International Network](#), “While the UN has taken several steps to address sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions, including through its ‘zero tolerance policy’ in 2003, the problem nonetheless continues.”

Another challenge faced by UN peacekeepers is the language barrier. If peacekeepers are multilingual, it will in fact help them to linguistically as well as culturally participate in the required state. It is challenging for them to learn the host nation’s language during pre-deployment however if this is accomplished this will become a strength to the peace process. In addition, a challenge that exists is the competitiveness in among regional countries for the same matter since the demand for peacekeepers regionally.

With all the above being said, it is clear that peacekeepers face multiple challenges in the constantly changing threat landscape. These challenges have come into the necessity of addressing them to facilitate effective peacebuilding by peacekeepers. Peacekeepers should be trained to survive as well as engage in peacekeeping in the changing threat landscape. For those peacekeepers should be further trained. To battle disinformation, it is crucial to recognize early warning signs and involve local informants to know the ground realities. UN is now at a point where it is hard to completely rely on major donors, therefore, it is crucial to advocate for predictable funding meanwhile sustaining and encouraging community engagement. It is crucial to foster collaboration with regional partners, conduct regular evaluations to incorporate lessons learned and integrate human rights considerations explicitly into peacekeeping mandates. These measures will facilitate accountability as well as transparency.



*Charani Patabendige is a Research Assistant and Acting Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*

# Economic Security via the Green Lens: Blue Economy Strategies for Economic Development in Sri Lanka

By Madushi Sandamini

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Natural resources are treasures in which the countries with natural prosperity flourish since they generate economic revenue for the national economy in a country through its sustainable utilisation. Of this natural wealth, sea and ocean regions that provide a range of economic opportunities have acquired a pivotal position on the economic rostrum. However, island, peninsular, and littoral nations that have extensive or limited maritime territories and strategic blue water spots have been granted outstanding possibilities for economic development. With the first emergence at the United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20/Rio 2012/Earth Summit 2012) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June, 2012, which aimed to advance the “green economy” concept, the notion of a blue economy or ocean economy was touted as an alternative economic model to boost deprived economic systems as well as sustain prosperous economics through the sustainable use of marine resources. The UN defines the blue economy as a variety of socially and environmentally responsible commercial ventures centred around seas, oceans, and coastal regions and it should promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring the environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas. In this scenario, the pure ideology of the notion of a blue economy, in particular, encourages sustainable ocean activities, ocean health, animal conservation, and pollution reduction.

However, the majority of maritime nations in the globe that are utilising blue resources intend to accomplish their economic requirements and poverty eradication. As per the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) – 2023, the worth of the global ocean economy has been estimated at United States dollars (\$) three to six trillion while fisheries and aquaculture provide \$ 100 billion per year as well as approximately 260 million employment opportunities to the world economy. When it comes to the developing world, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that more than three billion people rely on the ocean for their livelihoods as well as the vast majority in developing countries and that in many of those, ocean-based industries such as tourism and fisheries are key sources of income, foreign exchange, as well as a number of employment opportunities. Despite the ability to make the blue economy the cornerstone of the national economy by tapping into the abundant blue wealth, the vitality of blue economic investments

is still overlooked in some countries with abundant marine resources, such as Sri Lanka, while some countries with small sea areas have reached the pinnacle of economic development by the sustainable utilising of blue economic tactics.

### **Sri Lankan Perspective on Blue Economy**

Sri Lanka is an island nation with a coastline of 1,790 kilometres (km) including the shoreline of bays and inlets as well as 21,500 km squared (km<sup>2</sup>) of territorial seas covering 510,000 km<sup>2</sup> of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) bordered by the Indian Ocean while the Maritime Zone Law, No. 22 of 1976 has granted national authority to extend the country's EEZ over the territorial sea and maritime zones of Sri Lanka. According to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Sri Lanka's maritime area consists of approximately historic waters which cover 24% of the total land area across 14 administrative districts and the coastal areas contain four commercial ports, important railway lines, and 22 fishery harbours, which contribute to 65% of industrial outputs, 80% of tourism infrastructure, and 80% of the fish production. The World Bank estimates that Sri Lanka's coastal regions provide an array of livelihoods for approximately 33% of the country's population, ranging from fishing to the tourism industry.

Taking into consideration Sri Lanka's exploitation of the blue resources, the fishing sector brings in a significant amount of foreign exchange, contributing to 2.7% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), whilst the tourism sector, which includes coastline tourism, accounts for 8%. Although the country possesses an extensive variety of potentials for marine-based activities such as ocean-based renewable energy, aquaculture, mariculture, maritime transport, marine biotechnology, marine manufacturing, marine trades, marine constructions, shipping, port and maritime logistics, and so on, Sri Lanka's standpoint on blue revenue is however heavily reliant on fisheries and tourism. Although fishing is regarded as the top level blue revenue generator in Sri Lanka, massive socio-economic deprivation within the fisheries community has raised concerns about the industry's viability. Despite the fact that Sri Lanka has aligned with a number of international initiatives, including the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the UNDP, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), it seems that the country's sustainable blue economic investments are largely absent from the global disclosure on blue economic development in considering Sri Lanka's ocean economic contribution to the national economy in comparison to other maritime countries such as Bangladesh which has a relatively small maritime zone rather than Sri Lanka. On the other hand, while Sri Lanka is exerting effort toward achieving the 2023 agenda, which prioritises "Life below water" as the 14th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), the pragmatic approach used to pursue it has cast doubt on Sri Lanka's capacity for sustainable blue

economic development due to large-scale ocean pollution, poor investments, untapped resources, and other exploitations that keep on happening in Sri Lanka's maritime zone. In this scenario, whether Sri Lanka has properly verified the value of its enormous maritime resources for economic growth remains an uncertainty.

### **A Feasible Model**

Even though the notion of a blue economy is a relatively recent conception to Sri Lanka, history witnesses that the country prospered even during the monarchical period from massive amounts of ocean-based commerce, transportation, fishing, and other activities. However, nature's rare blessing of being an island nation located in a strategic spot in the Indian Ocean and having a marine environment with extensive biodiversity has produced an ideal environment for Sri Lanka to blossom into the blue economic potential and opportunities for economic development. In terms of the geographic significance of the blue initiatives, Sri Lanka has a beneficial position in the centre of a busy shipping channel that no other part in South Asia can compete with. Thus, Sri Lanka also has a great deal of potential to develop into a naval centre for the shipping industry. On the other hand, Sri Lanka's capability to establish a national economy centred around the blue economy is incontrovertible given that it is an island nation with a maritime area that is eight times larger than its total land area, and is positioned in the heart of an ocean that serves as a commercial hub and the centre for maritime trade routes in West and East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Arab and Eastern parts of the globe. And also, Sri Lanka is endowed with natural resources such as wind, deep sea minerals, offshore oil, sea waves, gas reserves, seafood, and medicinal plants, etc., some of which remain untapped and those resources can be utilised for commercial purposes and power generation. Conversely, while Sri Lanka is an indeed attractive tourist destination, adopting far-reaching approaches to boost coastal tourism by leveraging Sri Lanka's enormous marine biodiversity has a potential to make it even a top foreign exchange turbine in the country. However, simply put, as the ocean is a generator of economic opportunities, it is hard to put the intrinsic value of Sri Lanka's marine resources into words if there is an explicit vision and a deliberate as well as methodical agenda with technological adaptation to verify and capitalise on the blue potential.

During its worst economic turmoil, the wake-up call has sounded to Sri Lanka to rethink a number of marine-based activities and energise novel blue methods utilising the marine resource. In that endeavour, there is an extreme necessity to make strategies based upon blue resources in an assortment of ways to achieve fiscal intentions, depending on their capabilities. While the country collaborates with a number of international organisations and agencies pertaining to the blue economy, in this scenario, institutes such as the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development, the Department of Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource



Management, the Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA), the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA), the National Aquaculture Development Centre (NAQDA), the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, and so forth have all been established as national initiatives with an ocean economy aimed at protecting and overseeing Sri Lanka's blue resources. Despite numerous endeavours, the problem is that Sri Lanka's blue economic growth is still in a concealed layer. Accordingly, the Government should take the necessary steps to establish a Government focal point to oversee and manage Sri Lanka's blue resources through maritime spatial planning, which emphasises the sustainable management of marine areas as an oceanic tool while implementing innovative proposals of experts and leveraging technology to grow the country's blue economy. Furthermore, ocean reserves are essential because they may disturb unexplored marine riches before they are used sustainably. The fisheries sector, which is an essential component of the blue economy, should be expanded by minimising fishing-related abnormalities such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, post-harvest losses, and bottom trawling, etc. while providing formal mechanisms for the livelihood of Sri Lankan fishermen. On the other hand, it is imperative to make the optimal use of marine power farms and coastal tourism by applying sustainable practices and technologies. However, whatever has to be done, as a developing nation on the periphery of the world economy lacking in technological advancement, encouraging exploitative foreign investments that destroy the nation's blue wealth has become a serious concern that needs to be addressed first. Accordingly, as an island nation with the 25th largest coastal area in the world, Sri Lanka must instead focus on its enormous blue potential, which could be employed to stimulate an economic revival in the country through a sustainable approach.



*Madushi Sandamini is a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute*

## **Dangerous drug trade on social media: What factors do we need to know about this national security threat?**

**By Chandani Dissanayake**

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Drugs are a major topic that is discussed in the security agenda of contemporary Sri Lanka, and law enforcement agencies have made strides in answering the problem. Due to the regional drug transit hub in Asia and the precarious socio-economic and political context of Sri Lanka, people, particularly youth, have been involved in illegal drug trafficking and drug use. According to the latest report released by the National Dangerous Drug Control Board (NDDCB) (2023), drug-related arrests in Sri Lanka show a 36% increase in the year 2022 than in 2021. When discussing the drug trade in the digital era, it has shifted from traditional to modern platforms, which are online, particularly on social media. Due to this transition, law enforcement agencies are closely watching the drug trade on the social media from the domestic and international levels due to its grave security challenges on national security.

### **How social media is used for dangerous drug trade?**

According to The United States Drug Enforcement Administration, most of the social media such as Meta platforms (Facebook and WhatsApp), TikTok, Instagram, and Reddit can provide easy access for communication between drug dealers and buyers, and for the purchasing of dangerous drugs. In this regard, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) pointed out that due to the nature of being convenient and user friendly, most drug dealers and buyers use social media than the dark web to purchase drugs. Thus, it is significant to mention that interconnectivity is a novel dimension to increase drug distribution. Criminal syndicates are predominant in the face of the dangerous drug trade on social media. They advertise drug-related contents, keywords and emojis which are dynamic with their own hidden objectives on social media platforms. Moreover, drug traffickers increase the interest of people, particularly among children and youth, by posting videos, images, statuses related to the dangerous drugs and they show their availability also via the above mentioned variables. As a point of fact, we can understand that criminals provide a forum to discuss drug-related information via anonymous profiles and chat groups and share drug-related information that impact on the behavioural change of individuals via social media platforms.

Further, when considering the activities of drug dealers on social media platforms for



drug delivery, L. McCulloch and S. Furlong's "Direct message for details: Selling drugs in the age of social media (2019)" highlighted that criminal groups use encrypted messaging apps to discuss information regarding the delivery system and they use different social media profiles to represent the drug delivery method. Likewise, when considering the language which they use to share the drug related information, individuals and criminal syndicates use their own coded language to represent the dangerous drugs. In this regard, they further corroborated that the language of criminals who are engaged in the drug trade on social media is very discrete and subtle in the sharing of information related to dangerous drugs. Further, they highlighted that drug dealers show quantity, price, the types of the drugs and their quality, the method of contact, the drugs which are available and the available time for order, and the country which they have imported to, using their own languages and emojis on social media platforms.

### **Does social media contribute to destabilizing national security in line with the dangerous drug trade?**

When considering the national security implications of drug trafficking and use, the UNODC pointed out that cyber enabled and cyber dependent crimes, radicalization and violent extremism, suicide and psychological issues particularly among young people are connected with illegal drugs. Accordingly, it is significant to mention that there is a linkage between organized crimes, terrorism, extremism, and violence, particularly youth marginalization and drug trafficking. In point of fact, we can analyze that social media can have a distinct influence on the safety, peace, and security of the citizens by posting information linked with the dangerous drug trade.

There is no argument that youth are profoundly susceptible in the face of the dangerous drug trade on social media. This is because criminal syndicates primarily target youth who are engaged with the social media to propagate their criminal ideologies. In this regard, the UNODC highlights that youth are vulnerable in the face of the drug trade on social media. Criminal groups who are engaged in drug trade on social media increase youth radicalization and lead youth to terrorist activities and destabilize the social cohesion with the propagation of dangerous drug related information. Accordingly, social media is a tool that causes the propagation of extremist ideologies that influence the social, economic, and political security of the country in line with the dangerous drug trade. Moreover, it is important to mention that social media platforms have given an opportunity to criminal groups to earn illegal money by trading dangerous drugs on social media. Thus, it is an easy road to increase cyber-crime. Accordingly, the dangerous drug trade on social media perversely affects the social fabric and destabilizes the governability and stability of a country.

### **What mechanisms must Sri Lanka take to counter the dangerous drug trade on social media?**

When discussing the countering strategies related to the dangerous drug trade on social media, the UN highlighted that: “The International Narcotics Control Board is calling on governments to do more to regulate social media platforms that glamourize drug related negative behaviours and boost sales of controlled substances”. Accordingly, is the existing legal framework on dangerous drugs to regulate dangerous drug transactions on social media, adequate? And, what are the measures that Sri Lanka must take? In Sri Lanka, despite the laws and regulations related to cyber crime and dangerous drug trafficking, dangerous drug transactions on social media are an emerging, novel, security threat that creates insecurity among people. For that, there is a pressing need for discussions regarding this issue and law and regulation reforms to regulate drug transactions on social media and to build resilience and to safeguard the digital environment in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, with the dynamic context of the digital era, legislative reforms and policy changes can be identified as a preliminary step to counter this issue.

In Sri Lanka, the Computer Crime Investigation Division (CCID), the Police, the Computer Emergency Readiness Team (CERT), and the NDDCB, as major responsible agencies in line with cyber crime and the dangerous drug trade on social media, need to investigate the current situation of the dangerous drug trade on social media, particularly the activities of criminal syndicates, in collaboration with national agencies such as the Ministry of Justice, the Criminal Investigations Department, the International Criminal Police Organization National Central Bureau and the Ministry of Defence. Moreover, the CCID needs to organize workshops and training programmes for the relevant officers in collaboration with the private sector, civil societies, and regional and international counterparts to give comprehensive knowledge and training to counter this issue effectively.

Necessary and proper knowledge sharing by social awareness programmes can be identified as the best strategy to counter the dangerous drug trade on social media because it contributes to developing the individuals’ consciousness regarding the existing gravity of this issue and to harmonize their social life. Regarding this, the NDDCB necessarily needs to conduct their awareness programmes based on the dangerous drug transactions on social media, by connecting with the Ministry of Education, the CERT, the Police, the CCID, the Ministry of Health, non-governmental organizations, and the National Youth Council. Thus, the lack of awareness among people at all levels also directly contributes to an increase in the number of victims of criminal groups who are engaged in the dangerous drug trade on social media. Hence, information sharing is a timely requirement among the

people. Moreover, anonymity, pseudonymity, and the sophisticated nature of criminal syndicates related to the dangerous drug trade on social media can be identified as major challenges faced by the law enforcement agencies in terms of investigations. For that, it is important to mention that the NDDCB conducting policy-oriented research with the universities, and research think tanks with the assistance of the UNODC to promote the peace and sustainability of Sri Lanka is vital.

Summing up, what is security? It can be defined as a concept that requires citizens' and states' protection from traditional and non-traditional threats. Accordingly, the above factors note that the dangerous drug trade on social media detrimentally creates insecurity among people and can destabilize the sustainability and power of the country. Thus, all the citizens are at risk from increasing dangerous drug related activities on social media platforms. Accordingly, the consequences of the dangerous drug trade on social media encumber the entire economic, political, and social wellbeing of the country. And, countering the problem effectively helps to strengthen the peace and security of the country. Thus, before it becomes a huge threat, Sri Lanka must commit to safeguarding the future of all humans by implementing or reforming necessary the policies regarding this issue. If this action does not occur, all the citizens become at risk due to the dangerous drug trade on social media in the coming future.



*Chandani Dissanayake is a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*



# The New Face of Warfare: How Law is Changing the Battlefield

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige

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The tactics and strategies of wars have drastically changed resulting in a change in the threat landscape. War at present is not wholly physical in nature, in fact at present wars can be handled utilizing other mechanisms including information war, cyber war, net war as well as lawfare. Where earlier in society, warfare was based on procurement, shipping, and logistics but now it has taken a turn to include soft threats. However, regardless of tangibility, these wars are capable of disrupting peace, and harmony, causing instability, eroding the rule of law, and breaching the rights of citizens. Lawfare is one such way utilized to wage war to gain objectives including political, military, and strategic.

As stated by (Mattingly, 2016), “Kittrie points out that lawfare is traceable to Hugo Grotius and his book *Mare Liberum*, published in 1609. In this book, he argued that under “the Law of Nations the sea is common to all,” that through it the Dutch accomplished what their naval and military forces could not, and they thereby “solidified the concept of freedom of the seas.” Kittrie also points out a more recent interpretation of lawfare by two Chinese People’s Liberation Army colonels who in 1999 published *Unrestricted Warfare* which “lists examples of non-military warfare,” including “establishing international laws that primarily benefit a certain country.” Additionally, the colonels argue for “the use of domestic trade law on the international stage” which they equate to being “equal to that of military operations.” These are a testament of the gravity of Lawfare and use of it which dates to decades. Lawfare became well known with the definition by Major General Charles J. Dunlap. According to him, “lawfare” can be regarded as the “strategy of using or misusing law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve an operational objective.” Further, Dunlap mentions that “in the context of domestic US legal practices, in transnational legal incidents and, of course, within the realm of public international law, particularly in the context of the law of armed conflict. All accounts do share a conception that recognizes that lawfare is concerned with the instrumentalization or politicization of the law to achieve a tactical, operational, or strategic effect”.

