

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Centre for Policy Alternatives



Table of Contents

Introduction	2
The Board of Directors	3
Messages from CPA's Thematic Group heads.....	7
2019 In Review.....	10
Public Interest Litigation (PIL).....	11
Democracy, Governance and Human Rights	15
Women's Political Representation	21
Constitutional Reform.....	23
Right to Information (RTI).....	25
Transitional Justice.....	27
Civic Media.....	29
Electoral Reform	32
Financials.....	34
Donor List 2019	39

Message from the Executive Director

The year was marked by two key events – one, the terrible tragedy of the Easter Sunday carnage and the other, the convincing victory of former Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa in the Presidential Election at the end of the year. National security and strong and decisive leadership dominated the agenda along with the assertion of the identity of the majority community. The belief of CPA that Sri Lanka is a country made up of many peoples and whose governance is founded on the principle of Unity in Diversity, is therefore facing challenge.

The lead up to this and the repercussions from these events ensured that CPA remained focused on the key issue of rights and freedoms and their protection if not strengthening, in inhospitable circumstances. CPA therefore pursued high profile Public Interest Litigation, produced policy briefs and edited volumes on national security, constitutional reform and other contemporary rights issues as well as pioneered new areas of research through the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence's (CMEV) focus on campaign finance in the Presidential Election. Our civic media sites grew as platforms for the counter –narrative and for issues under-reported or ignored by the mainstream media and our Outreach Unit continued its capacity building of marginalized communities through use of the Right to Information (RTI) tool.

The political and electoral calendar makes it difficult to plan a full programme of activities. However, we fully expect the trend of creeping authoritarianism and the military mindset to continue through new legislative controls on non-governmental organizations, further Presidential Task Forces and through constitutional reform. CPA will continue to work with all tiers of government, where and whenever possible to protect and enhance liberal democracy in Sri Lanka.

We started the year with 52 members of staff and ended with 47. On behalf of the organisation I wish to thank Ms. Jean Samuel who left the Board and welcome Ms. Minoli de Soysa who replaced her.

My thanks to the members of the Board for their solidarity and support and likewise, to our funders. Finally, a big thank you to all the staff, for their unstinting commitment and resilience.

Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu

Executive Director

Introduction

Vision

A liberal, democratic Sri Lanka.

Mission

To strengthen the civil society contribution to public policy making through programmes of research and advocacy in the areas of democratic governance and peace with human rights as an overarching priority.

About the Centre for Policy Alternatives

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) was established in 1996 with the aim of strengthening institution and capacity-building for good governance and conflict transformation in Sri Lanka. For over 20 years, CPA has set the bar in Sri Lanka for how cutting-edge research and advocacy can be communicated through constructive dialogue and innovative content to address deficits in democracy and governance.

CPA works across four key units in two offices located in Colombo. The Research & Advocacy Team engages in critique and advocacy of policy alternatives through comprehensive field-based and applied research outputs and also leads CPA's public interest litigation efforts. The Outreach Monitoring Team works with local government and community based organisations on participatory governance, grassroots capacity building and service delivery, while working to generate mobilisation on social equality and reconciliation. Social Indicator is CPA's survey research unit and conducts public opinion polling on a wide range of social and political issues. The Civic Media Unit manages the award-winning civic media initiatives Maatram, Vikalpa and Groundviews which seek to amplify narratives by citizens otherwise marginal to and erased from mainstream media. In addition, CPA hosts the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV), the leading election monitoring and electoral reform advocacy organisation in Sri Lanka which promotes free and fair elections and inclusive democratic participation.

CPA works with a wide range of actors across Sri Lanka, from civil society organisations and community-based activists, to students and academics, to provincial and local government officials. CPA also engages with numerous NGOs, civil society organisations and academics in the international sphere to share, collaborate on and learn from policy approaches to democratic governance and sustainable peace. CPA staff members are regularly quoted in media, both locally and internationally, for their expertise and insights. Institutional output in print and online in all three languages is regularly flagged and used in debates on domestic policy making and international discourse.

The Board of Directors

Professor Chandraguptha Thenuwara (Chairman)



*Senior Lecturer
Department of History & Art Theory,
Faculty of Visual Arts, Colombo*

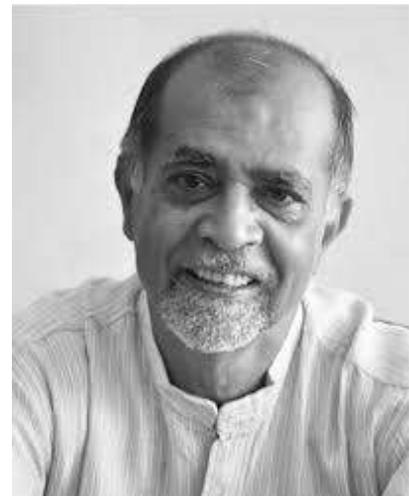
Chandraguptha Thenuwara (BFA/MFA/MPhil) is a leading Sri Lankan Artist and Activist whose work focuses on issues surrounding the impact of war and current politics in Sri Lanka. In 1993, He founded the Vibhavi Academy of Fine Arts (VAFA), an artist-run Alternative art school.