As per the definition stated by Dunlap, it is crucial to mention that lawfare is not solely about misuse since it includes use as well. Therefore, utilizing the law to strategic advantages to further military accomplishments is permissible by stated.



When perusing the terminology, Dale Stephens states that “the term “Lawfare” has established a distinctly pejorative connotation within the prevailing literature. This seems unusual, as the term, itself is value-neutral. It is neither intrinsically “good” nor “bad,” but rather an agnostic phenomenon.”

This brings into question which lawfare is threatening and who commits so. Lawfare waged by nonstate actors including rebels can have disastrous consequences since they will utilize Lawfare to question the legitimacy of wars conducted by the state, Lawfare by terrorist sympathizers, front, cover, and sympathetic organizers will cause fear in the public, the erosion of law, and instability in politics. According to Dale Stephens, “In the contemporary environment, allegations of lawfare are routinely cited as a tool used by insurgents or other non-State actors in actions against State military forces. This is the version of lawfare that has become more typically associated with the term. Hence, United States Army lawyer Eric Jensen identifies that in the context of asymmetric warfare, an opponent will seek to exploit an adversary’s weaknesses to seek tactical or strategic advantage. Such weaknesses are not necessarily those of military capacity, but rather are more intangible and revolve around inciting violent reaction that feeds public disquiet.” Nonetheless, regardless of the lack of tangibility, ill will, feelings of fear and misery too have grave consequences, which threaten stability of countries and the legitimacy of war.

According to (Dressler, 2021), Lawfare can be a constructive force or destructive force. According to him, The United States of America employs a strategy of constructive lawfare, such an example was in Afghanistan. America aimed to undermine terrorist activities by establishing civic and legal institutions through its Rule of Law Field Force (ROLFF). On the other hand, destructive lawfare is where terrorist organizations, such as ISIS, employ destructive lawfare strategies, by exploiting liberal democracies' adherence to international human rights and humanitarian laws. To do this, they utilize various activities including human shields to deter airstrikes, capitalizing on democratic nations' respect for human rights. According to (Williams, 2011), Lawfare can be offensive as per his categorization. Accordingly, “The recent case by Serbia against Kosovo in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the question of the legitimacy of Kosovo’s declaration of independence is a prime example of how a party switched to an offensive lawfare tactic after losing on the battlefield.”

This brings into the necessity of examining examples of Lawfare from both positive and negative lenses. One real-world example of positive Lawfare is the case of apartheid in South Africa. In South Africa, the use of legal strategies played a crucial role in the fight against racial segregation and discrimination. Social and human rights activists and organizations played a vast role. For example, the African National



Congress (ANC), employed legal challenges, both domestically and internationally, to challenge apartheid policies, which is a positive example of Lawfare. The International Criminal Court is another example, which merits attention, it is the permanent international tribunal created to prosecute individuals for grave offences of international concern, including crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. According to (CIVICUS LENS, 2022), “The first ICC conviction came in March 2012, when Thomas Lubanga Dyilo was found guilty of war crimes for using child soldiers in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Court has now heard 31 cases and convicted 10 people.”

An example where lawfare is utilized as a destructive force is the conduct of Hamas. According to (Dunalp, 2023), “Hamas’ strategy is, however, quite different. Lobbing rockets indiscriminately at Israeli population centers along with engaging in a few firefights to kill at least some Israelis is not, militarily speaking, a meaningful warfighting effort. Hamas is employing a “Lawfare” strategy. A Lawfare strategy uses (or misuses) law essentially as a substitute for traditional military means; it employs law much like any “weapon” to create effects or obtain results in an armed conflict that can be indistinguishable from those typically produced by kinetic methods” As cited by Dunlap, “an analyst of the 2014 Gaza war concluded, [that] Even though Hamas, like the Taliban in Afghanistan, violated international laws by using civilians as human shields, Hamas has shed enough public doubt on Israel’s conduct to advance a “both sides are guilty” argument. The spectre of this gives Hamas perpetual victim status and deters Israel from exercising the full range of its options against the group, one of which is its destruction. While not a triumph for Hamas, it gives them time to renew their resources and regroup.” This finely portrays how terror groups are utilizing Lawfare for military gains.

Even though Lawfare is a grave threat and a modern warfare strategy, its gravity is not understood in detail compared to physical war. The truth is, Lawfare is also serious and its impact is disastrous and cannot be underestimated. According to (Marti,2020), the Lawfare “phenomena today are a serious danger to the health and the consolidation of our democracies”. The author states that “the increasing use of lawfare as an everyday political weapon an alternative to ordinary democratic processes, the judicialization of politics, complemented by the politicization of justice, the growing repression of protest movements and the general abuse of criminal law to restrict fundamental rights, especially those of a more political nature.” In addition to what the learned author has stated it is also crucial to state that “media” also play a crucial role in propagating lawfare by disseminating news as well as times magnifying or exaggerating the content. Even though such acts by media is highly unethical due to the lack of sufficient media literacy, information literacy as well as digital literacy destructive Lawfare thrives in uncontrollable ways. Such

actions demonstrates that Lawfare cannot be isolated as it is inextricably interlinked with other cardinal facets of societies.

The rationale behind law is to have a law-abiding society which upholds the rule of law. In doing that judicial independence, parliamentary sovereignty and democracy can be regarded as critical elements. When the law which is supposed to be a guiding and abiding force becomes a weapon of destruction then it becomes chaotic. However, this brings into the necessity of identifying how to segregate lawfare as constructive or whether destructive. To do this, it is essential to identify the motive and legitimacy as factors. If the motive is ill and cause is illegitimate it eventually is to cause segregation and gain ulterior advantage. Such Lawfare is inherently evil since it will lead to disruption of peace and tranquility of the society. In addition, it is crucial for any state to be prepared to counter Lawfare which is destructive. To achieve this, it is imperative to have legal preparedness, have necessary diplomatic channels and support as well as manage media appropriately.



*Charani Patabendige is a Research Assistant and Acting Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*



# Perfect Storm: Climate Change, Food Security, and the Looming Threat to National Security

By Commander Amila Prasanga

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## Introduction

The 21st century presents a complex and multifaceted challenge: a confluence of climate change, food insecurity, and national security concerns demanding a nuanced understanding of the intricate web of interconnected risks (IPCC, 2023). This potent mix creates a "perfect storm" with potentially devastating consequences, demanding immediate attention and proactive solutions. Within this context, islands like Sri Lanka stand particularly vulnerable, facing heightened risks of agricultural disruption, resource scarcity, and social unrest, underscoring the urgent need for concerted action. This commentary delves into exploring the cascading effects of a warming planet on food production, regional instability, and ultimately, the potential for increased conflict and insecurity.

## Climate Change: The Catalyst

Climate change, driven primarily by anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, disrupts weather patterns, intensifies extreme weather events, and alters agricultural landscapes. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and increased sea levels threaten agricultural productivity (IPCC, 2023). These vulnerabilities are further exacerbated by land degradation, soil erosion, and saltwater intrusion due to rising sea levels (FAO, 2016). These disruptions exacerbate existing vulnerabilities in food systems, particularly in developing nations already struggling with poverty and malnutrition. Islands like Sri Lanka face a heightened risk due to their geographical location and reliance on agriculture, amplifying the urgency for action to address these interconnected challenges.

## Climate Change and its Ripple Effects

The rising heat and erratic weather patterns of climate change are wreaking havoc on our food systems. Extreme events like droughts, floods, and heatwaves disrupt agricultural production, leading to crop failures, reduced yields, and volatile food prices (IPCC, 2023). Water scarcity further complicates matters, as increased demand and changing precipitation patterns threaten irrigation supplies, impacting food production and potentially sparking regional tensions over this vital resource (FAO, 2016). Even our oceans, teeming with life and crucial for food security and livelihoods, are under siege. Acidification and unsustainable fishing practices

jeopardize coastal communities and protein sources, adding another layer of vulnerability to an already stressed system (FAO, 2016). Furthermore; Climate change's impact on food security is not a distant threat; it's a complex ripple effect with far-reaching consequences already being felt around the world. Therefore; Islands like Sri Lanka, situated in vulnerable coastal regions, face compounding risks, amplifying the urgency for concerted action to mitigate the impacts of climate change on food security and livelihoods.

### **Food Security Under Threat**

Food insecurity, defined as the lack of access to sufficient nutritious food, becomes a pressure point when climate change disrupts food production (World Bank, 2022). The consequences of climate change for food security are dire. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO), effects of climate change on agricultural production and livelihoods are expected to intensify over time, and to vary across countries and regions. Beyond 2030, the negative impacts of climate change on the productivity of crops, livestock, fisheries, and forestry will become increasingly severe in all regions. With climate change, however, the population living in poverty could increase by between 35 and 122 million by 2030 relative to a future without climate change, largely due to its negative impacts on incomes in the agricultural sector.

The sheer number of smallholder farm families in developing countries – some 475 million – justifies a specific focus on the threat posed by climate change to their livelihoods and the urgent need to transform those livelihoods along sustainable pathways (FAO, 2023). This food insecurity not only leads to malnutrition and its associated health problems but also fuels social unrest and political instability, potentially creating fertile ground for extremism and conflict (CSIS, 2016). In Sri Lanka, where agriculture is a significant component of the economy and livelihoods, the impacts of climate change on food security are especially acute. According to the World Bank, over 20% of Sri Lankans are already classified as food insecure, struggling to meet their basic nutritional needs. Climate change threatens to push this number even higher, potentially leading to social unrest and political instability.

### **Food Insecurity: The Pressure Point**

Climate change is intensifying the already dire issue of food insecurity, pushing millions more towards hunger and malnutrition, particularly in vulnerable regions. This brewing crisis not only threatens individual wellbeing but also has the potential to trigger social unrest, mass migration, and political instability, as seen in previous instances (CSIS, 2016). Extreme weather events further exacerbate the situation by disrupting food production, transportation, and storage, leading to shortages, price hikes, and increased vulnerability for already struggling populations (Breisinger et

al., 2015).

Additionally, food scarcity and dependence on imports can become geopolitical weapons, increasing vulnerability to external manipulation and destabilizing regional relations (ISDC, 2016). The pressure on food security is a critical point of concern, demanding urgent action to address climate change and build resilience in vulnerable communities. In Sri Lanka, these challenges are particularly acute, given its susceptibility to extreme weather events and its reliance on agriculture as a key sector of the economy, necessitating comprehensive strategies to mitigate climate risks and enhance food security.

### **National Security: The Domino Effect**

The cascading effects of climate change and food insecurity pose significant national security threats, fueling social unrest, mass migration, and resource competition (UN, 2024). Competition for dwindling resources can escalate into conflicts between communities and nations, jeopardizing regional stability and leading to humanitarian crises (UNHRC, 2023). Food insecurity can trigger mass migration, placing strain on border resources and potentially fueling social unrest in receiving countries (IOM, 2020). Furthermore, changing climate patterns can alter the spread of diseases, posing new biosecurity threats with national and international ramifications (WHO, 2023).

Furthermore, climate change directly impacts national security by displacing populations, disrupting critical infrastructure, and weakening government institutions. In Sri Lanka, these threats are particularly pressing, as the country grapples with its potential for increased social unrest, mass migration, and resource competition heightens the urgency for comprehensive strategies to address climate-related national security risks and build resilience within the region.

### **The Need for a Multifaceted Response**

**Investing in Sustainable Agriculture:** Climate-smart agricultural practices, water conservation strategies, and crop diversification are crucial for resilience and food security. Implementing sustainable agricultural practices can help mitigate the impacts of climate change on food production, ensuring the availability of nutritious food for communities, including those in Sri Lanka where agriculture plays a significant role in the economy.

**Strengthening Regional Cooperation:** Collaborative efforts to manage water resources and ensure fair access to food can mitigate regional tensions and foster collective action. By working together, countries in the region, including Sri Lanka, can address common challenges related to food security and water scarcity, promoting stability and prosperity for all. **Investing in Climate Mitigation and Adaptation:** Rapid emission reduction measures are crucial to curb climate change's

worst impacts and protect food security and national security in the long term. By investing in climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, including renewable energy development and infrastructure resilience projects, countries like Sri Lanka can build a more sustainable future while safeguarding their food security and national security interests.

### **Navigating the Storm: Collaborative Solutions**

Immediate action is imperative to address the perfect storm of climate change, food insecurity, and national security threats. By investing in a multi-pronged approach, including climate-smart agriculture, strengthening social safety nets, promoting international cooperation, and conflict prevention, we can navigate this complex challenge and build a more secure future for all, including Sri Lanka. Ignoring this crisis could lead to devastating consequences for generations to come. It's time for decisive action to safeguard the well-being of present and future generations and ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for Sri Lanka and the global community.



*Commander Amila Prasanga is a Military Research Officer at the Institute of National Security Studies, the premier think tank on National Security established and functioning under the Ministry of Defence Sri Lanka. The opinion expressed is his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute or the Ministry of Defence, Sri Lanka*

# Changing Threat Dimensions; Preventing Extremism in The Digital Age

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige

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## Abstract

Extremism poses a persistent and significant threat to the stability of a nation. It is a complex psychological phenomenon that gradually leads to tangible actions, extending beyond its narrow military aspects. Countering extremism in the present digital era requires innovative strategies to effectively address and prevent it within the changing digital landscape. Therefore, this research aims to explore the intricate relationship between extremism and its implications for national security in the digital sphere. Sri Lanka's historical experiences with extremism, both before and after digitalization, add unique dimensions to this examination. Understanding how the digital age has become a fertile ground for disseminating and amplifying extremist ideologies is crucial for formulating effective countermeasures. Leveraging the digital space to counteract and prevent extremism warrants exploration. Using a qualitative methodology, this study will investigate the evolving threat landscape through various analysis techniques. By shedding light on these changes, it seeks to uncover the complexities associated with preventing extremism in the digital age. The findings will inform recommendations to reduce its impact.

**Keywords-** Digital space, Extremism, Security, Sri Lanka

## Introduction

The advent of the digital age has brought about significant transformations in societal structures and communication patterns. However, along with these advancements, new challenges have occurred in the realm of security. One pressing concern that necessitates immediate attention is the prevention of extremism in the digital age. The digital age refers to a time characterized by the widespread use of digital technologies like computers, the internet, and other digital communication tools. It has brought significant changes to how information is accessed, shared, and processed. Extremism, characterized by radical ideologies and the adoption of extreme measures to achieve ideological objectives, has found a fertile breeding ground in the digital environment. Online platforms have become instrumental in the dissemination of extremist content, recruitment of susceptible individuals, and the facilitation of extremist activities. As per, the Centre for Policy Alternatives (2021), the term "Violent Extremism" (VE) gained widespread recognition among analysts and development agencies worldwide following the events of 9/11. The reason behind its



prominence was the realization that the approach of the United States and its allies, primarily focused on security concerns, proved ineffective in addressing the underlying causes of the issue. According to the Centre for Policy Alternatives (2021), the definition proposed by USAID, which is widely utilized, defines violent extremism as the endorsement, participation in, preparation for, or support of violence driven or justified by ideology to advance social, economic, or political objectives. Essentially, it pertains to violence that is justified through a rigid ideology as the exclusive means of attaining specific social, economic, and political aims. Nevertheless, establishing a clear understanding of extremism can be problematic due to varying interpretations among individuals.

Within this context, two essential characteristics of violent extremism have been identified. Firstly, it involves exalting one's group or faith while being deeply concerned with the challenges it confronts. Secondly, it encompasses the rejection of diversity and the concept of an inclusive society. These intrinsic attributes of violent extremism underscore its deviation from democratic principles, including the acceptance of diversity and the upholding of universal human rights. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding extremism in the digital age and the development of effective strategies to counter its proliferation. This paper highlights the urgency of preventing extremism in the digital age. The digital revolution has provided extremists with unprecedented opportunities, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of the evolving threat landscape. By critically examining the challenges and opportunities associated with preventing extremism in the digital space, this research aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies that safeguard security interests while upholding individual rights in the digital era.

### **Literature Review**

As mentioned by (Zeiger & Gyte), "The global reach of these online platforms has allowed terrorist networks to merge and spread across national boundaries, cultures, and languages. This has resulted in the formation of global coalitions among previously separate terrorist organizations, a phenomenon that the researcher fully agrees with the author on. A notable example is the pledging of allegiance (bayat) to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS. Due to geographic and security constraints, traditional methods of expressing loyalty in person were impractical, prompting the utilization of social media as an alternative approach. The Researcher concur that this shift towards online platforms has been particularly evident in Southeast Asia, where various terrorist groups in the Philippines and Indonesia, such as Maute, Abu Sayyaf, Katibat Ansar alSharia, and Mujahidin Indonesian Timor, have pledged their allegiances via online videos. The acceptance and recognition of these pledges have also been released through online video platforms, reinforcing the researcher's

agreement with the author's perspective on the role of social media in facilitating and documenting these alliances.”

(Evans & Williams, 2022) state that the internet's unique characteristics contribute to individual radicalization, a point supported by the researcher. Virtual echo chambers immerse users in inhomogeneous media environments, reinforcing the tendency to seek like-minded individuals and affirming information. Algorithmic systems, as identified by the researcher, customize information presentation based on user preferences. Within these echo chambers, interaction plays a significant role in radicalization. Users engage with extremist content and likeminded peers, fostering an environment conducive to radicalization. The researcher's analysis highlights the importance of understanding these dynamics for effective counter-radicalization strategies. The internet's influence on individual beliefs and behaviour, as explored by the researcher, is a topic of concern.