In response to overwhelming crisis Thenuwara has devised his own stylistic formulation in 1997, which he has called "Barrelism". His works are also included in the collections of the Queensland Art Gallery Australia, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum Japan, John Moore's University Art Collection Liverpool and Fine Arts Museum of Udmurtia, Izhevsk, Russia. His public monuments include the Seeduwa monument to the Disappeared and Monument to Neelan Thiruchelvam at Kinsey Terrace Colombo.

Professor Jayadeva Uyangoda

*Senior Professor of Political Science (Retired)
University of Colombo
Founding Member of CPA*

Prof. Jayadeva Uyangoda leading researcher and commentator on contemporary Sri Lankan politics. He has been associated with the Social Scientists' Association (SSA), Colombo, since the early 1980s. He co-founded with Charles Abeysekera and Kumari Jayawardena the journals *Pravada*, *Polity* and *Pirivadam*. He has also directed SSA's research and education programs.



He was a lead researcher in the research program "The State of Democracy in South Asia", coordinated by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), New Delhi and from August 2016-July 2017, he held the Rajni Kothari Chair in Democracy at the CSDS. Some of his major writings have been on themes relating to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and peace processes.

Aritha Wickramasinghe



Lawyer and Activist

Aritha is an international banking lawyer, a founding trustee of the global education initiative Think Equal and Equality Director at iProbono. He was formerly a lawyer at Clifford Chance and K&L Gates and also worked in the Chambers at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Tanzania, where he worked on the Military 1 and Karera cases.

Aritha is a legal consultant for the Colombo International Financial Centre project and is a strong advocate of diversity and inclusion. He has advised the British Government on using British business to promote human rights abroad, recognising the identity of non-gendered persons, and was instrumental in lobbying to set up the Transgender Equality Inquiry at the British Parliament.

He has been a guest speaker at the University of Oxford, London Business School, Kings College, London and the London School of Economics and Political Science where he has shared his experiences in law, campaigning, and social reform. For his work, Aritha was ranked No. 1 Future Leader by the Financial Times in their 2015 OUTstanding List.

Mr. Chandana L. de Silva

Finance and Management professional

Chandana de Silva held financial and management positions in the U.K. including Chief Financial Officer for Level (3) Communications in Europe a NASDAQ quoted company and Head of Financial Planning for British Telecoms PLC. At MAS Holdings he established the group's Supply Chain Management function, strategy development in 2005, set up the MAS training Centre and was the Chief Executive Officer of MAS' Investment Division until December 2011.

He presently serves as a consultant and adviser to clients in investment management, property development and the technology sector. He is also a non-executive Director on the Boards of Eureka Technologies (Private) Limited, 24/7 Techies (Pvt) Ltd, Dunamis Capital PLC, Kelsey Developments PLC, First Capital Holdings PLC and its subsidiaries, Bairaha Farms PLC and the Executive Director of Sea-Change Partners Lanka (Private) Limited. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (in England, Wales and Sri Lanka).



Dr. Dinusha Panditaratne



Lawyer

Dinusha Panditaratne is a specialist in foreign policy and international law. She is a Nonresident Fellow of the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKI) and previously served as LKI's Executive Director for three years.

Prior to her appointment at LKI, Dr. Panditaratne was an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and a Visiting Fellow at the University of Hong Kong. She is an attorney admitted to practice in the State of New York and previously worked at Milbank LLP, a law firm on Wall Street. Dr. Panditaratne is a member of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN) headquartered in Seoul, an Advisor to Verité Research, and an Independent Non-Executive Director of NDB. She also served as a member of the International Advisory Board of the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh.

Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu



Executive Director

Dr. Saravanamuttu is the founder Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA). He was a member of the Foreign Policy Advisory Group and the Board of the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International and Strategic Studies. He has presented papers on peace and governance in Sri Lanka at a number of international conferences.

In 2010, Dr. Saravanamuttu was awarded the inaugural Citizens Peace Award by the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka and in September 2013, he was invited by President Obama to attend his “High Level Event on Civil Society”, in New York. In 2016, he was appointed, Secretary of the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms and in 2017, short-listed for the Peace Prize awarded by the city of Ypres, Belgium. He is also a member of the Regional Advisory Group of Amnesty International for Asia.

Dr Saravanamuttu is a founder director of the Sri Lanka Chapter of Transparency International and a founding Co-convener of the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV), which has monitored all the major elections in Sri Lanka since 1997 and the civil society alliance Platform for Freedom. In 2004 he was an Eisenhower Fellow (2004) and is currently Chairperson of the Eisenhower Fellows, Sri Lanka and a Member of the Gratiaen Trust.

Dr. Saravanamuttu received a BSc. Econ, Upper Second Class Honours degree and Ph. D in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), University of London, in 1979 and 1986, respectively. He lectured in International Politics at the University of Southampton, UK, from 1984 – 92.

Messages from CPA's Thematic Group heads

The devastation of the Easter Sunday attacks and a presidential election that saw a former defence secretary elected as the executive president carried several implications for human rights, governance and democracy in Sri Lanka with new levels of fear, increased incidents of incitement and polarisation within communities. CPA's contribution with research, advocacy and public interest litigation in 2019 was a critical reminder of the need for civil society to continuously monitor, engage and advocate for the promotion and protection of rights and uphold the rule of law in Sri Lanka's constitutional democracy. For example, CPA was the only civil society organisation that challenged (in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka) the post Easter Sunday emergency regulations. In addition to litigation, CPA raised concerns regarding heightened levels of incitement against minorities and ethno-religious violence. Further, CPA played a key role in challenging attempts to introduce the death penalty and advocated for legislative reforms using multiple tools. This year also saw CPA continuing with its research and the production of several research products that contributed to multiple discussions and informed constitutional reform, transitional justice and human rights.

Bhavani Fonseka, Research and Advocacy

2019 has been characteristic in the creation of thousands of empowered citizens encouraged to use RTI as a combat tool to voice out their concerns and strengthening the voice of plantation communities through the media of creative photovoice in an era of digitalisation, while building alternative and joint spaces in the national and cross-regional level to open up and reverse shrinking democratic and civil society spaces. While we are all affected by shrinking civic, democratic and civil society spaces, some sectors are found to be more marginalised from these spaces. The pandemic and securitised emergency responses will further exacerbate these inequalities. Hence, strengthening human rights, developing and bridging capacities on conflict analysis, multi-stakeholder processes and conflict transformation on nonviolent direct action and advocacy while capacitating minority communities to have active roles in developing policies and mechanisms to transform roots of dis-inclusion, dis-empowerment and marginalisation are obligatory.

Lionel Guruge, Capacity Building and Outreach

Sri Lanka has long had a great reputation for holding elections that safeguard the elements of democracy. However, at the same time, the lack of proper consideration of electoral reforms that must necessarily take place remains an unresolved problem in the ongoing electoral process in this country. With the establishment of the Election Commission in 2015, there was some anticipation among Sri Lankans that they would respond swiftly to these issues. Nevertheless, there are many new mechanisms and laws that need to be introduced immediately, such as the introduction of a proper mechanism to regulate election campaign finances, Facilitating for Out of Country Voting, and the ability to vote at the age of 18. There is rarely a formal discussion in the country about the recently introduced 25% quota for women in local governments and even its future existence with great interest in promoting women's political representation. Accordingly, the coming year is a crucial one. To ensure the electoral integrity in the country, a well-determined effort should essentially be made by civil society organisations to make the citizens of this country aware of these issues connected to the elections. Elections are not only the Biggest Logistic Operation in a day, but the massive challenge we face is to create an informed society that understands that it is the future of all citizens.

Manjula Gajanayake, CMEV National Coordinator

The Easter Sunday terrorism and consequential Presidential election in 2019 bookended a significant year of content production for and reader engagement with Groundviews. Generating over 574,000 page views, averaging over 1,500 page views a day on the website, content engagement saw an even sharper increase over the platform's Facebook and Twitter accounts. Conforming with Sri Lanka's media and information ecologies, the platform's social media accounts – updated more frequently and continually engaging with critical voices from government, media, diplomatic circles, and civil society – generated considerable interest and engagement in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday terrorism as well as in the lead up to the Presidential election. On Facebook, over 200 posts were published from just May to July, contextualising public fears, anxieties, impunity and increasing militarisation in Sri Lanka after the terrorist attacks. May drew the highest number of interactions on Facebook, driven by links to articles on the website. This reflects the considerable interest in and engagement with content on Groundviews not covered elsewhere.

Through continued innovation in responsive web design, interactive storytelling, photos, short-form video, Twitter polls and on the website, op-eds by leading commentators and public intellectuals, Groundviews retained its position as Sri Lanka's pre-eminent platform for content framing and contextualising socio-political developments marginal to or erased from other media platforms, including state and private TV and print. Groundviews featured commentary on the Niqab ban, surveillance, militarisation, the impunity of the then President and Prime Minister, controversial

Presidential pardons, the historic Parliamentary Select Committee hearings of the Easter Sunday terrorism, violence against refugees, the rise of Islamophobia, reflections on a decade after the end of war, interrogation of the deep state and after the Presidential election in November, several articles on the future of democracy in Sri Lanka. This content on the website was supported by hundreds of tweets flagging salient points and tagging relevant authorities and individuals, including those in the government at the time. On Facebook, content included multimedia productions around these issues. Distribution of content on WhatsApp through 3 groups with a total of close to 500 subscribers resulting in critical perspectives featured on the platform reaching a demographic that Facebook and Twitter did not capture.