The same authors go on to mention that Efforts to disrupt online extremism and prevent the indoctrination of individuals have been undertaken by various governmental, educational, and civil sector entities. These initiatives involve the use of automated tools to identify and remove violent, hateful, or harmful content, aiming to inhibit its spread online. The researcher agrees with the author's viewpoint and emphasizes the significance of these measures. Tech companies have implemented advanced algorithms and collaborations with law enforcement agencies to swiftly remove extremist content from their platforms. Governments have also introduced regulatory frameworks to ensure accountability and responsible content moderation. Educational initiatives promote digital literacy and critical thinking skills, while civil society organizations foster dialogue and peace-building efforts. Collectively, these actions demonstrate a commitment to combatting online extremism. While challenges persist, stakeholders are dedicated to creating a safer online environment. The literature reflects consensus on the importance of collaborative approaches, automated content moderation, educational programs, and civil society engagement in countering radicalization online. The researcher supports these strategies and emphasizes their role in curbing the spread of extremist ideologies in the digital realm.

## **Methodology**

The research methodology employed in this paper aims to effectively address and prevent extremism in the dynamic digital age. It utilizes a qualitative approach, focusing on non-numerical data and avoiding statistical conclusions. Both primary and secondary sources are utilized for data collection and analysis. Secondary data sources, such as scholarly articles, books, reports, and literature, are analyzed to support the research objectives. This analysis helps identify patterns and gaps in



knowledge related to extremism in the digital age. Throughout the research, various examples and case studies are incorporated to illustrate and validate the findings. These examples substantiate statements and arguments, providing practicality and relevance to the analysis. Real-world instances are examined to shed light on effective strategies and approaches for countering and preventing extremism in the digital landscape.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

### **A. Extremism and National Security**

Scholars have presented various interpretations and definitions of the term "extremism," influenced by societal norms, cultural values, religious beliefs, and gender perspectives. Consequently, the understanding of extremism may differ among individuals, posing inherent challenges in addressing this phenomenon. It is crucial, therefore, to examine existing definitions of extremism, including its association with violent extremism, to develop a comprehensive understanding. As stated by the Danish government, "Extremism refers to individuals or groups that commit or seek to legitimize violence or other illegal acts, based on societal conditions they disagree with. This term encompasses various forms such as left-wing extremism, right-wing extremism, and Islamist extremism" (Schmid, n.d.). Likewise, J.M. Berge describes extremism as the belief that an in-group's success or survival necessitates hostile actions against an out-group, which can range from verbal attacks and discrimination to violence and even genocide (Schmid, n.d.). The notion of violent extremism, according to Berge, involves the belief that violent action is indispensable for an in-group's success or survival, whether defensive, offensive, or pre-emptive. In line with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's definition, violent extremism is characterized as "encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social, or economic goals" (LaFree and Freilich, 2019). These definitions highlight the diverse motivations behind individuals' engagement in extremist activities, often resorting to violence, which is considered illegitimate.

Extremism, including violent extremism, poses a significant threat to national security for several reasons. It disrupts social order, harmony, tranquillity, social cohesion, community engagement, and stability. It undermines the rule of law and freedom of expression. Extremist ideologies can lead to the radicalization of individuals, making them vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist organizations. These organizations exploit the isolation and exclusivity experienced by extremists, offering them a sense of belonging and purpose in exchange. Consequently, extremist acts give rise to terrorism, impacting both individuals and the state, with military and non-military implications. Moreover, extremism fosters discrimination within society, contributing to polarization along ethnic, religious, or political lines. Violent

extremists advocate for separatism, which poses a threat to the territorial integrity of nations. Additionally, the transnational nature of extremism, violent extremism, and terrorism involving multiple actors creates complex international networks and funding mechanisms, straining diplomatic relationships between nations. Furthermore, extremism violates both the human rights and fundamental rights of individuals.

### **B. Digital age as a platform for extremism**

To comprehend the facilitation of extremism and violent extremism in the digital age, it is essential to grasp the nature of the present world. According to Digital Sociology (n.d.), the Digital Age, also known as the Information Age or the Computer Age, characterizes the contemporary era in which the pervasive use of the Internet has become integral to various dimensions of society. This era emerged in the 1970s and encompasses the widespread adoption of personal computers and communication technologies, significantly impacting social, political, and business domains. In the fully digitalized landscape of today, the propagation and promotion of extremism have become effortless undertakings. As a result, individuals and societies face a formidable challenge in combatting extremism amidst the opportunities and challenges presented by the digital age. The ramifications of extremism manifest both online and in tangible forms, posing threats to national security.

In line with the research by Ganesh and Bright (2020), drawing upon the insights of Gill et al. (2017), it is evident that extremists skillfully exploit social media platforms and the broader realm of the Internet to serve their purposes. These purposes encompass the dissemination of hateful narratives, propaganda, financial transactions, recruitment activities, and the exchange of operational information. An example of hate speech as stated in (Al Jazeera, 2019) is, “hate propaganda targeting Muslim communities” in Sri Lanka aftermath of the Easter Sunday Bombings 2019 which were by National Thawheed Jamath inspired by ISIS. Furthermore, social media platforms have become conduits for inciting violence, as extremists share provocative content and venerate terrorist leaders. According to Digital Watch Observatory, “Terrorist entities employ online propaganda as a strategic tool to effectively radicalize individuals, recruit supporters and new members, and even instigate “lone wolf attacks” (as evidenced by the case of the Christchurch gunman [who live telecasted], who is believed to have undergone online radicalization). The dissemination of online propaganda also serves the central aim of terrorist activities, which is to propagate fear and apprehension within society.” The digital landscape also exposes vulnerabilities to cyber terrorism, as governmental and private entities face the risk of system disruptions and compromised information security. Influential figures on social media pose an additional challenge, as they attract susceptible youth by projecting glamorous lifestyles that obscure their underlying terror connections.

Moreover, contemporary trends indicate an increasing utilization of disinformation by violent extremists and terrorist groups, particularly targeting vulnerable populations residing in conflict-affected regions, as underscored by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - ICCT (n.d.). Additionally, the dark web, a clandestine segment of the internet that evades search engine indexing, serves as a breeding ground for extremist activities, encompassing the illicit trade of goods, coordination of attacks, and the dissemination of hard-to-access extremist content. Easy accessibility to extremist and terrorist networks for the exchange of information further exacerbates the challenges associated with extremism in the digital age. Further, it is important to draw attention that the process of radicalization and recruitment predominantly occurs within the online domain, facilitated by extremist groups leveraging various means such as propaganda outlets, front organizations, cover identities, and sympathetic networks.

### **C. Sri Lankan situation**

Before the widespread usage of the term "Violent Extremism," Sri Lanka had already experienced various instances of such phenomena. In 1971, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) uprising served as the country's first encounter with organized violent extremism following its independence. As highlighted by the Center for Policy Alternatives (2021), the subsequent LTTE uprising in the 1980s predominantly involved Tamil youth from the northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka. This uprising can be categorized as a form of violent extremism, as Tamil youth were trained, armed, and indoctrinated with an ideology focused on the pursuit of a separate Tamil Eelam. Extremist Buddhist nationalism also poses a threat, exemplified by groups like Bodu Bala Sena.

Additionally, the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks, alleged to be carried out by an ISIS-inspired group called National Thawheed Jamath, shook the country. It can be regarded as a prominent incident where online extremism happened afterwards. Following the attacks, Sri Lanka temporarily blocked certain social media networks and messaging apps, including Facebook and WhatsApp, as reported by Al Jazeera (2019). This action was taken in response to an inflammatory post that incited anti-Muslim riots across multiple towns. In one such town, Chilaw, predominantly inhabited by Christians, there were instances of stone-throwing at mosques and Muslim-owned shops in response to the Facebook post made by a shopkeeper, according to the police. The aftermath of these events witnessed communal violence, including the boycott of Muslim businesses. Sri Lanka faced a significant rise in online extremism following the Easter Sunday bombings, targeting the Muslim community. On one hand, there was understandable fear among non-Muslims in the wake of the unprecedented brutal bombings. On the other hand, innocent Muslims who had no association with the extremist group NTJ were unfairly affected.

#### **D. Prevention of extremism in the digital age**

The digital age, despite its inherent challenges and role as a platform for online extremism, can also be effectively harnessed for positive purposes. The essence lies in utilizing the digital age efficiently to contribute to the well-being of humanity. Although individuals who are radicalized, extremists, and terrorists may exploit the online realm for their hidden motives, it is imperative to acknowledge that the opposing party can employ the digital age as a means to counter and eliminate such attacks. Ultimately, the crux of the matter lies in strategically utilizing the digital age as a potent tool to combat and eradicate the threats posed by online extremism.

Starting from individuals, tech companies, and private entities to governments all over the world are utilizing precautionary measures to prevent online extremism. These measures can be by way of websites, laws, resolutions or policies. Social media platforms have community standards where if they detect extremist activities they take it down, it also provides the opportunity to report such content. For example, YouTube uses enhanced Content Moderation, where machine learning algorithms and human moderators are employed as moderators to identify and remove extremist content from its platform. In Sri Lanka, Section 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Act No.56 of 2007 (ICCPR Act) is a significant legal framework to address hate crimes. The Educate Against Hate website, established by the Home Office and Department of Education of the United Kingdom is another example. the website serves as an information hub catering to students, teachers, and parents. Its primary objective is to provide a comprehensive range of resources and support materials aimed at countering extremist ideologies and promoting education focused on tolerance and inclusivity. Another example is the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFT), which is an initiative that facilitates the collaboration and exchange of information among the technology industry, government bodies, civil society organizations, and academic institutions. Its primary objective is to collectively address and mitigate the impact of terrorist and violent extremist activities on the internet. Another example is the Toronto Declaration which addresses the protection of human rights in the context of artificial intelligence. Led by Amnesty International and Access Now, it has received widespread support from the global human rights community.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the prevention of extremism in the digital age is a pressing concern that demands immediate attention and this applies to Sri Lanka as well. The digital revolution has transformed societal structures and communication patterns, presenting both opportunities and challenges in the realm of security. Extremism thrives in the digital environment, where online platforms have become instrumental in disseminating extremist content, recruiting susceptible individuals, and facilitating



extremist activities. Understanding extremism requires examining diverse definitions influenced by societal norms, cultural values, religious beliefs, and gender perspectives. Extremism, including violent extremism, poses significant threats to national security, social order, and human rights, while also fostering discrimination and straining diplomatic relationships. Online platforms, including social media and the dark web, serve as powerful tools for the dissemination of hate speech, recruitment, and incitement of violence. Prevention efforts necessitate a collaborative approach involving individuals, tech companies, private entities, and governments, with measures such as community standards, legislation addressing hate crimes, and collaborative initiatives for information sharing. Promoting digital literacy and education focused on tolerance are crucial components. International cooperation, exemplified by initiatives like the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, is essential in mitigating the impact of online extremism. By comprehensively understanding the threat landscape and strategically utilizing digital tools, societies can counter extremism and create a safer and more inclusive digital environment.

### **Recommendations**

To further advance the endeavours aimed at countering extremist activities within the digital realm, a range of supplementary actions can be deployed. Of paramount importance is the cultivation of digital literacy among individuals, equipping them with the capacity to identify terrorist or extremist content and comprehend the potential ramifications, thereby fortifying their resilience against falling prey to such material. Moreover, fostering collaboration with technology companies assumes pivotal significance as it engenders cooperation among governments, law enforcement agencies, and technology enterprises, ultimately yielding the development and implementation of policies specifically designed to counteract extremist activities. In this context, technology companies can allocate resources towards the deployment of cutting-edge algorithms and artificial intelligence systems that expedite the identification and removal of extremist content. Additionally, the establishment of a robust reporting mechanism, congruent with principles of victim and witness protection, assumes indispensable importance. Concurrently, forging alliances with civil society actors constitutes a potent strategy, providing a platform for civil society organizations, community leaders, and religious institutions to engender online dialogues, cultivate mutual understanding, and promote initiatives aimed at fostering peace. Lastly, the augmentation of international cooperation assumes paramount significance, as it facilitates the exchange of information among governments, law enforcement agencies, and technology companies, thereby bolstering efforts to combat extremist activities transcending national boundaries. The sharing of best practices, intelligence, and expertise serves to fortify preventive measures and response capabilities, amplifying the efficacy of counter-extremism endeavours.

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*Charani Patabendige is a Research Assistant and Acting Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute*



# Nexus Between Climate Change and Human Security in Sri Lanka: Implications for Small Island Developing States in the Indian Ocean Region

By Commander Amila Prasanga

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## Abstract

This study explores the interconnectedness of climate change and human security in Sri Lanka and its broader implications for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Indian Ocean region. The research addresses a critical gap in understanding the complex relationship between climate change impacts and the challenges faced by human security in Sri Lanka, with implications for similar vulnerable island nations in the Indian Ocean region. The research problem stems from the recognition that climate change poses substantial risks to human security in Sri Lanka, particularly in SIDS in the Indian Ocean region. The objectives of this research are to examine the specific impacts of Climate Change on Human Security in Sri Lanka, assess the climate change-induced Human Security challenges faced by Sri Lanka, and recommend evidence-based adaptation and mitigation strategies to Sri Lanka and other SIDS in the IOR. The research methodology features a qualitative approach blending desk review with participatory methods, like case studies, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the research problem. A participatory approach involves Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews with affected communities, local leaders, and experts. Data analysis employs the Conflict Tree Visualization tool to illustrate causes, problems, and effects. To bolster reliability, a triangulation approach cross-references data from various sources. The results demonstrate that climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and poses significant threats to human security in Sri Lanka and other SIDS in the Indian Ocean region. The findings reveal the interconnected nature of climate change impacts and human security challenges, highlighting the necessity of integrated approaches that address social, economic, and environmental dimensions. In conclusion, this study emphasizes the significance of enhancing resilience measures and strategies to protect vulnerable communities and ensure sustainable development in SIDS in the Indian Ocean region.

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Human Security, Sri Lanka, Small Island Developing States, Indian Ocean Region

## Introduction

Climate change poses significant risks to human security, particularly in small island states within the Indian Ocean region (IPCC, 2022). The impacts of climate change, such as rising sea levels, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and changes in precipitation patterns, have far-reaching consequences for the well-being and livelihoods of the population in these vulnerable island nations (UNEP, 2020). Among these countries, Sri Lanka stands as a compelling case study to explore the intersection between climate change and human security. This small island state faces a range of climate-related challenges, including coastal erosion, loss of land, water scarcity, and disruptions to agriculture and food security (Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, 2016). Understanding the implications of climate change on human security in Sri Lanka can provide valuable insights into the broader context of climate change impacts of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Indian Ocean region and inform the development of effective adaptation and mitigation strategies to safeguard the well-being of vulnerable communities.

Studies have extensively examined the impacts of climate change on various scales, including global, regional, and local levels (Smith et al., 2019; UNEP, 2020). However, there is a noticeable gap in comprehensive research that specifically addresses the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by SIDS in the Indian Ocean region. These SIDS, including Sri Lanka, possess distinct socio-economic and geographical characteristics that significantly influence the way climate change impacts human security (IPCC, 2022). Despite the existing literature on climate change and human security, it often fails to provide in-depth insights into the specific risks and coping mechanisms of vulnerable communities in SIDS like Sri Lanka, thereby leaving a research gap that necessitates focused investigation (Smith et al., 2019; Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, 2016).

The research problem at hand delves into the intricate relationship between climate change and human security in Sri Lanka, with a broader perspective on its implications for SIDS in the Indian Ocean region. This study seeks to address a critical research gap by providing a comprehensive understanding of the specific challenges confronting vulnerable communities in the face of climate change.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate and analyze the precise impacts of climate change on human security within the context of Sri Lanka. Another objective is to assess and identify the specific human security challenges exacerbated by climate change in Sri Lanka. The final objective of this study is to provide evidence-based recommendations for adaptation and mitigation strategies, not only for Sri Lanka but also for other SIDS in the Indian Ocean region facing similar

challenges.

This research endeavors to shed light on the complex interplay between climate change and human security in Sri Lanka, ultimately offering valuable insights and actionable strategies to safeguard the well-being and livelihoods of vulnerable populations, both within Sri Lanka and across the broader Indian Ocean region.

### **Literature Review**

The nexus between climate change human security has gained increasing attention on the global arena. The United Nations (UN) was founded in the aftermath of World War II with a core mission of ensuring international peace and security, as articulated in the charter's preamble: "*to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war*" (UN, 1945). This historical context underscores the foundational role of peace and security in the UN's mission. In 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted during the Rio Earth Summit. This landmark framework aimed to prevent "dangerous" human interference with the climate system. Importantly, it acknowledged the critical importance of both climate change mitigation and adaptation in maintaining peace and preventing conflicts (UNFCCC, 1992).

National security comprises "*measures taken by a state to ensure the safety and well-being of its citizens, protect its sovereignty, and safeguard its territorial integrity against internal and external threats.*" It encompasses various dimensions, including military, economic, political, and environmental security (Mendis, 1992). The UN General Assembly report entitled "Climate Change and its Possible Security Implications" (A/64/350) addresses various points related to the impact of climate change on SIDS and their security implications (UN General Assembly, 2009).

The report recognizes climate change as a significant threat to SIDS due to their geographical vulnerabilities. It highlights the security implications of climate change for SIDS, including the potential for increased conflict over scarce resources, displacement of populations, and damage to critical infrastructure.

Additionally; UN General Assembly, 2009 emphasizes the concept of human security, which includes protection from climate-induced threats such as food and water scarcity, loss of livelihoods, and forced migration. Furthermore; it highlighted that the climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts can contribute to conflict prevention in SIDS by addressing the root causes of potential conflicts related to resource scarcity.

Within the UNFCCC framework, the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process was established. This process assists countries in identifying their specific adaptation



needs and formulating strategies to address these needs effectively (McGray, 2014). A significant milestone occurred in 2015 during the Conference of Paris, where 196 countries collectively adopted the Paris Agreement. This legally binding international treaty on climate change aims to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius, with a preference for 1.5 degrees Celsius. To contribute to the global goals outlined in the Paris Agreement, countries have committed to developing and implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). These NDCs encompass national climate action plans that include targets for reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions and enhancing adaptation efforts (Streck et al., 2016).

The United Nations Security Council is an important instrument for integrating climate change and environmental considerations into peace and security policymaking. As of May 2021, the Security Council has recognized the adverse effects of climate change among other factors. For example, in its Resolution 2527 (2020) on Somalia, the Council recognizes “the adverse effects of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of Somalia, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity (UN Security Council, 2020).

For the first time, the 2020 annual report of the UN Secretary-General on women, peace, and security includes a dedicated section on climate change and its peace and security implications. The report urges governments to integrate climate change considerations into their National Action Plans on women, peace, and security.

To help countries achieve the ambitious global prevention agenda, United Nations Common Country Analyses (UN CCAs) are carried out as an inclusive, multi-stakeholder process to assess gaps, opportunities, and strategic direction at the country level. Ensuring that UN CCAs are informed by integrated climate security analysis is an important step in delivering on key inter-related SDGs. To this end, several existing global frameworks provide the foundation for policy-making to address climate-related security risks.

Further, the 2030 Agenda, adopted by world leaders in 2015, is a comprehensive "plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity." It includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets. Responsive action on climate security can help us achieve goals on climate action (Goal 13), inclusive peace (Goal 16), among other goals on sustainability, inclusion, and peace.

This recognizes that climate change and human security are deeply interconnected. Beyond armed conflict, insecurity exists in various forms and at multiple levels, including political, economic, community, and personal. This comprehensive

understanding highlights that "sustaining peace" encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict (United Nations, 2017).

To broaden the understanding of security, the concept of human security has gained prominence. This approach encompasses a range of security risks that affect people's daily lives globally, including threats related to climate change, such as food insecurity, displacement, and health issues (UNDP, 1994). The literature highlights contemporary challenges in the context of climate change, and human security. Rising internal displacements associated with both disasters and conflicts (IDMC, 2023), coupled with an increasing number of people in need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA, 2023), underscore the urgency of addressing these interrelated issues. Nevertheless, a significant funding gap hinders effective humanitarian responses (OCHA, 2023).

Effective strategies for addressing climate-related security risks must involve diverse stakeholders, including local communities, indigenous peoples (IAGN, 2023). Initiatives like the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) under the UNFCCC aim to facilitate knowledge exchange and best practices for holistic mitigation and adaptation. Fragility, as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), encompasses the combination of exposure to various risks and the limited coping capacity of governments, systems, or communities to manage, absorb, or mitigate these risks. Fragility manifests across multiple dimensions, including environmental, political, societal, economic, and security aspects. This multifaceted nature of fragility can result in adverse outcomes, such as violence, poverty, inequality, displacement, and environmental and political degradation (OECD, 2020).

Resilience, in contrast, refers to the capacity of individuals, communities, and states to withstand and rebound from shocks while positively adapting to long-term changes. Resilience efforts may involve substantial transformations in core structures and institutions, making them better suited to evolving environments (OECD, 2018). Building resilience hinges on inclusive and sustainable development, addressing inequalities, reinforcing institutions, and ensuring that development strategies integrate risk considerations. This approach, as emphasized by the United Nations and World Bank, represents a powerful means of prevention in the face of fragility and climate-related challenges (United Nations and World Bank, 2018).

Sri Lanka's extensive coastline, including major cities like Colombo and Galle, is exposed to sea-level rise and coastal erosion. Studies indicate that this threatens infrastructure, displaces communities, and disrupts livelihoods (Seneviratne et al.,

2020). The island experiences an increasing frequency of extreme weather events, including cyclones and heavy rainfall. These events lead to flooding, landslides, and property damage, particularly in hilly regions (Munasinghe et al., 2019).

Irregular monsoons and shifting rainfall patterns impact agriculture, the backbone of Sri Lanka's economy. Crop failures result in food insecurity, affecting both rural and urban populations (Hettiarachchi et al., 2018). Prolonged droughts have intensified water scarcity issues in Sri Lanka. This has implications for drinking water supply, agriculture, and hydropower generation (Fernando et al., 2021).

Vulnerability is often tied to socioeconomic status. Low-income and marginalized communities lack the resources to adapt effectively. Women, in particular, face gender-specific vulnerabilities due to societal norms and limited access to resources (UNDP Sri Lanka, 2020). Coastal communities are at the forefront of climate impacts. Vulnerability is exacerbated by inadequate housing, sanitation, and infrastructure in these areas (Hapuarachchi et al., 2017).

Climate change exacerbates health risks, including the spread of waterborne diseases during floods and heat-related illnesses during extreme heatwaves. Vulnerable populations face increased health disparities (WHO Sri Lanka, 2019). Communities heavily reliant on natural resources, such as forests and fisheries, are vulnerable to ecosystem changes and degradation caused by climate change. Disruptions in these sectors affect livelihoods (ADB, 2020).

Sri Lanka has implemented a range of policies and strategies aimed at enhancing climate resilience, disaster preparedness, and adaptation. These initiatives encompass the establishment of early warning systems, the implementation of climate-resilient infrastructure projects, and the development of comprehensive disaster management plans (UNDP Sri Lanka, 2020).

Local communities have developed adaptive strategies through community-based organizations, sharing traditional knowledge, and implementing local-level projects. These initiatives enhance resilience and coping capacity (Jayatilleke et al., 2019). Sri Lanka receives support from international organizations and donors to enhance its climate resilience efforts, including infrastructure development and capacity-building programs (World Bank, 2021).

Given the increasing urbanization in Sri Lanka, there is a need for in-depth studies on urban vulnerability to climate change and the effectiveness of urban adaptation measures. Assessing the effectiveness of climate policies and their alignment with the needs of vulnerable communities is essential for informed policy-making (World Bank, 2021).

## **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research approach, combining both desk review and participatory methods, including case studies. This approach enables a comprehensive exploration of the research problem by drawing from existing knowledge and engaging with affected communities directly. To capture the nuanced perspectives and experiences of those most impacted, this study incorporates a participatory approach. This involves conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with affected communities and conducting semi-structured interviews with community members, local leaders, and subject matter experts. FGDs promote open dialogue among community members, fostering a collective understanding of their challenges, while interviews provide in-depth insights from key stakeholders.

Data analysis is facilitated by utilizing a Conflict Tree Visualization tool. In this method, the causes of the issues under investigation are depicted as the roots of the tree, the core problems as the trunk, and the resulting effects as the branches and leaves. This visual representation offers a clear and structured way to understand the complex web of causation, problems, and effects.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, a triangulation approach is adopted. Triangulation involves cross-referencing multiple data sources and research methods. By combining information gathered from desk reviews, FGDs, and interviews, the study can ensure that the findings are robust and consistent. This method reduces bias and enhances the overall credibility of the research.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations are diligently addressed. This includes obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of sensitive information, and adhering to established ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. The ethical framework underpinning this study safeguards the well-being and rights of all individuals involved in the research.

## **Analysis of the Study**

In Sri Lanka, the impacts of climate change are evident in various sectors. According to the Climate Risk Index 2021, Sri Lanka ranks among the countries most affected by climate change in terms of extreme weather events (Germanwatch, 2021). The country has experienced an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as floods and cyclones. For instance, between 2000 and 2019, Sri Lanka witnessed 19 major floods, affecting over 12 million people and resulting in significant economic losses (National Disaster Management Centre, 2020).



The impacts of climate change also extend to coastal areas in Sri Lanka, where sea-level rise and coastal erosion pose significant challenges. According to Dissanayake et al., 2021, Sri Lanka's coastline has been experiencing an average erosion rate of 0.3 to 0.6 meters per year, resulting in the loss of land and displacement of coastal communities. These coastal vulnerabilities not only disrupt livelihoods but also create social and economic tensions, potentially leading to conflicts over resources and displacement.

Sri Lanka is projected to experience a substantial loss of 1.5% of its GDP by 2050 due to climate-related issues. This stark prediction underscores the pressing urgency of taking decisive climate action to mitigate these impacts effectively. Sri Lanka's climate ambition encompasses a dual-pronged approach. Firstly, it involves the launch of Sri Lanka's Climate Prosperity Plan 2022, which focuses on achieving green growth through the generation of renewable energy. This plan leverages the advantages of wind and solar energy to facilitate economic restructuring, particularly following the financial crisis of 2022.

Secondly; Sri Lanka is actively supporting the establishment of a Climate Justice Forum, a platform designed to foster international collaboration in addressing climate-related challenges. These challenges encompass a wide range of issues, including loss and damage, adaptation, and mitigation. Recognizing the finite nature of global resources, Sri Lanka places strategic emphasis on areas where maximum results can be achieved in the realm of climate action and environmental sustainability.

Sri Lanka has presented two noteworthy proposals on the global stage in 2022. First, it advocates for the establishment of an International Climate Change University, envisioned as a research and development platform dedicated to advancing climate mitigation actions. Second, Sri Lanka has introduced the Tropical Belt Climate Ambition Project, which centers on biodiversity conservation, renewable energy adoption, nature-based solutions, and pollution control within the tropical belt. This project aims to make a positive global impact in the fight against climate change.

This comprehensive research delves into the multifaceted realm of climate-induced vulnerabilities and their far-reaching effects in the context of Sri Lanka. Four distinct case studies were meticulously conducted, each in different geographical areas, carefully selected based on their susceptibility and the frequency of particularly devastating natural disasters.

The analysis employed a Conflict Tree Visualization tool, a robust method that unveils the intricate relationships between the *core causes*, *core problems*, and *profound effects* stemming from these environmental vulnerabilities.

### ***A. Analysis of Case Study 1: Coastal Vulnerability in Jaffna Peninsula***

The case study of coastal vulnerability in the Jaffna Peninsula illuminates a grave and multifaceted issue exacerbated by climate change. The analysis of this case study encompasses an examination of the causes, problems, and effects of coastal vulnerability in Jaffna peninsula.

#### **1)Core Causes**

**Rising Sea Levels:** The documented average sea-level rising rate of 1.4 to 3.5 mm per year over the past few decades presents a significant challenge. This dangerous trend amplifies the risk of coastal erosion, coastal flooding, and saltwater intrusion, all of which threaten the livelihoods of coastal communities.

**Irregular Weather Patterns:** The erratic weather patterns resulting from climate change bring irregular precipitation to Jaffna. These unpredictable climatic fluctuations undermine the resilience of coastal communities, rendering them ill-equipped to cope with the unpredictability of their changing environment.

**Inadequate Infrastructure Development:** Unplanned and insufficient infrastructure development along the coast exacerbates the region's vulnerability. Poorly constructed buildings and roads in flood-prone areas amplify the risks faced by residents.

**Land Degradation:** Activities such as deforestation, improper land use, and unsustainable agricultural practices collectively lead to soil erosion and weaken the natural buffer against coastal vulnerabilities.

**Lack of Climate Adaptation:** Traditional agricultural practices and livelihoods in the Jaffna are often ill-suited for the evolving climate. Communities struggle to adapt to changing conditions, which further compounds the economic and livelihood challenges they face.

#### **2) Core Problems**

**Coastal Erosion:** This issue is pressing, and data from the Sri Lanka Department of Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management (2019) indicates an alarming average coastal recession rate of 1.2 meters per year. Coastal erosion threatens infrastructure and habitats in Jaffna.

**Coastal Flooding:** IPCC, 2022 predicts a surge in extreme weather events, including heavy rainfall and storms, leading to coastal inundation. Recent data indicates a 25% increase in the frequency of floods over the past decade in the Jaffna Peninsula. Further, coastal flooding disrupts communities and infrastructure.

**Saltwater Intrusion:** Saltwater intrusion significantly affects crop yields, with fertile paddy fields lost due to this issue. Additionally, it compromises the quality of drinking water, posing health risks and increasing vulnerability to waterborne diseases.

**Agricultural Loss:** The intrusion into arable lands results in the loss of fertile paddy fields, affecting local food security and the nutritional well-being of communities.

**Resource Scarcity:** Prolonged coastal vulnerability exacerbates resource scarcity, particularly in terms of potable water. The intrusion of saltwater into freshwater sources intensifies the shortage of clean drinking water.

### ***3) Profound Effects***

**Food Insecurity:** Saltwater intrusion disrupts crop yields, leading to local food insecurity and increased dependence on external aid for sustenance. This affects not only the quantity but also the quality of food consumed by the affected population, with implications for their overall nutritional well-being.

**Community Displacement:** Pervasive coastal vulnerability forces communities to contemplate relocation, potentially displacing generations from their ancestral homes, culture, and traditions. This migration disrupts the social fabric of these communities and creates challenges in terms of resettlement, livelihoods, and preserving cultural heritage.

**Economic Vulnerability:** Households reliant on agriculture and fisheries confront economic hardships, affecting their overall well-being and access to essential services such as healthcare and education. Income reductions due to saltwater intrusion and land loss have led to a staggering 30% decrease in annual incomes for affected households.

**Health Risks:** The intrusion of saltwater into freshwater sources poses health risks as it compromises the quality of drinking water, increasing vulnerability to waterborne diseases. This exacerbates the vulnerability of the population, particularly affecting the health and well-being of children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions.

**Social Disruption:** The pervasive coastal vulnerability in the Jaffna peninsula has triggered profound social disruption. This social upheaval reverberates through these close-knit communities, disrupting the very fabric of their societies and eroding their cultural heritage. The complex challenges posed by such social disruption call for comprehensive and culturally sensitive responses, recognizing the deeply rooted connections to land and traditions held by these communities. Addressing these social dimensions is paramount in formulating effective strategies for climate resilience in the Jaffna peninsula.

In Summary, the case study of the coastal vulnerability in the Jaffna Peninsula underscores the severity and complexity of this issue. Climate change-induced factors, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of adaptation measures compound the challenges faced by this region. Addressing these issues requires not only environmental measures but also social and economic interventions to safeguard the well-being and livelihoods of the coastal communities in the Jaffna peninsula.

### ***B. Analysis of Case Study 2: Landslide Risk in Badulla***

The case study on landslide risk in Badulla illuminates a series of complex issues caused by climate change and human activities that threaten both the environment and the well-being of the local population. The analysis will delve into the core causes, core problems, and profound effects of landslide vulnerability in Badulla.

#### ***1) Core Causes***

**Irregular Rainfall:** One of the primary causes of landslides in Badulla is irregular rainfall patterns exacerbated by climate change. These unpredictable weather events, characterized by unprecedented rainfall in recent years, contribute significantly to soil instability. As climate change continues, these irregular weather patterns are likely to persist, further increasing the susceptibility to landslides.

**Deforestation:** Extensive deforestation, primarily driven by agricultural expansion, poses a critical environmental challenge. It has left the region's steep slopes vulnerable to erosion and has compromised soil structure. The removal of trees and vegetation disrupts the natural balance of the environment, making landslides more likely and more severe.

**Urbanization:** The rapid urbanization in Badulla, fueled by population growth and inadequate urban planning, has led to the haphazard construction of buildings and infrastructure on slopes prone to landslides. This reckless expansion contributes to the increased risk of landslides in urban areas.



**Weak Regulatory Frameworks:** Inadequate regulatory frameworks governing construction and deforestation in vulnerable areas have allowed dangerous development to persist. The absence of robust enforcement and clear land use policies further exacerbates the problem. Legal and policy measures are urgently needed to address this aspect of landslide vulnerability.

**Limited Awareness:** Many communities in Badulla lack awareness of landslide risks, and there are insufficient preparedness measures in place. Educational initiatives and community-based programs are essential to improve awareness and readiness for landslides.

## *2) Core Problems*

**Community Exposure:** Vulnerable communities living on steep slopes are directly exposed to the heightened risk of landslides. Their proximity to landslide-prone areas puts them in immediate danger, and the lack of resources and infrastructure further amplifies their vulnerability.

**Infrastructure Vulnerability:** The proliferation of infrastructure in landslide-prone areas increases the risk of damage and loss during landslides. Roads, buildings, and public structures are all at risk, disrupting daily life and the overall development of the region.

**Resource Scarcity:** Landslide-affected areas struggle with resource scarcity, particularly in terms of accessing clean water, food, and shelter. The aftermath of landslides can result in a shortage of essential resources, deepening the challenges faced by residents.

## *2) Profound Effects*

**Food Insecurity:** Prolonged droughts lead to widespread food insecurity in Ampara, affecting both the availability and affordability of nutritious food for the communities. The provision of food assistance and support for sustainable farming practices can help alleviate this problem.

**Economic Hardship:** Households heavily reliant on agriculture suffer from economic hardship, limiting their overall well-being and access to essential services such as healthcare and education. Diversifying livelihoods and strengthening social safety nets are essential to mitigate these economic challenges.

**Health Risks:** Drought conditions, compounded by water scarcity, elevate health risks, particularly concerning waterborne diseases and healthcare challenges. Improving access to clean water and healthcare services is vital.

**Social Disruption:** The disruption of traditional livelihoods due to drought forces communities in Ampara to seek alternative income sources, altering their way of life. Supporting livelihood diversification initiatives can facilitate a smoother transition and reduce the overall impact of drought.

In summary, the case study on drought in Ampara underscores the critical need for climate-resilient agricultural practices, diversified livelihoods, and improved water resource management. Addressing these aspects can enhance the region's ability to adapt to changing climate conditions, ultimately reducing the vulnerabilities and challenges associated with drought.

#### ***D. Analysis of Case Study 4: Flood Vulnerability in Colombo***

The case study on flood vulnerability in Colombo provides insights into the intricate relationship between climate change, urbanization, and the recurring issue of urban flooding. The analysis dissects the core causes, problems, and effects of flood vulnerability in Colombo.

##### ***1) Core Causes***

**Irregular Weather Patterns:** Colombo's susceptibility to floods is intrinsically linked to climate change-induced irregular weather patterns. These patterns result in intense and unpredictable rainfall, overwhelming existing drainage systems and triggering urban flooding. The irregular weather underscores the urgency of adapting to changing climate conditions.

**Sea-Level Rise:** Rising sea levels, attributed to climate change, significantly contribute to the increasing vulnerability of low-lying areas in Colombo. Higher sea levels worsen the impacts of heavy rainfall by causing coastal flooding and inundation. As sea levels continue to rise, this threat will persist, emphasizing the need for robust mitigation and adaptation strategies.