2019 also witnessed the significant instrumentalisation of social media, in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday terrorism as well as in the election campaigns leading up to the Presidential election. New and disturbing trends emerged, including the weaponisation of rumours over WhatsApp that were aimed at stoking anxiety and anger. Even with the longest and most comprehensive block of social media in the history of Sri Lanka soon after the Easter Sunday attacks, the now well-documented use of VPNs resulted in very high engagement with content on Facebook and Twitter, including what was published by Groundviews. In the lead up to the Presidential election, the (ab)use of Facebook by political entrepreneurs was unprecedented and not matched by the company's oversight or investments to curtail the seed or spread of propaganda. The regulatory vacuum around propaganda production especially on social media, including content broadcast by private TV stations, resulted in a toxic information landscape where populism trumped principle and viral media overwhelmed critical engagement with political ideology.

In 2006, the establishment of Groundviews as the country's first civic media platform did not foresee the complexity of these challenges or how Sri Lankan political entrepreneurs with media proxies would learn to abuse social media platforms. Groundviews inhabited a contested information and media landscape in 2019, defined by the quality of content produced and the perspectives it brought to bear on contemporary socio-political developments. The name recognition of and trust in the brand, even with a niche core audience, continues to generate interest and engagement. Renewed fears around censorship and the violent clampdown of dissent after the Presidential election reaffirms the importance of the Groundviews and its founding vision, to bear witness to that which others gloss over, or are too fearful to focus on.

Sanjana Hattotuwa, Civic Media

2019 In Review

The project period was a time of social upheaval, violence, and political transition. The following developments were key issues that emerged in 2019 to which CPA responded via the organisation's thematic groups: Research and Advocacy, Civic Media, Social Indicator, Capacity building and Outreach and the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV).

In February 2019, President Maithripala Sirisena called for the implementation of the death penalty and went on to sign the death warrants for four individuals convicted of drug-related offenses on 26 June, ending a 43-year suspension of capital punishment in Sri Lanka.

The Easter Sunday terror attacks that took place in April 2019, not only resulted in severe loss and destruction to life and property causing deep shock and distress among the public but also exposed the harsh repercussions of a divided political leadership. A series of riots and violence targeting Muslim communities took place across the island in retaliation against the Easter attacks and the country witnessed an alarming increase of anti-Muslim rhetoric and Islamophobia over the months that followed.

In August 2019, President Maithripala Sirisena appointed Major General Shavendra Silva as the Commander of the Sri Lanka Army. Maj. Gen. Silva faces multiple allegations of violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) including war crimes. The appointment stands against the background of the Government's own commitments to Justice and Accountability made through UNHRC Resolution 30/1 and demonstrates a clear disregard for human rights norms, facilitating the further entrenchment of impunity in Sri Lanka.

The Presidential Election that followed in November 2019 saw the landslide victory of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and was acutely symptomatic of the loss of public confidence in the former Government. The victory of President Rajapaksa can be viewed as a key turning point in Sri Lanka's Human Rights and Transitional Justice trajectory. The increase in Sinhala Buddhist nationalism and anti-minority rhetoric show signs of a shrinking space for human rights activism in Sri Lanka.



Public Interest Litigation (PIL)

CPA advanced several PIL cases in 2019 which were at the forefront of political governance in Sri Lanka. These cases were carried out under the **Public Interest Litigation Sri Lanka** project supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs with the aim of strengthening civil society contribution to democratic peace and governance through PIL to uphold the supremacy of the constitution and reinforce the rights of citizens.

Fundamental Rights

1) **Centre for Policy Alternatives v Attorney General (SC FR 194 & 199/2019)**

On 28 May 2019, The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and its Executive Director, Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, filed papers **challenging some of the Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers included in the Emergency Regulation No. 1 of 2019**. CPA did not challenge the Declaration of a State of Emergency, but rather some of the Regulations which are found in Gazette Extraordinary No. 2120/5 dated Monday April 22, 2019.

CPA argued that some of the Regulations violated the rights guaranteed under Articles 4(c) [judicial power of the people], Article 10 [freedom of thought], Article 11 [freedom from torture] ,Article 12(1) [equal protection of the law]) & Article 12 (2) [non-discrimination], Article 13 [freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention and punishment] and 14 (1) (g) [freedom to engage in a lawful occupation, profession] &14 (1) (h) [freedom of movement and choosing residence within Sri Lanka] of the Constitution.