**Urbanization Pressures:** Rapid urbanization, driven by population growth and inadequate urban planning, has led to the haphazard construction of buildings and infrastructure in flood-prone areas. The urban expansion amplifies the risk of flooding. Effective urban planning and sustainable development practices are imperative to mitigate this risk.

**Inadequate Infrastructure:** The inadequacy of drainage and flood control infrastructure in urban areas further exacerbates the flooding problem. Poorly

designed or maintained drainage systems struggle to cope with heavy rainfall. Infrastructure investment and maintenance are crucial for enhancing flood resilience.

**Informal Settlements:** Approximately 45% of Colombo's urban population resides in informal settlements characterized by inadequate housing and infrastructure. These vulnerable populations are highly exposed to floods due to their precarious living conditions. Addressing the needs of these communities is paramount in reducing flood vulnerability.

## *2) Core Problems*

**Infrastructure Damage:** Recurrent floods result in the damage of critical infrastructure, including homes, roads, and public buildings, hindering overall development and recovery efforts. Investment in resilient infrastructure is essential for mitigating the impact of floods and facilitating recovery.

**Resource Scarcity:** Flood-affected areas often face resource scarcity, including clean water and shelter, deepening the challenges faced by residents and impeding recovery efforts. Ensuring a steady supply of resources during and after floods is critical.

**Community Vulnerability:** Vulnerable populations residing in informal settlements are particularly susceptible to floods. Limited access to resources and healthcare further amplifies their challenges, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to protect these communities.

## *3) Profound Effects*

**Infrastructure Loss:** Flooding results in the loss and damage of critical infrastructure, affecting homes, roads, and public buildings. This hinders overall development and recovery efforts, reinforcing the need for resilient construction and urban planning.

**Health Risks:** Floods disrupt access to healthcare services, exacerbating health risks and hindering responses to injuries and diseases. Improving healthcare access and preparedness is essential for minimizing health-related challenges during and after floods.

**Economic Strain:** The economic upheaval caused by floods affects the overall well-being of households, limiting their capacity to access essential services and education. Supporting economic recovery and livelihoods is pivotal in reducing the economic strain imposed by floods.



**Resource Depletion:** Flood-affected areas suffer from resource scarcity, particularly in terms of clean water, food, and shelter. Enhancing resource management and supply chain resilience is crucial for minimizing the challenges faced by residents.

**Community Disruption:** Pervasive flood vulnerability strains social fabrics, compelling communities to contemplate migration and displacement, potentially leading to the erosion of cultural heritage. Preserving community cohesion during and after floods is essential.

In summary, the case study on flood vulnerability in Colombo underscores the pressing need for comprehensive strategies that encompass urban planning, infrastructure development, community support, and climate adaptation to effectively address the recurring issue of urban flooding and its far-reaching impacts.

### **Discussion and Results**

The impact of climate change on human security in Sri Lanka, particularly in the context of SIDS, is contingent upon their exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacity in the face of these environmental stressors (IPCC, 2019).

Exposure, in the context of SIDS like Sri Lanka, pertains to the physical presence of populations, infrastructure, and other critical assets within regions susceptible to climate-related stressors and shocks, including but not limited to sea-level rise, tropical cyclones, and coastal erosion (IPCC, 2019).

Vulnerability, which is particularly acute in island states, reflects the inclination of these exposed elements, such as communities, infrastructure, and other essential assets, to suffer adverse consequences due to climate change hazards. The inherent factors of small landmass, limited resources, and geographic isolation render island states highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. These encompass elevated risks of flooding, land erosion, and disruptions to vital services and livelihoods (UNEP, 2019).

Coping capacity, an integral facet of vulnerability, signifies the capacity of island states and their populace to effectively manage the repercussions of climate change. This encompasses various determinants, including institutional capabilities, financial resources, access to technology, and the presence of robust social and community networks. These factors collectively empower the adoption of adaptive strategies and the fortification of resilience against climate-induced challenges (IPCC, 2019).

Furthermore, climate change impacts manifest in various ways, particularly in SIDS like Sri Lanka situated in the Indian Ocean region. These impacts can be categorized

into sudden onset stressors/shocks and slow onset stressors, each posing distinct challenges.

**Sudden Onset Stressors/Shocks:** These are conspicuous, immediate events that include extreme weather phenomena like cyclones, floods, and droughts. These events have the potential to inflict extensive damage on property, infrastructure, and livelihoods, often resulting in the displacement of communities.

**Slow Onset Stressors:** In contrast, slow onset stressors are less overt and exert a gradual influence. They encompass phenomena such as rising sea levels, Ocean acidification, and shifting precipitation patterns. These phenomena incrementally affect the ability of communities to access fundamental resources like food and water.

Understanding the different types of climate change impacts, both sudden onset and slow onset, are crucial for SIDS in developing effective adaptation and mitigation strategies. By addressing both immediate and long-term challenges, island states can enhance their resilience and well-being in the face of these evolving environmental conditions (IPCC, 2022; UNEP, 2020).

To provide a more comprehensive understanding, it's essential to consider various factors that amplify vulnerability to climate change impacts in Sri Lanka and similar island nations in the Indian Ocean region.

**Geographic Location:** Proximity to climate change impacts significantly influences vulnerability. Coastal and low-lying areas are particularly exposed due to their susceptibility to rising sea levels and extreme weather events (World Bank, 2022).

**Socioeconomic Status:** Individuals and communities grappling with poverty and marginalization confront heightened vulnerability. Limited resources hinder their capacity to cope with the multifaceted effects of climate change (UNDP, 2022).

**Gender:** Gender dynamics play a pivotal role, with women and girls facing elevated vulnerability. They often bear the responsibility for securing water and food, tasks that become more challenging in the face of climate change (United Nations Women, 2022).

**Age:** Vulnerability is also associated with age. Both older individuals and children exhibit increased susceptibility to climate change impacts due to their diminished resilience (World Health Organization, 2022).

**Disability:** Persons with disabilities confront augmented vulnerability as they may encounter difficulties accessing essential resources and evacuating during climatic disasters (Disability Rights International, 2022).

**Education:** Education serves as a critical determinant of coping capacity. Those with higher levels of education tend to be more equipped to navigate climate risks and employ mitigation strategies (UNESCO, 2022).

**Access to Resources:** The availability of essential resources, such as food, water, and shelter, significantly influences an individual's or community's ability to withstand climate change impacts (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2022).

The study scrutinizes the multifaceted impacts of climate change on human security in Sri Lanka, with a special focus on SIDS. Human security encompasses various dimensions, including health, economic, political, food, environmental, personal, and community security, all of which are significantly influenced by climate change (UNDP, 2020).

**Health Security:** In Sri Lanka, climate change poses considerable threats to health security, particularly regarding water quality and sanitation. Rising temperatures and altered precipitation patterns exacerbated water scarcity issues, impacting around 11.7 percent of the Sri Lankan population with limited access to improved water sources. This elevates the risk of waterborne diseases, with vulnerable communities, especially children, facing substantial health challenges (OHCHR & WFP, 2022).

**Economic Security:** Economic security in Sri Lanka is intimately linked to employment opportunities and income stability. Climate change-induced events such as extreme weather events and sea-level rise disrupted livelihoods, posing severe economic challenges (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). This is especially concerning in areas with existing poverty and income inequality issues, predominantly rural areas (World Bank, 2020).

**Political Security:** Political stability and protection of human rights are pivotal aspects of political security. Climate change exacerbated political tensions, as resource scarcity and displacement due to environmental factors may trigger conflicts. Sri Lanka has previously experienced political unrest and ethnic tensions, underscoring the fragile nature of political security (UNDP, 2020).

**Food Security:** Climate change-induced shifts in precipitation and temperature patterns can substantially affect crop yields and food production in Sri Lanka.

Ensuring access to nutritious food for all individuals becomes increasingly challenging with around 17% of the Sri Lankan population already experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity (WFP, 2022).

**Environmental Security:** Sri Lanka's environmental security is under duress due to climate change. The nation faces a slew of environmental challenges including deforestation, land degradation, and pollution. Sri Lanka witnessed the loss of approximately 29% of its forest cover between 1990 and 2020, resulting in dire ecological consequences (Global Forest Watch, 2020).

**Personal Security:** In the context of climate change, Sri Lanka faces specific challenges related to personal security. The implications of climate change exacerbated these existing personal security challenges. Climate-induced events, such as extreme weather events and environmental degradation, can disrupt livelihoods and communities. Displacement resulting from climate-related disasters can lead to overcrowded living conditions and heightened tensions, potentially increasing the risk of domestic violence and conflicts within communities.

One notable concern is the prevalence of domestic violence, crime, and child abuse in the country. The Sri Lanka Police Department recorded a significant number of cases in 2020, with 22,941 reported incidents of domestic violence alone (Sri Lanka Police, 2021). This alarming statistic underscores the urgency of addressing these issues within the framework of personal security.

**Community Security:** Fostering social cohesion and preventing intercommunal conflicts is pivotal for community security in Sri Lanka. The nation has a history of tensions between different ethnic and religious groups. Climate change-induced resource scarcity and displacement can further exacerbate these issues (UNDP, 2020). Therefore, initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and respect for diversity are essential for building resilient and inclusive communities.

In the context of climate change, these dimensions of human security are profoundly interconnected, underscoring the necessity of a comprehensive approach to address the evolving challenges faced by Sri Lanka, particularly for SIDSs in IOR.

## **Recommendations**

### **A. Recommendations for Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka should prioritize the development and implementation of robust adaptation measures to address the specific climate change impacts it faces. Raise awareness about climate change impacts and adaptation strategies among coastal communities.

Education and training programs can help communities understand the risks and adopt resilient practices.

Sri Lanka should promote climate-resilient agricultural practices in vulnerable regions like Jaffna. This includes introducing salt-tolerant crop varieties and efficient water management techniques.

Sri Lanka should invest in resilient infrastructure, especially in coastal areas. This includes constructing flood-resistant buildings and improving drainage systems to reduce the impact of inundation.

Sri Lanka should empower local communities to be part of the solution. Encourage the formation of community-based organizations to manage resources sustainably and implement climate adaptation strategies.

Sri Lanka should develop and maintain early warning systems for extreme weather events, including storm surges and heavy rainfall. Ensure that these systems are accessible and understandable to the local population.

Sri Lanka should implement integrated coastal management strategies in vulnerable regions like Jaffna. This includes shoreline protection, mangrove restoration, and sustainable land use planning to reduce the impacts of saltwater intrusion and inundation.

### **B. Recommendations for SIDS in the Indian Ocean Region**

Foster regional collaboration among SIDS in the Indian Ocean Region to share knowledge, resources, and best practices for climate adaptation. Collaborative efforts can enhance the resilience of all member states.

Establish a regional network for climate data collection and sharing. Accurate and timely data is crucial for understanding climate change impacts and formulating effective adaptation strategies.

Invest in capacity building programs for SIDS to enhance their ability to assess vulnerabilities, formulate adaptation plans, and implement climate-resilient projects.

Promote ecosystem-based adaptation approaches, such as mangrove restoration and coral reef protection. These natural barriers can help mitigate the impacts of rising sea levels and storms.

Support the development of climate-resilient infrastructure in SIDS, especially in vulnerable coastal areas. This includes building resilient roads, buildings, and energy systems.

Strengthen disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. SIDS should have well-defined plans in place for responding to climate-related disasters, including evacuations and relief efforts.

Involve civil society organizations, local communities, and indigenous knowledge in the development and implementation of climate adaptation initiatives. Their insights and participation are invaluable.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study highlights the intricate relationship between climate change and human security, particularly in the context of Sri Lanka and other SIDS in the Indian Ocean region. The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive and integrated approaches to address the multifaceted impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities.

In implementing these recommendations, it is crucial to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance data collection and knowledge sharing, and prioritize the most vulnerable populations, including women, children, and marginalized groups. A comprehensive and inclusive approach that considers the interconnectedness of the different dimensions of human security is key to sustaining peace and promoting climate resilience.

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*Commander Amila Prasanga is a Military Research Officer at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute*

# Analyzing Air Connectivity, Air Diplomacy, and National Security in Sri Lanka-India Relations

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige

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## Abstract

Indo-Sri Lanka relationships date back to time immemorial for both nations, rooted in mutual recognition and respect. Driven by cultural, religious, and geographical similarities, the diplomacy between these nations surpasses comparisons with other countries. Regardless of the political figures in power, both countries have maintained constant ties in various dimensions, be it humanitarian, commercial, economic, military, cultural, or political. With changing priorities in the current context, countries opt for sustainable links, benefiting both the present and future generations. In a globalized world with both traditional and non-traditional threats abundant, regional cooperation is a shield against intervention and a proactive investment for mutual benefits leading to a secure nation with a sustainable foreign policy roadmap. In this context, air connectivity plays a pivotal role in enhanced cooperation and this is evident by the foremost decision made by both the countries. In light of the deepening interconnections between nations and the growing importance of air connectivity and diplomacy, there is a critical need to comprehensively analyze the relationship between improved air connectivity, air diplomacy, and national security in the context of Sri Lanka-India relations, which will serve as the research problem. The study aims to address several objectives. Namely, how does improved air connectivity, coupled with air diplomacy, between Sri Lanka and India influence diplomatic ties, economic collaborations, and regional stability and what is their significance? What are the long-term implications for their cooperation and national security? How does it affect their decision-making processes and collaborative efforts in the Defence and security sectors? Lastly, the study aims to understand the challenges faced by Sri Lanka and India in enhancing air diplomacy and connectivity for mutual benefit and will explore potential solutions to foster stronger coherence and interdependence in the region.

**Keywords-** Air connectivity, Air Diplomacy, India and Sri Lanka, National Security

## Introduction

In a globalized world, countries are motivated to act based on survival, cooperation, as well as competition. At the outset, countries have the main concern to ensure non-interference and sovereignty, which are cardinal principles encapsulated in the United



Nations Charter. With the progression in the world order, be it in the economy, politics, or culture, a country cannot remain isolated. Such isolation can make a country vulnerable, leading to a chaotic situation. Even though there are arguments, such as self-sustenance, and practicality in the modern world this is questionable. This is well evidenced by the shift from socialism to capitalism. Countries opt to engage in trade and commerce with other countries for their survival as well as interdependence. Various international agreements in the form of bilateral or multilateral exist. Irrespective of it, regional cooperation has become both challenging and a blessing. Now, “diplomacy” becomes the tool of connectivity. The necessity of regional cooperation will therefore be showcased using Sri Lanka and India as a case study.

## **Literature Review**

### **A. Regionalism and Security**

In the analysis presented by Bailes and Cottey, the terms 'region' and 'security' are extensively employed yet remain ambiguous and subject to debate. In the realm of global politics, the concept of 'region' is primarily associated with continents such as Africa, the Americas, Asia, Oceania, and Europe. Additionally, subcontinents like South Asia and areas surrounding seas such as the Baltic and the Caspian seas are occasionally categorised as regions. The distinction between regions and sub-regions further complicates the terminology; sub-regions are perceived as geographically distinct sub-areas of continents. However, these terms are often used interchangeably, leading to a blurred differentiation between them. Notably, geographical boundaries alone do not define regions in the context of world politics. Regions are essentially political and imaginative constructs, akin to nations, shaped by the local countries' self-perception, connections, and how external entities perceive and interact with them. Historical, and cultural factors, as well as a variety of subjective perceptions and preferences, drive the recognition or intentional creation of regional and sub-regional systems, interstate groupings, and organisations. This process is influenced as much by subjective factors as by any objective logic, as exemplified by the historical use of terms like 'Near East' and 'Far East' during a period dominated by Eurocentric imperialist perspectives. In accordance with the insights provided by Bailes and Cottey, the researcher aligns with the notion that the terms 'region' and 'security' are enveloped in ambiguity and intricacy. This inherent complexity significantly influences international relations, compelling nations to seek clarity through bilateral agreements.

The researcher further contends that this inclination towards bilateral arrangements can be attributed to the disputes arising from attempts to precisely define regional boundaries. These complexities in demarcating regions often lead to controversies and discrepancies, prompting countries to opt for bilateral engagements. Such

strategic decisions serve as pragmatic solutions, allowing nations to establish agreements based on mutual understanding and clear parameters. By resorting to bilateral frameworks, countries can effectively face the challenges posed by the vague and contested nature of regional terminology, fostering more precise and manageable diplomatic relations. In an era marked by geopolitical complications and cross-border threats, the role of bilateral frameworks in enhancing national security cannot be ignored. These agreements not only facilitate stable diplomatic relations but also serve as foundational pillars in safeguarding a country's sovereignty and integrity.

### **B. Air Diplomacy and Connectivity**

As per (Cooke, 2021), developed nations are swiftly advancing into the future, embracing cutting-edge innovations and modern technology, bolstered by substantial power and influence that permeates both private and public sectors. These advancements manifest in improved infrastructure, enhanced air capabilities, and integration of technology into diplomacy, fostering global connectivity. In contrast, developing countries, such as Sri Lanka, heavily rely on diplomatic efforts to assert their presence on the world stage. However, they often face challenges due to inadequate infrastructure and financial constraints. To overcome these hurdles, such nations must seek collaborative opportunities that can generate positive outcomes. The implementation of a comprehensive Air Diplomacy policy holds the key to unlocking a multitude of opportunities. This approach promises significant benefits for the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), positioning it as a vital implementing agency. Exploring this uncharted territory not only enhances diplomatic engagement but also fortifies the state's arsenal of foreign policy tools, paving the way for a more robust international presence. The researcher fully agrees with the author, thus highlighting the potential of air diplomacy and connectivity. This underscores the urgent and proactive need for innovative approaches like air diplomacy to bridge the gap between developing and developed nations. Such collaborations, as articulated by the author, stand as powerful catalysts for diplomatic progress and international collaboration. Through these concerted efforts, nations like Sri Lanka can pave their path in the global arena, fostering partnerships and elevating their diplomatic standing on the world stage. In light of the said perspective, India and Sri Lanka's bridging serves as an ideal example.