The government discontinued the state of emergency in August 2019 and with that the said emergency regulations lapsed. As such CPA withdrew its application. CPA also released a [statement](#) on the issue. (Media Cover: [Daily FT](#), [Daily News](#), [Times Online](#))

2) Centre for Policy Alternatives v Attorney General (SC FR 256/2019)

On 20 June 2019, CPA and its Executive Director, Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, filed papers **challenging the Presidential Pardon of Gnanasara Thero who was convicted for contempt of court** by the Court of Appeal on 8th August 2018. He was sentenced to 19 years of rigorous imprisonment to be completed within 6 years.

CPA noted that the Constitution does not permit the President to act in a manner that undermines and erodes the independence of the judiciary in exercising his right to pardon under Article 34 of the Constitution.

CPA's position was that this grant of pardon frustrated the power of the judiciary to maintain its authority and uphold its dignity and the rule of law. As such CPA argued, that fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 12(1) [*All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection before the law*] has been violated. This case is still ongoing. CPA released a [statement](#) on this issue. (Media Cover: [News Radio](#), [The Sunday Times](#))

3) Centre for Policy Alternatives v Attorney General (SC FR 273/2019)

On 01 July 2019, CPA and its Executive Director, Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, filed papers **challenging the President's act of signing the death warrant of four persons** convicted of drug-related offences.

Though convicts have been sentenced to death, the long-recognised practice in Sri Lanka for over 43 years has been that they were not executed. CPA reiterated that the implementation of the death penalty at this juncture is a violation of fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 11 [*Freedom from torture*] and under Article 12(1) [*All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection before the law*] of the Constitution. CPA argued that Sri Lanka is obliged under international law to refrain from carrying out the death penalty. The Supreme Court in the first instance issued an order staying any executions from taking place. With the end of President Sirisena's tenure as President there does not seem to be the same push to execute any person who has been convicted and sentenced to death. The case is still ongoing.

CPA sent [letters to all 225 Members of Parliament](#), urging them on the need for legislative reforms in the criminal justice system in Sri Lanka including the need to abolish the death penalty from all existing statutes. (Media Cover: [Daily News](#), [The Sunday Morning](#))

4) CPA submissions in Supreme Court Reference 01/2019

On 23rd August 2019, CPA and its Executive Director Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu made submissions to the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka during proceedings on the questions posed by President Maithripala Sirisena in terms of Article 129(1) of the Constitution. In his Reference to the Supreme Court (SC/Ref/01/2019), President Sirisena requested the Court's opinion on whether **Provincial Council elections** could be held under the new election law introduced by the Provincial Councils Elections (Amendment) Act, No. 17 of 2017 or whether the elections could be held under the old election law which existed before September 2017 based on section 6(2) of the Interpretation Ordinance.

CPA also urged the Supreme Court to be mindful that Provincial Council Elections could be used as a tool to delay Presidential Elections due later in 2019. Therefore, CPA requested the Court to make it clear to all stakeholders that *all elections must take place* at the time prescribed by law and that delay in *any election* is a violation of the Sovereignty of the People and the Constitution itself.

This reference comes in the wake of several manoeuvres by the government, with the support of the President, to postpone Provincial Council elections. [In a case filed by CPA in August 2017](#), the Supreme Court unequivocally reaffirmed the position that delaying elections was a violation of the Sovereignty of the People. [CPA also raised serious concerns](#) about the rushed and non-transparent process followed by the government to enact Provincial Councils Elections (Amendment) Act, No. 17 of 2017. Due to the changes introduced by this Act, the Election Commission has been unable to conduct Provincial Council elections as and when they became due. Accordingly, the terms of office of eight of the nine Provincial Councils have lapsed. CPA released a [statement](#) on this issue. (Media Cover: [The Morning](#), [Sunday Times](#))

5) Centre for Policy Alternatives v Attorney General (SC FR 449/2019)

On 14th November 2019, CPA and its Executive Director, Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu filed a fundamental rights application **challenging the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers to allow President Maithripala Sirisena the continuous use of the residence currently used by him, and to cover the costs associated with same**. In their Petition, the Petitioners stated that the residence occupied by President Maithripala Sirisena on Mahagama Sekara Mawatha (also referred to by some as Paget Road) is of great financial value and is a valuable asset of the Country.

The benefits received by former Presidents and their widows are regulated by the Presidents Entitlements Act, No. 4 of 1986. As such the CPA argued against, the allocation of a public

asset of such financial value for the personal use of a former President who is no longer carrying out the functions of a Head of State. CPA further argued it is wrong for the Cabinet of Ministers to decide on the benefits of a retiring President before s/he ceases to hold office.

CPA contended that the fundamental rights of the Petitioners' and the citizens of Sri Lanka (under Article 12(1) [Right to Equality]) have been violated by the Cabinet of Ministers' decision. The case is still ongoing. CPA issued a [statement](#) on this matter. (Media Cover: [Daily FT](#))

CPA is the only civil society organisation that has challenged this act. If not challenged the decision to allow President Maithripala Sirisena the continuous use of the residence used by him whilst in office (during the course of his lifetime and his wife's lifetime), and to cover the costs associated with same would cost the Sri Lankan taxpayers millions of rupees and would set a bad precedent to be followed by future Presidents.

Land Rights

6) Maheshwary Thambirajah and 4 others vs. W. Waragoda and 6 others CA (Writ) 376/2014 and SC/SPL/LA 229/2019

CPA supported filing a writ application on 30 October 2014. The 1st Petitioner, Maheshwary Thambirajah, is a landowner of a land located in Eluthumaduvil in the district of Jaffna.

The case was filed against the steps taken by the government to take over their lands constituting approximately 52 acres for a purported public purpose of establishing a 'training school under 52nd Brigade Headquarters'.

The matter was delayed during 2014, 2015 and 2016 due to the various national elections and the changing of government officials which necessitated technical changes to the Petition. The Court instructed the army to explore the possibility of giving the Petitioners alternative land of the like value and kind, however, the prospects for settlement did not materialise, and the matter was argued on the 7th of September 2018.

On the 17th May 2019, the Court of Appeal delivered its judgment, holding against the Petitioners and dismissing the Application. The court also held that this was a matter of National Security and 'should not be discussed and probed openly'. The Centre for Policy Alternative thereafter supported the Petitioners in filing an Application for Appeal to the Supreme Court from the Judgement of the Court of Appeal on the 25th of June 2019.



Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

Although 2019 marked a decade since the end of the war in Sri Lanka, the challenges to democracy, human rights, and governance were many. CPA responded to these developments via research and advocacy for policy reform, awareness building and campaigning for the protection of human rights and democracy, as well as outreach projects enabling and empowering marginalised communities.

EU Strategic Country Assessment

The European Union Delegation to Sri Lanka & the Maldives commissioned CPA to conduct an assessment as part of their strategic pre-programming process for Sri Lanka which examined several dimensions including in the areas of democracy, rule of law, human rights, environment, economic issues, trade and development, reconciliation, and geo political considerations among others. The assessment was conducted during the period declared as an emergency, in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks. CPA hosted three conferences to explore current trends and future projections for Sri Lanka with civil society, trade unions, religious leaders, the business community, and non-EU donors. Three reports with the findings of each discussion were developed and shared with the EU Delegation.

From late April to early May 2020, Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu and Bhavani Fonseka commented on an internal EU document and engaged with the EU Delegation in Colombo to discuss trends and possible political, economic and human rights implications of the Easter Sunday Attacks.

Survey on Public Perceptions Towards Governance in Post Independent Sri Lanka

The research dealt with the respondent's memory and experience of the past and present as well as expectations he/ she had for the future of Sri Lanka. The survey analysed public attitudes towards forms of governance, inter-ethnic/religious relations, traditionalism and modernism, social welfare, as well as freedom of expression, media consumption and international relations in post-independence Sri Lanka. [A top-line report depicting the survey results](#) was published in February 2019.

Contents of the report and data gathered from the survey provided a baseline assessment for both planning and conducting outreach building/ awareness campaigns on socio-economic and political reforms in Sri Lanka. Findings of the survey were also used for public policy discussions pertaining to the Government's future political and structural reform agenda and by independent researchers, academics, policy makers et al for research and advocacy purposes.

Publication of a Comprehensive Guide to the Sri Lankan Parliament



PARLIAMENT Law, History and Practice

Pasan Jayasinghe
Peter Reid
Asanga Welikala

CPA in association with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) and the University Court of the University of Edinburgh published *Parliament: Law, History & Practice* co-authored by Pasan Jayasinghe, Peter Reid, and Dr Asanga Welikala in all three languages (English, Sinhala and Tamil) in December 2019.

This is the first comprehensive guide to the Sri Lankan Parliament, its history, its constitutional role, and how it functions. The absence of an authoritative but accessible guide on Parliament is most acutely felt after the changes made by the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 2015.

The publication written with the cooperation of the Speaker and the Secretary General, will be useful for Members of Parliament and officials as well as the general public. The Sinhala translation of the book was completed by Mr. Mahinda Hattaka and the Tamil translation by Mr. Thurairajah. The Sinhala and Tamil review were completed by Asoka Herath and Rajesh Segar respectively.

The book was launched in December 2019 and trilingual printed copies were disseminated among Members of Parliament, staff of Parliament, Embassies, NGOs, INGOs, civil society, libraries and other stakeholders.