### **C. Historical Overview of Indo-Sri Lanka Relationships**

When perusing the bilateral air connectivity between India and Sri Lanka, as presented by (Kathuria et al, 2018), it is obvious that this collaboration has significantly evolved since the inception of their first air services agreement (ASA) in 1948. The commitment of both nations to progressively liberalize air services has therefore played a pivotal role in shaping their diplomatic relationship. The researcher, in line with the perspectives of learned authors, deeply understands the

imperativeness of such agreements, recognizing them as cardinal frameworks that not only enhance economic interactions but also serve as potent tools of diplomacy facilitating regional coherence and stability. This understanding showcases the interplay between economic cooperation and diplomatic strategies by air as a tool, emphasizing the multifaceted significance of bilateral agreements. Through a series of amendments in the 1990s, crucial revisions in 2003, and a major liberalization effort in 2011, the impact on air services has been profound. These reforms led to a notable increase of 16 flights per week and an addition of 2,442 seats per week between the two countries. This substantial growth not only underscores the importance of bilateral agreements but also highlights the potential benefits of such collaborations in showcasing the gravity of diplomacy. The positive outcomes resulting from the air services liberalization between India and Sri Lanka serve as a compelling case study, indicating that other South Asian nations can adopt a similar incremental approach to liberalization. This approach, when accompanied by supportive reforms, not only fosters healthy competition but also eases logistical challenges, encourages trade, and ultimately strengthens diplomatic ties between nations, further affirming the researcher's understanding of the relationship between agreements and diplomacy in the context of relations between those countries.

## **Methodology**

This research employs a qualitative approach, by relying on secondary sources to explore the complex interplay between improved air connectivity, air diplomacy, and national security in the context of Sri Lanka-India relations. To accomplish such, qualitative methodology is chosen to delve deeply into the multifaceted aspects of diplomatic ties, economic collaborations, and regional stability. Primary data collection will not be utilized due to the classified nature of diplomatic relations and national security concerns that might fall into consideration. Instead, an analysis of academic articles, government publications, policy papers, and reputable international relations journals will form the basis of this study. Additionally, historical documents, official statements, and reports from international organisations will be scrutinised to reach findings.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

### **A. Impact of Improved Air Connectivity and Air Diplomacy on Diplomatic Ties**

Before looking into what Air connectivity is and how it leads to diplomacy facilitating interdependence and collaboration, it is crucial to look into what air connectivity is exclusively. According to (Malaysian Aviation Commission, 2018), Air connectivity is an indicator of the performance of airline networks and airports. It provides a link between civil aviation tourism and trade. Globally, an estimated 54% of tourists travel by air both the direct and indirect connectivity are based on point-to-point passengers

while the hub connectivity is based on the transiting passengers. Explaining, Direct connectivity refers to the direct connections offered by the origin airports (airport X) to the destination airports (airport Y) without stops and Indirect connectivity refers to the indirect connections offered by the origin airports (airport X) to the destination airports (airport Y) via one or more intermediate airports (including hub airports). Finally, Hub connectivity refers to connections offered through hub airports between origin and destination airports. Regardless of the form and type, it is evidenced that such connectivity is cardinal to the prosperity and fostering of the economy and commerce of any country. As mentioned clearly in the introduction no country lives in isolation and mutual interdependence have become an option less situations. This position is well evidenced by the air connectivity of Sri Lanka and India.

As stated, (Joshi, 2023), “Air connectivity between Sri Lanka and India started decades ago when the first air service agreement between the two countries was signed in 1968. This allowed Indian airlines to operate flights from any point in India to any point in Sri Lanka”. India has always relied on various strategic policies including the “Neighborhood First Policy” as well as the “Act East Policy”. In addition, the recent discussion between Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and Sri Lankan president Ranil Wickremesinghe mentioned about “resumption of flights between Jaffna and Chennai, the two sides will expand flights to Colombo and explore connectivity between Chennai and Trincomalee, Batticaloa and other destinations in Sri Lanka” as reported by Hindustan Times. The said air expansion in addition to land connectivity and energy connectivity, which were agreed upon, highlights how Sri Lanka and India are inextricably interlinked and continue to be in the Indian Ocean region.

Moving on to the aspect of the military, when it comes to air diplomacy, how an Air Force conducts air diplomacy is a practice deeply rooted in history, and this is evident in various forms such as public, humanitarian, military, commercial, traditional, preventive, coercive, and deterrence diplomacy. Thus, by all these methods, the Air Force’s contribution serves as a facilitator of regional cooperation. Utilizing air power possesses multifaceted advantages. As stipulated by, (Air Power and Diplomacy - haf.gr), the benefits are that it offers a viable method to achieve the desired outcome without involving any ground troops, thereby avoiding military casualties and causing any adverse public opinions, both domestically and internationally, associated with the presence and combat engagement of ground forces in foreign countries. Furthermore, its adaptability allows for a gradual escalation in crisis management, encompassing deterrence, force projection, or limited intervention, depending on the situation. This approach also minimizes the expenses associated with deploying ground forces, saving significant costs related to military resources and equipment. In addition, averting the deployment of ground forces prevents the complications that

arise from such engagements. A perfect example of this is evident in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq. Additionally, it can serve as a credible component of coercive diplomacy. To a certain extent, it demonstrates a scalable capability, as seen in instances like Kosovo, where allied air power was applied with graduated pressure to achieve strategic goals.

One of the key milestones which showcased diplomacy is, as stated by (Sibal, 2023) recently, India handed over the Indian Navy Dornier aircraft to Sri Lanka Air Force, the aircraft, a Dornier manufactured in India, signifies a significant achievement in the partnership between the two countries. This event marks the second Dornier aircraft provided to the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) through a grant from the Indian Government. It takes the place of the original Indian Navy Dornier, which served for a year and was returned to India for scheduled maintenance after being ceremonially handed over to President Ranil Wickremesinghe exactly one year ago, on August 15, 2022. The introduction of the advanced Indian Navy Dornier Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft represents a substantial enhancement in Sri Lanka's surveillance capabilities. This new addition to the SLAF's current fleet is expected to significantly bolster the nation's security efforts, acting as a force multiplier. The aforementioned air connectivity and air diplomacy pave the way for regional coherence and interdependence. This can be explained through several headings.

### **1) Cultural**

The enhanced travel from India to Sri Lanka increases people-to-people connections, which would lead to cultural, social and religious exchange, as exposure will be abundant. People in India will visit their families and friends in Sri Lanka and vice versa will strengthen family roots and deep-seated connections.

### **2) Crisis Management and Humanitarian Assistance**

India acts as a first responder in crises such as natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies. In addition to the vibrant Maritime connectivity between the nations, air assistance is also rendered at times of crisis. This is evident in the case of the X-Press Pearl incident.

### **3) Economic Collaborations**

Before mentioning the enhancement agreements to air connectivity, it is vital to look into the enormous support rendered by India to Sri Lanka during the economic crisis. As reported by (Pathi & and Mallawarachi, 2023), India offered vital financial and humanitarian aid exceeding \$4 billion to its struggling neighbour. This support, including provisions like food, medicine, and fuel, aimed to bring much-needed stability to the nation grappling with a substantial total debt of over \$83 billion, out of which \$41.5 billion was owed to foreign entities. Furthermore, India played a

crucial role as the first creditor to express support for Sri Lanka's debt restructuring initiatives. This endorsement facilitated backing from the IMF, leading to the approval of a \$3 billion bailout package in March. When it comes to air connectivity, it is crucial to display the interests of Sri Lanka's Aviation Ministry, as reported by (Joshi, 2023) the Ministry has “invited Alliance Air to fly to more destinations in the country and increase the frequency of its existing services. The island nation's aviation minister Nimal Siripala de Silva has asked the airline to consider flying to Colombo's secondary airport Ratmalana, as a continuation of the same service to Jaffna.” Therefore, it is understandable that with such further expansion, it will provide more room for business ventures, and talks between business leaders and investors. Consequentially, such increased trade would lead to economic and other benefits for both countries, including job creation, revenue generation, and a diversified market for products.

#### **4) Defence and Security Sectors**

Improved air connectivity facilitates strategic partnerships in areas such as Defence, security, and counterterrorism in matters such as supervision and surveillance. In addition to last year's donation of a Dornier 228 Maritime Patrol Aircraft to the Sri Lankan Air Force, this year another Indian Navy Dornier aircraft was officially handed over to the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), which was mentioned afore. Such donations, (Presidential Secretariat, 2023) “encompass a spectrum of activities such as monitoring and safeguarding Sri Lanka's airspace and exclusive economic zone through maritime and coastal surveillance operations, executing search and rescue missions, and monitoring and controlling maritime pollution.”, which are part and parcel of security of the country. In addition, both Indian and Sri Lankan forces engage in joint exercises and training which human capital investment is.

In addition, engagement among high-level officials and military personnel amounts to strategic discussions and collaborative efforts, leading to enhanced security cooperation. These partnerships will also result in research and development shaped by decisions.

#### **B. Challenges Faced by Sri Lanka and India**

The rationale behind such investment is to ensure coherence, sustainability and security of the country as well as the nation. Both the countries just like other countries have the constant burden of protecting borders. However, this task has become arduous with the change in the threat landscape including the soft power threats, which are intangible in nature. Another challenge, which needs mutual assistance and joint efforts, is to counter terrorist and extremist activities, which are cross-border crimes as the name suggests involving various jurisdictions and multiple perpetrators. Another challenge is the need for regulatory alignment, where it is

pivotal to harmonize aviation regulations, including safety, customs, immigration, and air traffic management, for smooth operations. Another crucial matter is infrastructure development and maintenance. Another mutual challenge is the Environmental Impact. The reason is that with the increase in air connectivity, carbon emissions become higher as well. Thus, since these challenges are mutual it is crucial to address them jointly and strengthen individual initiatives as well.

### **C. Regional Cooperation and National Security**

Air connectivity and air diplomacy lead to better networking which facilitates cooperation and security including militaristic as well as other domains such as economy and rights of people. Elaborating, enhanced technology, and equipment are proactive measures against an enemy and contingencies. For example, in case of an air strike or maritime disaster having the required power or additional support is essential to defend own rights and ensure human life respectively. With enhanced air connectivity, tourism occurs and job creation also takes place. Employment opportunities pave the right to livelihood, which is a right of people, which is human security. In addition, direct investments and other economic enhancements supplement economic security. In addition, political decisions by the leaders strengthen international relations and shape the country's foreign decision-making roadmap.

Yet, it is crucial to accept the matter since the world is globalized and countries opt for regional and extra-regional linkages. There are controversies, conspiracy theories, feelings of intimidation, insecurity as well and disinformation taking place when countries engage with one another. A primary benefactor or an investor can view the relationship with similar power as a challenge as well as a threat. Due to these power competitions and geopolitical dynamics, there is an undeniable need to balance the power Struggle. Sri Lanka as a country with a non-aligned foreign policy has the task of the hurdle of balancing interests.

### **Conclusion**

The air connectivity and diplomatic collaboration between Sri Lanka and India depicts a significant advancement in fostering bilateral relations, economic partnerships, and regional stability leading to security. Enhanced air connectivity, by expanded flight services, not only facilitates smoother travel but also serves as a symbol of strengthened ties of culture, religion and economy. This enhanced connectivity encourages cultural exchange and economic growth, strengthening trade, commerce, tourism, and investment. Further, it acts as a stabilizing force regionally, fostering dialogue and cooperation in areas such as security, counter-terrorism, and disaster management which are matters of mutual interests. From a national security perspective, continuous air connectivity enables swift movement of



key personnel, intelligence sharing, and coordinated responses to potential threats, allowing to respond promptly. This collaborative effort strengthens the security apparatus, making it more responsive to emerging challenges. Although challenges exist, joint efforts, flexibility, and mutual commitment are key to overcoming these hurdles, paving the way for lasting peace, security, and prosperity for both nations and region as a whole.

### Recommendations

In light of the developments in air connectivity and diplomatic ties between Sri Lanka and India, nations must invest in sustaining and expanding these joint efforts further. Strengthening air connectivity by increasing the number of destinations and flight frequencies should be complemented with robust mechanism which aimed at enhancing cultural exchange, trade facilitation, and investment promotion, by fostering deeper economic integration. It is also vital, prioritizing joint regional stability initiatives, such as collaborative approaches to security, counter-terrorism, and disaster management, is crucial in bolstering resilience against emerging threats. Addressing challenges related to infrastructure and regulations requires sustained efforts and cooperation. In addition to these efforts, both nations need to counter disinformation campaigns, promoting accurate and reliable information to ensure public understanding and trust. Moreover, given the complexities of power struggles in the region, both countries must maintain a balanced approach. Sri Lanka, in particular, should uphold a non-aligned policy, safeguarding its sovereignty and independence while actively engaging in diplomatic relations.

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*Charani Patabendige is a Research Assistant and Acting Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*

# Women and Violent Extremism

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige

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## Violent Extremism

Extremism, terrorism and radicalization are inextricably interlinked yet have nuances. Nonetheless, all these concepts have become crucial since society is a victim of them. Violent extremism at present has become a growing threat to society with multiple consequences. As cited by (Strieger, 2015), “Australian Attorney-General Department’s Resilient Communities website on their webpage, [on 2017 has defined violent extremism as] ‘beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism, other forms of politically motivated violence and some forms of communal violence. All forms of violent extremism, no matter what their motivation, seek change through fear and intimidation rather than constructive democratic processes’”.

However, violent extremism lacks a uniform definition and it is often defined, interpreted, discussed and variously debated by scholars and practitioners. Regardless when perusing VE, it is evident that it involves a lack of moderation, ill intent including rivalry, aggression or hostility, and actions depending from person to person or context to context. VE takes diverse forms, including political, ideological, racial, religious or social. In the world, the concept of Violent extremism has become indispensable and there is a dire need to be discussed since it has caused various repercussions. According to (Bak et al, 2019), “the concept of violent extremism has also become increasingly mainstream in the international community, with both the UN Security Council (UNSC 2014)2 and the UN General Assembly (UNGA 2015) calling for member states to address violent extremism”. In this context, violent extremism has become a challenge that should be mitigated, combated and prevented fruitfully and therefore, utilizing “women” to do so have many success stories.

## As offenders

According to (Oxfam Policy and Practice, 2017), “currently, women are on the frontlines of violent extremism, as recruiters, propagators, suicide bombers, and targets”. Such example as explained by, David Cook is, the “acceptability and prevalence of women waging jihad in Islamist terrorist groups and establishes that women are more visible as suicide bombers in more secular contexts (Chechnya and Palestine”. These overt acts of engaging as suicide bombers or terror leaders however is a gradual and emerging development because in history the instances were where

women engaged in supplementary roles and functions rather than directly involved in extremism and terrorism. As cited by [Mahmood, \(Elshtain, Jean Bethke. 1987\)](#), “In the context of Islamist terrorism, the role of men encapsulates participation in violent jihad to defend the ideology or goals of their organisations, while the women’s part is to take up a supportive position by assisting the men in defending and facilitating violence through supplementary functions”. The reasons pointed out by Mahmood are that there are strategic benefits of women's involvement since Women deployed as attackers allow these groups to gain publicity or ‘renown’ as referred to by Louise Richardson. Further, the inclusion of women leads to the longevity of the group since giving birth increases the multi-generational impact of the group.

### **Preventers**

Nonetheless, there are multiple strengths in including women in preventing extremism and terrorism. Women and children are given special attention as well as protection in times of war and other crises since they are vulnerable to risks including rape, torture, slavery and human shields. However, women play a commendable role as peacemakers and peacekeepers. According to [\(Ndung’u and Shadung,2017\)](#), “As mothers, wives, caregivers, partners and sisters, women are thought to be in a position to be the first to detect and influence extremist thinking and behaviour in their families and communities. They are considered to have a unique position in ‘early warning’ and ‘early response’ as they are perceived as ‘non-polarizing’ in families and communities and as potentially helpful in developing young people’s self-esteem and social cohesion. In addition to these perceived roles, security policymakers are interested in their potential as ‘assets for fighting extremism.” This analysis by the learned authors showcases an undeniable reality which is the natural inclination of women to respond to attacks by understanding them in primary stages rather than acting after escalation.

With that being said, it is crucial to look into case studies where women played a pivotal role in mitigating, preventing and combating violent extremism through leadership, mediating, and negotiating leading to peacekeeping. For example, in the case of Israel and Palestine, women in both countries have played a crucial role in peace talks. As stated by (the [Council on Foreign Relations](#)), “notable women have held prominent positions, such as Tzipi Livni, who served as Israel’s chief negotiator in multiple rounds between 2007 and 2014, and Hanan Ashrawi, a negotiator for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1990s. In [Yemen](#), the role of women in civil society efforts is praiseworthy. Women play an indispensable role irrespective of the challenges present to them. “Women in civil society have worked across political and sectarian lines to influence the peace process, including through the Yemeni Women Pact for Peace and Security. Women have supported local security

efforts, including by facilitating humanitarian access, assisting in the release of detainees, combating child marriage, and leading the reintegration of child soldiers.” Historically, women have also been rewarded for their work leading to peace. Such example according to ([UN Women, 2013](#)) is, “the decision of the Norwegian Nobel Committee to award the 2011 Peace Prize to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and women’s rights to full participation in peacebuilding processes reaffirmed the centrality of women’s contribution to peace, and the essential connection between democracy, justice, and gender equality. Due to the strengths possessed by women in preventing conflict and engaging in peace processes, governments and organizations all over the world encourage including and actively involving women in peace processes. According to the ([Council on Foreign Relations](#)), “Concerted efforts to increase the number of women in conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution efforts, include the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000, which “urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.”