Critique of the Emergency Regulations

In response to the threat to security caused by the Easter Sunday explosions, President Maithripala Sirisena proclaimed a state of emergency and promulgated a set of emergency regulations on 23 and 24 April. Although a robust and compelling response from the government is necessary in the face of terrorism, it is critical to ensure that emergency powers are not allowed to completely extinguish the balance between freedom and security.

CPA released a [statement of concern](#) and a [public awareness document](#) regarding the scope and powers under the emergency regulations passed by the government as well as [interactive visual content](#) educating the public on emergency regulations and their constitutional provisions.

CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES



WHO CAN DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY?

The President has the sole discretion to bring about a state of emergency, by way of a Proclamation (Article 155 of the Constitution). This brings into operation the provisions of the PSO including the power of the President to make Emergency Regulations, which may override any other law. Emergency Regulations cannot override the Constitution. The Proclamation must be communicated to Parliament, which must be summoned for that purpose. A declaration of a state of emergency cannot be challenged in the Courts.

OR MORE INFORMATION SEE [HTTPS://WWW.CPALANKA.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2019/04/QA_SOE.PDF](https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/QA_SOE.PDF)



WHAT IS A STATE OF EMERGENCY?

A clear situation of exceptional threat, danger or disaster where the government can be given powers not permitted during normal times to deal with the threat. A situation like this allows the President to proclaim a state of emergency in order to ensure national security, public order and maintain essential services.

OR MORE INFORMATION SEE [HTTPS://WWW.CPALANKA.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2019/04/QA_SOE.PDF](https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/QA_SOE.PDF)



HOW LONG CAN A STATE OF EMERGENCY LAST?

The President can issue a Proclamation that is valid for one month (though he may revoke it earlier). Parliament must approve this Proclamation within fourteen days – if it doesn't, then the Proclamation expires. A state of emergency can only be extended by Parliamentary approval.

OR MORE INFORMATION SEE [HTTPS://WWW.CPALANKA.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2019/04/QA_SOE.PDF](https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/QA_SOE.PDF)

Condemning Terrorism and Communal Violence

CPA issued two statements in the period following the Easter Sunday attacks, one [condemning the violence and terrorism](#) of the attacks and a second [commenting on the communal violence](#) that followed. The statements were informed by the monitoring work done by the Research and Advocacy team on the ground situation, increased incidents of incitement and ethno-religious violence, and field visits engaging with multiple stakeholders.

Awareness on the Proposed Counter Terrorism Act

The proposed Counter-Terrorism Act (CTA) was approved by the Cabinet and tabled in Parliament on 9 October 2018. Building on the PTA and CTA comparison report that was released in 2018, CPA developed a short [document addressing frequently asked questions](#) on the CTA.

Giving Voice to the Untold Stories of Sri Lanka's Plantation Sector

This project was organised by CPA in partnership with the Uwa Shakthi Foundation and the GIZ's Strengthening Reconciliation Processes in Sri Lanka (SRP) program. The project facilitated the plantation community to play a proactive role in advocacy initiatives, addressing their own issues and to tap into the skill and potential of plantation youth through creative photography/photovoice.

Discussions were held between key stakeholders including Estate Management and Trade Unions with the Estate community, youth participants and Community leaders. A series of workshops were conducted to identify and recruit youth groups as participants for the project. Field visits to oversee photo-taking in the selected locations (two estates in the Badulla and Nuwaraeliya Districts) also incorporated a photo reading session to assess the photos captured and to finalise the images to be showcased at the exhibition for dialogue.

A series of [photography exhibitions](#) featuring images captured by the youth were held at the district and provincial level over the course of 2 months. The national exhibition was conducted successfully on the 26th and 27th of September at the Lionel Wendt Art Gallery in Colombo. Participants included the plantation youth, general public, political leadership, policymakers, academia, and members of civil society generating policy dialog for social change.

Language Rights

CPA has continuously advocated for meaningful implementation of the official languages policy (OLP) in state institutions to ensure equal language rights to all Sri Lankans. To date CPA-led

initiatives have submitted complaints to local institutions and independent Commissions and advanced litigation on language rights. Advocacy of this nature has secured some important victories, including ensuring trilingual printings of legislation; trilingual transport notices and announcements; trilingual documentation by finance companies; and undertakings to provide trilingual labelling of consumer and medical products. 2019 continued to build on these advances.

Promoting Language Equality and Reconciliation at a National Level

Supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, CPA worked with the Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council to strengthen language equality by tackling challenges and obstacles at the Provincial Council (PC) level in order to facilitate effective language policy implementation.

Under CPA initiative, the Sabaragamuwa PC received technical support and guidance to understand the current status, issues and challenges connected to the OLP. CPA also facilitated the strategy design and Language Plan for all government institutions under the Sabaragamuwa PC to ensure the effective implementation of the OLP.

Data received from the language audit can be used to ensure the allocation of sufficient financial resources, reinforcing policy measures and formulating strategies for effective implementation of the OLP in the future.