### **Way forward**

Women and young girls just like men and boys can be utilized in preventing extremism. Since, extremism and terrorism have now shifted the digital space to a virtual format, fighting extremism in the online space can be gender-neutral. In addition, women and young girls play a unique role which makes the gender an asset in fighting extremism. For example, women are proven to be good listeners and maternal instincts drive women to care and protect from danger. Utilizing the understanding and protective nature of women can be equipped as tools against violent extremism. Another point is when you educate a woman, you educate many. For example, if women and young girls are educated and exposed to novel knowledge including information and digital literacy it will aid in making children, siblings and other families better since women in nature are proven to nurture the young and look after the elderly which makes them better at recognising early warning signs. It is also crucial that governments have a mechanism to punish perpetrators by holding them accountable. The reason is, that the victims of violence including women who underwent torture, forced pregnancy, intimidated and used as slaves should be given the justice they deserve. With such action, it will allow them to get closure for their suffering and disintegrate from the vicious cycle.

However, there are challenges in this as well. According to ([Sandi, 2022](#)), “Despite increased awareness of the gender dimensions of violent extremism and the

importance of involving women in P/CVE efforts, these remain mostly patriarchal...since outdated notions of masculinity and femininity, where women are assumed to be ‘moderate’ by nature. This results in overlooking women and granting them only limited roles, which in turn undercuts the opportunity to fully understand the gender dimensions of violent extremism”. Therefore, women and young girls must be given leadership roles and decision-making power which will allow them to make a substantive difference.



*Charani Patabendige is a Research Assistant and Acting Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*

# FTAs': A way forward in national security of Sri Lanka

By Wathsunu Rajinda Jayathilleka

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Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have become an integral part of global economic systems as countries seek to establish stronger economic ties and increase their competitiveness in the international market. For a small island nation like Sri Lanka, studying FTA opportunities is crucial not only for economic prosperity but also for enhancing national security prospects. The ongoing discussions surrounding the China-Sri Lanka FTA and the recent signing of the Thailand-Sri Lanka FTA have become a prominent topic of interest. Although FTAs are primarily intended to boost economic growth by increasing trade, investment, and job opportunities, it is crucial to consider their potential impact in enhancing Sri Lanka's national security prospects.

*"Open trade is not just good for jobs and growth, it also strengthens our national security... It encourages cooperation and interdependence, making conflict less likely." Former President of the United States of America, George W. Bush addressed the State of the Union in 2004 (The White House 2004).*

## FTAs and its implementing

According to the book "Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order," published by American political scientist Robert Gilpin in 2001, free trade is an economic philosophy in which the primary objective of economic activity is to benefit consumers and enhance global prosperity. This concept aims to increase consumer choices, lower prices, and optimise the utilisation of the world's limited resources in an efficient manner. Free trade is simply known as doing trade without any restrictions on what countries can buy or sell between them. This can be done through excluding tariffs, quotas, paperwork, and bureaucracy. An FTA is similar to a deal between two or more countries to make it easier and cheaper to buy and sell things between them. The main objective of an FTA is to increase exports of a country by reducing its barriers. It is also used to protect the competition in the partnering country while using the interests of the agreement. FTAs also help companies compete in global markets through reduced tariffs and other provisions. Therefore, it generally creates a place without any trade barriers, which leads to the creation of a predictable and transparent market, further leading to an environment in which investors find friendliness.





### **Sri Lanka's bandwagoning with FTAs**

His Excellency President Ranil Wickramasinghe, in an exclusive interview with the China Media Group (CMG), stated that 'FTAs are highly beneficial for Sri Lanka', as they can enhance investment, trade in goods and services, government procurement, telecommunications, and e-commerce. Therefore, it can increase the number of exports of Sri Lanka, which leads to an increase in production and opportunities in the domestic market of Sri Lanka. This can lead to job opportunities and low prices of goods and services. Currently, Sri Lanka has signed four FTAs with India, Pakistan, Singapore, and Thailand while currently negotiating an FTA with China. Sri Lanka is also a member of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).

### **The essence of Sri Lanka's national security**

National security is a crucial element in a country's functioning. Ensuring the safety and security of a nation and its citizens is the primary objective of the concept of national security. Originally, the focus of this concept was on fortifying against physical threats, such as military attacks. However, at present, as per the former United States Assistant Secretary of State for International Organisation Affairs Kim R. Holmes stated in a 2015 published article that collaborated with the United States Heritage Foundation, "National Security involves a broader range of non-military features such as economic security, energy security, environmental security, and even health, women, and food security".

### **Is an FTA a root support for national security?**

FTAs help bolster national security prospects. The FTA's relationship with national security has broader complexity. However, if we deeply analyse the synchronising relationship between national security and FTAs, this can be linked to the broader prospects of a state. For instance, in terms of economic security and human security, which are under the umbrella of national security, the following can be boosted through the FTA prospects of job opportunities, which increase human security, as well as trade opportunities, which increase economic security. Furthermore, regional FTAs are useful for enhancing national security because they expand the level of trade between countries, which can increase familiarity and lessen misconceptions between the two countries, based on a research article published by the Korea Institute for National Security in 2005. Further, the US-based think tank called 'American Security Project' in 2014 stated that "Free trade agreements in place with countries around the world will ensure that our military has a constant and secure supply of technology and a diversity of market access will provide a hedge against the risk of crisis in any one country or region". This shows how FTAs can help national security.

### **The global outreach of FTAs synchronizing with national security**

One such agreement that has benefited national security concerns is the North

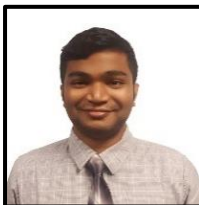
American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Although the agreement has flowed on migration, transnational crimes, and border security issues, it has widened the regional security corporation within its partners. For instance, “In the wake of 9/11, U.S., Mexican and Canadian policy makers undertook efforts to deepen NAFTA through ‘partnership’ agreements (termed the partnership for Security, Peace and Prosperity or SPP), which were concerned with creating a regional security as a way of diminishing the severity of the border paradox”. Another significant bilateral FTA that has strengthened the national security element of a state is the Korea-US (KORUS) FTA. For instance, the Korea Institute for National Security in 2005 states that “the KORUS FTA was a catalyst to strengthen military, security, and economic alliances between the ROK and the US”. Furthermore, Singapore has established strategic security partnerships with its FTAs to boost regional security.

### **FTAs: ‘A shot in the arm’ for national security of Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka’s national security apparatus focuses mainly on non-traditional and non-military features. This highlights the importance of utilising FTAs in Sri Lanka’s national security framework. Although there is no current utility framework to use FTAs to benefit the national security apparatus of Sri Lanka, one might question how FTAs are applicable to strengthening the national security framework of Sri Lanka. The answer lies in the implications and utilisation of these FTAs. For instance, securing regional stability and security is a major element that can be utilised through FTAs for Sri Lanka. The FTAs signed by Sri Lanka between India and Pakistan are key agreements depicting Sri Lanka’s commitment to regional stability and regional security. Furthermore, strengthening regional diplomacy through regional economic integration via FTAs such as the SAFTA can ultimately lead to the strengthening of regional security. His Excellency President Ranil Wickramasinghe also ratified Sri Lanka’s entry into the largest free trade block, known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which is recognised for enhancing Sri Lanka’s geopolitical security. Furthermore, strengthening security partnerships with key allies through FTAs is another crucial point that can be positively addressed towards the Sri Lankan national security apparatus. However, while there have been intangible outcomes regarding FTAs in strengthening the national security of Sri Lanka, the general public harbours a ‘flogging a dead horse’ sentiment towards utilising FTAs for national security, as tangible results are lacking. This gap hinders the bridging of our understanding.

However, this can be addressed by a crucial point that is also a major aspect of international trade and national security. This enables access to advanced technology and securing access to military technology through FTAs. To maintain the current swift developments in defence technology that are occurring globally, it is imperative that we have unrestricted access to global markets. However, such military

technologies in the market come with high prices and expenses. Sri Lanka, which is currently recovering from an economic collapse, faces some challenges in purchasing such military technologies to boost the national security apparatus. Therefore, with possible budget constraints and requirements, FTAs are a suitable option for gaining military technology without incurring heavy costs. Although FTAs are not directly related to military corporations, there are occasional and reasonable clauses related to military and defence. For example, according to the US government, the US-South Korea FTA includes provisions for joint research and development on defence technologies, without the direct transfer of specific technologies. Further, the government of India and Singapore utilises the India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement for defence and military purposes. Therefore, one crucial element that Sri Lanka can include in its FTAs is joint research on defence and military technologies. In the current context, FTAs in Sri Lanka do not specifically address the transfer of military technology or engage in defence cooperation projects. Rather, these agreements mainly concentrate on economic concerns, such as trade in goods and services, and investment. While the option of expanding trade agreements to encompass more comprehensive partnerships is available, the potential inclusion of military technology research and non-military defence cooperation aspects remains a possibility. Sri Lanka has yet to sign more bilateral FTAs in many states. For instance, the China-Sri Lanka FTA is currently in negotiation which also addresses a strategic partnership within the FTA, which can be taken as a prospect for national security. Therefore, it is important to understand the potential of FTAs to utilise national security as a crucial element for strengthening Sri Lanka's national security apparatus.



*Wathsunu Rajinda Jayathilleka is an Intern (Research) at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*

# Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and its global applicability

By Shashika Lakshan

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*“Once, late United States (US) President Abraham Lincoln said that you cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.” – excerpt from a letter to the then Secretary of War Edward Stanton, 1864”*

Conflict is one of the common facts among humans from the origin of mankind. Crimes against humanity are committed by stakeholders in fierce conflicts. In such situations, the international community has a responsibility to ensure the protection of humanity. There are many concepts and theories which focus on conflicts and how and when the international community should interfere with the State. Among those concepts, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a major pillar, more of a doctrine.

This doctrine reveals how the international community should interfere with a state if there is a threat for crimes including war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and ethnic cleansing. Before the R2P was introduced to the world in 2005, there were United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations throughout the world and one such example is the 1993 Somalia Peacekeeping Operation. In the 1990s, atrocities happened and crimes made a huge discourse among scholars, global leaders, and governmental and non-governmental institutes which led to the focus on conflict studies and humanitarian law. As a result, the UN introduced the R2P in 2005 with the initiative of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. There are appreciations as well as negative criticisms from scholars on the R2P and here, in this article, the motive is to find out the succession of the R2P doctrine.

## **The setting of the R2P doctrine**

Even though the R2P was introduced in 2005, there is a long history related to the introduction of the R2P. According to the Global Centre, the R2P is defined as “an international norm that seeks to ensure that the international community never again fails to halt the mass atrocity crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.” There are three pillars of the R2P process. Pillar one – each sovereign state has the responsibility to protect its territory; pillar two – the international community should assist sovereign States to protect the population; and pillar three – the international community should interfere with the protection of the population if the state fails to protect its population.

When analyzing the background of the R2P doctrine, it goes back to the Westphalian treaties in 1648. These treaties marked the end of a protracted war for territorial borders among the European nations. Accordingly, there are four basic assumptions which discouraged aggressiveness among the Europeans. Namely, national self-determination, starting diplomatic relationships and solving problems through diplomacy, peaceful coexistence emerged as a norm among the states, and the balance of power and non-interference in the internal affairs of other sovereign states. The foundation of sovereignty emerged through Westphalian treaties. The R2P is a doctrine that is a justification to exceed the sovereignty of a state for the international community as a last resort when there is a threat of atrocity type crimes. Then, the Hague Conventions also related with the R2P doctrine. There are two treaties which were signed in 1899 and 1907 which established the norms and customs by identifying and pointing out the rules that nations should follow during hostilities. The Geneva Convention was adopted in 1949 after the Second World War which killed thousands of civilians and created mass destruction. Its fourth Geneva Convention identified how nations should protect civilian rights and cultures during a conflict as well as in post-conflict situations. Until the 1990s decade, the world order followed the principal policy of the Westphalian treaty, showing respect for the sovereignty of other states. However, some terrifying incidents that happened in this decade marked a huge black mark in humanity.

For example, the Rwandan genocide happened between two ethnic groups. the Hutus and Tutsis, which lasted for 100 days between April and July 1994. More than a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Even though there were UN Peacekeeping Forces deployed, they were unable to mitigate this genocide and the lack of coordination and lack of resources were some reasons for that failure. In the Srebrenica massacre on 6 April 1993, the UN Security Council (SC) passed Resolution 819 that guaranteed the protection of the Srebrenica town. Nonetheless, the Bosnian Serb soldiers attacked the security posts and captured the control of the town. Then, they killed more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim males including boys.

### **Response from the international community against atrocity type crimes**

The international community believed that they had a chance to mitigate these tragedies. This fact made a huge discourse and questioned how the international community should interfere with internal conflicts within states when there are threats to commit atrocity type crimes. Then, the R2P doctrine was exposed to the world by the UN in 2005. When implementing the R2P, there are a few facts to consider, namely, just cause, right intention, last resort, and proportional means.

The R2P was implemented during some conflicts after it was introduced. The Libyan



conflict and the Syrian conflict are such examples. The implementation of the R2P is done mostly by UN Peacekeeping Forces. Currently, there are 11 peacekeeping missions done by the UN in Africa and the Middle East. These operations were not implemented under the R2P doctrine but there are features of the R2P doctrine within these operations. As an example, ensuring human rights, the mitigation of violence, and the continuation of the flow of humanitarian aid are some major objectives of peacekeeping missions.

### **Challenges and criticism**

A few challenges can be identified according to the comments of the International Crisis Group. The conceptual challenge questions the scope of the practical implementation of the R2P doctrine and its limitations. When practically applying this doctrine, the limitations and boundaries might become unclear. For example, at what time should this be applied and how should it be terminated? Should this be applied at the last resort and if yes, how can the last resort be identified clearly? Another one is the institutional challenge as the R2P process is applied through a combination of institutions like the UN, the UN Peacekeeping Forces, the World Health Organisation, and the local security authorities. In the practical application, there might be some occurrences of disagreements and miscommunication among institutions. That affects the relationship between the institutes and the overall R2P process as well. Another challenge is the political challenge which focuses on global and regional power dynamics and the political order. Those power dynamics can also be affected by the R2P in practical application as an external factor. Under the cover of the R2P, there can be hidden political desires of some states as well. This challenge is a criticism of the R2P doctrine as well.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 criticised the R2P. According to that, the R2P was used as a tool which powerful nations used to accomplish their desires and agendas. The main example of this is the Libyan R2P intervention. Libya was the first incident in which the UN SC permitted the R2P doctrine for a military intervention. In February 2011, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization led alliance intervened to fight against atrocity type crimes done by Muammar Gaddafi's forces and to protect civilians. However, according to the critics, the purpose of the intervention was hijacked into a 'regime change', to topple down the Gaddafi regime. Some argue that the R2P is a threat to the sovereignty of a state and that it transforms a national state into a powerless one.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The argument on the R2P made by the NAM is not relevant for all the R2P operations. There is some truth about the Libya operation as it exceeded the limits of using proportional means. In Syria also the R2P was applied against Bashar al-Assad's

regime as the Assad regime used chemical weapons (US President Donald Trump ordered an airstrike against the Syrian Government in response to the Khan Shaykhun chemical attack). This Syrian intervention was also criticized with the same argument that Libya was criticized. However, there are many successful peacekeeping operations in the world which are relevant to the R2P. For example, the Central Republic of Africa, Mali and Haiti Peace Operations are renowned.

The argument of saying that the R2P is a threat to sovereignty is also baseless because the first pillar and second pillar of the R2P is to support the sovereign state to manage the internal issues. Only in the third pillar does the international community do their interventions. These challenges and criticisms are not only intrinsic characteristics of the R2P but also the practical application of many geopolitical doctrines. The conceptual challenge can be solved by a proper understanding of the three pillars. Then, the institutional challenge can also be solved by a process which is well-organised and planned. That will increase the mutual connectivity among the institutions. Third, politics is a hard one to mitigate practically but it is not impossible to overcome. All one needs to do is establish a transparent control and monitoring institution for the R2P which does not allow external political interference.

As recommendations, the following can be suggested: Strengthening domestic accountability where sovereign states can stop atrocity type crimes by themselves within the first two pillars of the R2P without moving to the third pillar; empowering civil society engagements by establishing and empowering civil society institutions on human rights, and conflict resolution which will increase and develop social awareness of human rights and related sectors; enhancing international and regional cooperation to create a good mutual understanding and interconnectedness among the states that will create norms, regulatory systems and transparency when doing international interventions; and the 'just cause and right intention' facts will be protected. Finally, it is important to mention that the R2P should be transparent and acceptable.



*Shashika Lakshan is an Intern (Research) at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*



## Peak Time Traffic: A Moving Yet Stalled, Hazard in Disguise

By **Rivindu Samadhith Perera**

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Sri Lanka's working hours have been consistent for most of history, which has led to a sizable proportion of the population entering roads at the same time. This is a recurring scenario. Effective mobility is vital to ensure national security aspects, but the congestion of vehicles has led to chaos in the morning and the afternoon, specifically in the cities, which is of concern and it is safe to assume that urban cities in Sri Lanka, specifically Colombo, have a lot to lose in terms of economic, social, health and environmental security, with key challenges on national security. Flyovers have been built, main roads have been expanded, but at what cost? The issue of Peak time traffic is a global concern with zero exceptions in Sri Lanka and even though it stalls vehicles, it is still a running issue.

### Underlying concerns

One may ask whether traffic is a reason for concern apart from getting late to attend your work. When there is a theory termed, 'Law of peak-hour traffic congestion' published in 1962, by US researcher Anthony Downs, the concern is clear. The rapid increase of population that comes to the city has led to an increase in the use of personal vehicles. In both recent and historic times, Colombo specifically has been infected with a plague of traffic, with almost 200,000 vehicles entering the city daily, according to Senior Scientist Sarath Premasiri, at the National Building Research Organisation (NBRO) and for a country that is geographically smaller in size, this figure could be sarcastic with a considerable increase of the country's population, road and vehicle density. Therefore, it is wise to investigate both direct and indirect negative impacts due to peak-time traffic in the city on economic, social, environmental and health as bodies of national security.

Time is the most important entity that is lost, which causes a resounding slump on the entire economy, and this setback is largely long-term looking. Practically looking, more vehicles on the road burning fuel leads to an increase in fuel consumption and becomes a reason for the vehicle to perform low on efficiency. The wastage of fuel, being an import, leads to an additional burden on the consumer and indirectly affects Sri Lanka's foreign currency reserves and negatively impacts the country's economy when considered on scale. Moreover, businesses in logistics and transport sectors therefore will have to increase costs of operation burdening the consumer, resulting in massive delays in completing tasks of supply leading to inefficiency.

At a time where the tourism industry is finally back on a high, peak time traffic, specifically in the city can lead to tourists being given a negative experience due to the inconvenience caused. A 2023 article, based on Antalya in Turkey, one of the top five tourist destinations in the world, with more than 15 million tourists a year, suggests that a majority of tourists complain of the continued traffic in the city, which depletes the affection, engagement and perception of tourists regarding the city, resulting in a loss of positive activity in the tourism sector with public image in disarray. This indicates a similar barrier for Sri Lanka to retain and reap the maximum economic benefits from the booming tourism industry with an ambitious target this year.

More congestion of vehicles during peak time traffic leads to more carbon emissions and an intensifies unhealthy greenhouse gases, while also depleting the scarce natural resource of fuel, which could be severe in the long-run, the environment is at risk and it directly negatively affects environmental security. This has a major impact on the air, creating air quality issues such as photochemical smog and acid rain. According to IQAir in early 2024, almost 70 per cent of Colombo's air pollution comes from emissions from vehicles and it therefore could be considered an alarming public health concern, resulting in unhealthy conditions in the Air Quality Index (AQI). In the long run, exposed to these emissions, this issue could lead to an increase in respiratory diseases, cardio-related diseases and even more serious complications like cancer. More vehicles on the road in peak -time traffic, further takes a toll on the economy with consequences that will take place in the long term.

The loss of effective productivity due to traffic is uncountable. A serious delay in the time that one takes to travel affects entire organisations. Nuwan I. Senaratna's practical discovery on Colombo's traffic, in a web article, shows the high toll submerging 'time' due to traffic. For example, you might take three hours of travel time to get to work and get home from work which could have been a thirty-minute commute and considering you go to work two hundred days a year, you will be spending at least six hundred hours (around twenty-five full days) on the road in traffic. The balance between working and life is directly impacted here, on a negative scale.

*"The time that is lost could have been used on a worthwhile activity or at least to spend time with family and loved ones. The psychological effect on people due to long traffic further escalates to frustrations and negative mental health, where morning traffic can influence the entire work of the day and act as a chain reaction, with lost motivation and engagement, which once again at scale negatively affects the entire nation based on the security of human and social capital."*

People appreciate getting to work and getting home at least a minute early. Aggressiveness, along with recklessness is a human instinct in such situations, which due to peak-time traffic will lead to more accidents. According to a World Bank Article, in 2021, which analyses data that is available, Sri Lanka faces almost 38,000 road traffic accidents annually. This has led to almost 8,000 serious injuries and resulted in quarter of the country's deaths annually. The Asian Development Bank, in an early 2024 blog article, identifies that Sri Lanka has spent at least 4.9% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on costs related to road traffic accidents. A series of Epidemiological Reports in February 2024, by the Ministry of Health, that focus on road traffic accidents, shows that they are among the top ten causes of death in the country, and with disabilities added peaks in the top five of diseases. Since accidents cause people both long and short physical and psychological disabilities, treating those seriously injured will take a lot of time, with the process becoming a burden on the entire system of healthcare financially and with resources, that could have been prevented. Road accidents further lead to a loss of property which increases the negative economic impact, with its implications on damaged vehicles and both public and private infrastructures. This hits back on the security of health, which also affects the productivity and economic security of the country.

Peak time traffic could make people's security directly vulnerable on a national scale. Potential emergencies that could occur on the road are not limited to road-rage and could even be terrorist activities. Theft is highly common during peak hours. Reports compiled during the recent economic crisis and restrictions show a surge in vehicle theft, which are mostly three-wheelers and motorbikes. The threat to national security in this regard is evident.

### **Solutions to consider**

It would be wise to think of long-term and short-term solutions to tackle traffic. One might come up with the construction of roadways, bridges and other infrastructure to tackle road traffic, but at what cost? Colombo has seen this in more recent times, with older roads being reconstructed and expanded with more lanes. A 2023 research article by Volker, Jamey and Handy, Susan shows that expanding roads only worsens traffic, which has been technically coined as 'the induced travel effect'. It could be one reason for Colombo's traffic to keep growing despite wide lanes being built. Enrique Peñalosa once said, "Trying to solve traffic problems by building more roads is like putting out a fire with gasoline." Constructing infrastructure is wise, but solely depending on it is unwise. Short-term implementations such as carpooling and similar ridesharing could be a distant ideology due to the complications that could arise in performance and practicality.

The ideal and the primary solution that will help solve the issue of traffic and the

threats arising out of it would be to enhance public transport mediums. Proposed projects like the Light Rail Transit system (LRT) are far ahead of reality in a country which once had electric tramcars in operation. Another mid-term solution would be to enhance the use and purchase of electric vehicles, that would help reduce carbon emissions specifically during peak time traffic. Along with this addition, the conditions of public buses and trains come with issues such as overcrowding, uncleanliness, service strikes and tardiness in travel time would need to drastically be improved to gain supplementary traction of the public.

This once again is a widely discussed topic, but to no avail. The mindset of people must also be addressed for them to shift from private vehicle use to public transport in peak-times, which will take a long time, subject to positive changes. The importance of preparing reliable services through public transport and working towards making it efficient both in the short and long run could result in less traffic congestion, which will help reduce problems accordingly.

Peak-time traffic is a recurring issue. It has made a significant impact, mostly negative in many aspects with regards to national security. Looking back, this severe impact comes down to economic fragility in the entire country and is a weighty threat to economic security. This makes it important to make swift changes on a national scale that are practical and efficient, to flatten this issue.



*Rivindu Samadhith Perera is an Intern (Research) at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*

## SL's econ. development & nat. security: Political stability essential

**By Kalpani Gunathilaka**

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*“There can be no long-term peace and security without development. There can be no long-term development without peace and security,”* said the former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, K. Annan in an article in the UN Chronicle in 2015.

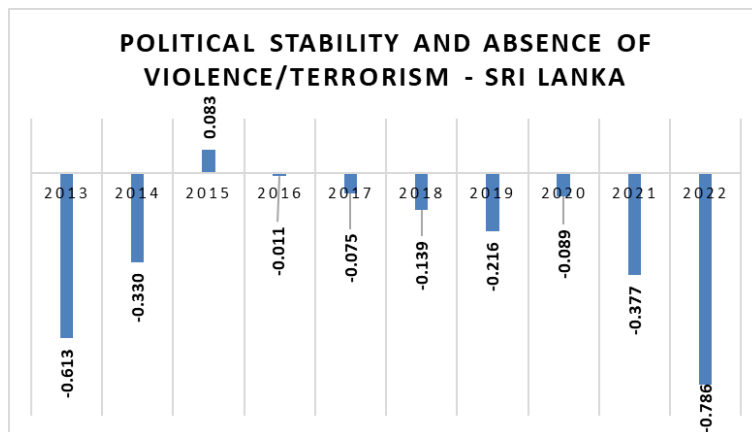
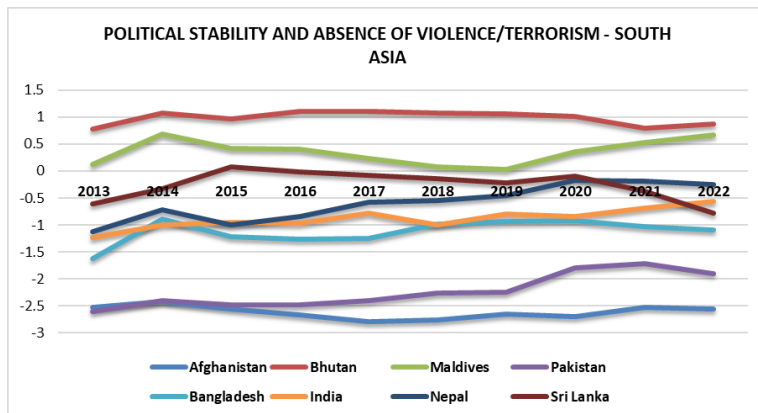
Political stability is the cornerstone of a country's socio-economic development as it provides an environment conducive for investment, growth, and the implementation of long-term policies. Furthermore, it serves as a fundamental pillar in safeguarding the country's national security. In the absence of political stability, a country may face numerous challenges such as economic uncertainty, social unrest, declined international standing and policy paralysis. Therefore, maintaining political stability stands as an imperative priority for any nation.

### **What does political stability mean?**

C. Ake defined political stability in the Journal of Comparative Politics in 1975 as “members of society limiting their behaviour patterns to those constrained by political role-related expectations”. Any deviation from these boundaries is an example of political instability. Countries exhibiting a high level of political stability, which also implies the absence of terrorism and political violence, are those with robust social and environmental orientations, predominantly found in Western countries. Political stability also tends to be more prevalent in countries with democratic political systems. If a country enjoys political stability, its citizens harbour confidence and trust in their government and its ability to address their needs and desires. Consequently, there is a minimum risk of violence and social unrest occurring in such countries.

### **The status of political stability in SL**

The World Bank (WB) annually measures the political stability index. Within the category of political stability and the absence of violence and terrorism, they assess perceptions regarding the likelihood of political instability and/or politically motivated violence, which includes terrorism.



**Source:** Prepared by the author based on the World Bank data, 2023

The above data indicates a significant decline in Sri Lanka's political stability from 2020 to 2022, particularly in comparison to other South Asian countries. When examining country specific data on political stability and the absence of violence or terrorism, there is a consistent increase observed from 2013 to 2015, followed by a continuous decline from 2016 to 2022, with a slight uptick in 2020. This WB data underscore remarkable political instability in Sri Lanka post-2020. In 2022, Sri Lankan citizens experienced profound social unrest during the 'aragalaya'. This marked a historic moment as people rose against the existing regime, demanding political change and economic prosperity in the country. Hence, it becomes evident that there was substantial political instability in Sri Lanka during that period. As of this year (2024), the country has managed to achieve some degree of political stability. However, as Sri Lanka prepares to hold Presidential and General elections

### **Present status of the SL economy**

According to data released by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) in their annual publication in 2022, the real economy contracted by 7.8% in 2022, marking the deepest contraction compared to the 3.5% growth in 2021. Inflation, based on the Colombo Consumer Price Index (CCPI), reached a historic high of 69.8% in September, 2022, primarily due to Sri Lankan Rupee depreciation, supply-related shortages, and increased monetary financing. Fiscal sector imbalances that had persisted for several decades reached a tipping point in 2022, with the lowest Government revenue and the highest Government expenditure recorded. The economic crisis resulted in severe hardships for individuals and businesses, particularly affecting lower- and middle-income individuals and small enterprises. Rising inflation exacerbated living conditions for the public and posed substantial challenges to businesses, including increased prices, high production costs, negative real returns, and declining real wages. Shortages of essential items such as pharmaceuticals, fuel, liquefied petroleum gas, food items, and industrial raw materials, coupled with a lack of foreign exchange liquidity, caused significant social suffering. These severe economic hardships led to heightened public anxiety and political unrest. Since 01 January, 2024, the Value Added Tax (VAT) has been increased up to 18% on a large number of goods and services as per the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), further burdening people and exacerbating their financial struggles. In 2024, the political situation of the country is expected to become more heated.

### **Present status of SL's nat. security**

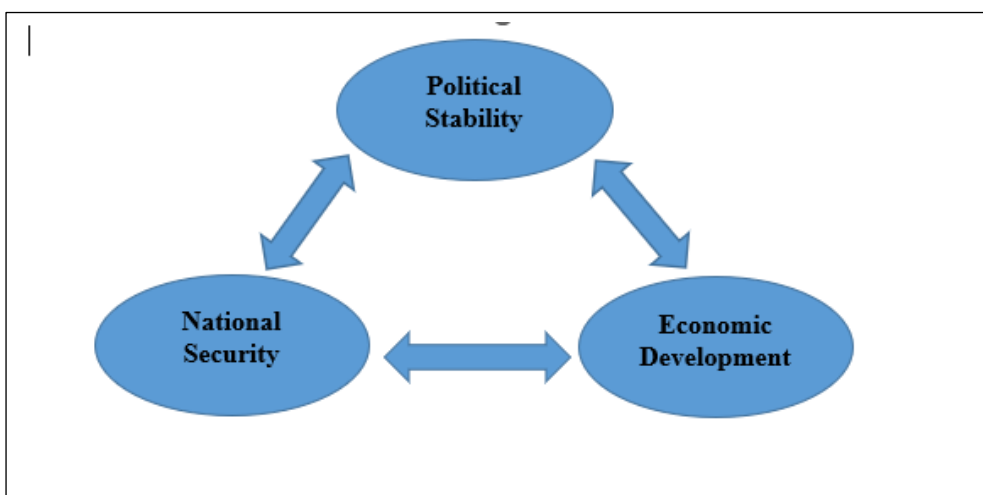
Throughout much of the 20th Century, the concept of national security predominantly centred on military defence. However, over time, it expanded beyond the capabilities of armed forces alone. In 2015, former United States Assistant State Secretary Kim R. Holmes defined national security as “the safekeeping of the nation as a whole”, emphasising its paramount importance in protecting both the nation and its citizens from internal and external threats and attacks by maintaining armed forces and safeguarding state secrets. Yet, national security encompasses far more than military defence. It extends to the economy, energy, environment, health, families and food security, reflecting a comprehensive approach to safeguarding a nation's well-being. This broader understanding of national security involves not only defending the nation but also protecting a range of geopolitical, economic, and other interests. Consequently, it influences not just defence-related policy but also foreign and other governmental policies.

A decade after the defeat of one of the world's most ruthless terrorist organisations, the Easter Sunday attacks in 2019 and the subsequent people's revolution, known as ‘aragalaya’ in 2022, starkly revealed the failure of the country's national security



apparatus to respond effectively when needed. As a result, public confidence in both the political system and leadership responsible for national security has eroded. In response to these challenges, the Government has initiated measures to strengthen its security apparatus, including reforms within its military and intelligence agencies, and has collaborated with regional and international partners to address transnational threats. However, the current security situation in the country remains fraught with uncertainty. This uncertainty is not only impacting the daily lives of citizens in the short-term but also exerting long-term effects on the country's economy.

### **The interplay of political stability, econ. development & nat. security**



Political stability, economic development, and national security are closely interconnected and mutually dependent factors for a country to function effectively. The absence of political stability undermines efforts to maintain national security and achieve economic growth. Without strong national security, political stability is at risk, hindering economic development. Meanwhile, strong economic development contributes to stability and security, creating an environment conducive to prosperity and progress. Therefore, these factors are not only interconnected but also vital components that support the foundation of a flourishing society.

### **How does political stability affect econ. development & nat. security?**

A strong and stable political structure is a fundamental prerequisite for a country to achieve sustained economic growth. Economic growth and political stability are intricately linked. Uncertainty stemming from an unstable political environment can reduce investments and impede economic development. Conversely, poor economic performance may affect government collapse and political unrest. However, achieving political stability can sometimes involve oppressive measures or having a

dominant political party that faces little competition for re-election. In such cases, political stability can become a double-edged sword. Research conducted by Prof. Ali Acar at the Selcuk University in 2019 revealed that the absence of political stability has negative effects on economic development.

Countries with political stability have the opportunity to achieve economic development more rapidly and efficiently. When analysing the relationship between political stability and the economy, it becomes apparent that economic growth thrives where there is stability. It is widely agreed among economists that countries with strong economies and political stability experience faster growth compared to unstable economies. In developing economies, political instability often emerges as the most significant variable affecting the growth process. Businesses are more likely to flourish and expand in politically stable countries, leading to job creation, heightened productivity, and overall economic growth.

National security and political stability are indispensable factors for maintaining a stable and legitimate state. However, the rising number of corruption and bribery cases, along with power struggles between political parties, is exacerbating instability in the country. Under such conditions, achieving political stability becomes increasingly challenging. Consequently, societal frustration may lead certain individuals to neglect the rule of law. In military strategy, attacks are most effective when the enemy is weakened. Therefore, political instability creates an opportune moment for adversaries to launch attacks. Even if the Army remains the most disciplined fighting force in the country, they would be rendered vulnerable in the face of political turmoil. Despite the end of armed conflicts, the potential for future conflict, whether internal or external, remains if political and economic instability persists. Therefore, addressing political instability is crucial not only for national security but also for long-term stability and prosperity.

### **What further steps can SL take to enhance political stability?**

Especially in developing countries, governments play a crucial role in ensuring successful economic development and national security. In this context, political stability is paramount as it underpins both development and a country's security. Policies should be formulated towards establishing sustainable governmental mechanisms that foster long-term benefits, such as reducing inflation, and unemployment, and fostering economic growth. However, achieving and maintaining political stability can be challenging, particularly in regions or countries grappling with issues like corruption, ethnic or religious tensions, social inequality, imbalanced foreign relations, economic challenges, weak institutions, or external threats.

Governments, political parties, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders must collaborate to tackle these challenges through effective governance, respect for human rights, inclusive policies, and a dialogue to build consensus and manage conflicts peacefully. A stabilised political climate in Sri Lanka will be pivotal in its recovery from the current economic downturn and in ensuring national security. By addressing these underlying issues and fostering political stability, Sri Lanka can pave the way for sustainable economic growth and security.



*Kalpani Gunathilaka is a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.*



## **Institute of National Security Studies**

**8<sup>th</sup> Floor, 'Suhurupaya', Battaramulla,**

**Sri Lanka**

**Tel: +94 11 2 879 087**

**Email: [inss.srilanka@gmail.com](mailto:inss.srilanka@gmail.com)**

**Web: [www.inss.lk](http://www.inss.lk)**