CPA has also filed a case against the breach of the Official Language Policy with regards to pharmaceutical drugs and cosmetics products in the local market, which is ongoing.

Monitoring security and rights issues in the North and East

CPA [released a statement](#) on an incident of ethno-religious tension occurring in Mullaitivu, where there was a dispute over the cremation of Colomba Medhalankarakitti Thero, who resided in the Mullaitivu Gurukanda Purana Rajamaha Viharaya on land claimed to belong to the Neeraviyadi Pillaiyar Kovil.

An Assessment of Strategic Displacement During the Sri Lankan Civil War

Social Indicator conducted a large-N survey in the Northern, Eastern Provinces and the border villages, as well as in some areas in the Western Province in order to assess the movement trajectories of persons affected by the civil conflict during the period between 1983 – 2009. The survey gathered details pertaining to all the locations the respondent lived during that time, when he/she moved (or:

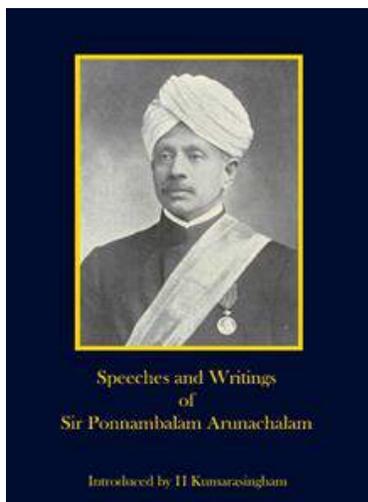
was displaced/resettled) there and when he/she left. Each location was treated as a so-called “milestone” in the movement trajectory of the respondent. The survey’s ultimate goal was to shed light on the patterns of fleeing and staying on the ground – during the civil conflict.

A pilot study was followed by the main survey with 1200 respondents across the Northern and Eastern Provinces, border villages and the Western Province. A database with the survey results was developed along with a code book that consisted of the Sinhala and Tamil code lists translated in English for the pilot survey.

Accountability and security sector reforms

CPA's work around accountability and the need for security sector reforms as well as close monitoring of national developments continued throughout 2019. CPA was the only local organisation to make an [official statement of concern on the promotion of Shavendra Silva](#) to Chief of Staff, of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) followed by another [statement on his appointment as the commander](#) of SLA.

Speeches and Writings of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam



This is a reproduction of a collection first published in 1936 with a foreword by J.C. Wedgwood. The 2019 publication provides a new contextual introduction to Arunachalam and the contemporary relevance of his public interventions as introduced by Dr. Harshan Kumarasingham.

The publication was printed in March 2019 and disseminated to Embassies, NGOs, civil society, libraries and other stakeholders.

Media Coverage on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Issues: [SBS News](#), , [The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs](#), [South Asia Journal](#), [Aljazeera](#), [Euro News](#), [The Hindu](#), [Voicepkdotnet](#), [Colombo Gazette](#), [UCA News](#), [Daily FT](#), [Sri Lanka Brief](#), [Roar Media](#), [The New Humanitarian](#), [Democracy Now](#), [France 24](#), [Sri Lanka Brief](#), [Forum Asia](#), [Times Online](#)



Women’s Political Representation

Women in Politics (WiP)

The Project engaged with elected female councilors, officials from the Local Authorities, political party leaders, district organisers and CSOs to address the gender imbalance rooted in political decision-making processes at the National, Provincial and Local levels, which has distressed the concept of representative democracy in Sri Lanka.

CPA identified that the elected female councilors (entering through the 25% Quota System under Amendment to the Local Government Election Ordinance) lack the basic knowledge and support required to fully contribute to the Local decision-making process. Three project activities were carried out in ten districts in the Western, Sabaragamuwa, Uva and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka targeting three specific objectives.

Objective	Activity
<i>To strengthen the political carrier of women members elected to the local councils to better prepare them for the councils and in the long term to contest in the Provincial and National Level Elections.</i>	42 discussion series over 10 districts, training a total of 1385 individuals including female councilors and LA officials.

Objective	Activity
<p><i>To enhance the awareness and importance of female participation in the political process among District organisers, Political Party Leaders and thereby encouraging political party leaders to build a strong platform that would provide equal access for women to contest in the upcoming elections.</i></p>	<p>Ten district dialogues were conducted targeting district organisers and political party representatives with the total participation of 252 people.</p>
<p><i>To direct the Quota outlook towards Gender Equality Concept to sense the idea that female representation is an essential segment to the Political Decision Making process of the country.</i></p>	<p>A trilingual publication was made compiling the findings, observations and the recommendations of the Project.</p>

Diamond Leadership Study on Women Political Empowerment in Sri Lanka (DLM)

The aim of the DLM study was to analyse the progress of women's advancement as well as factors supporting and hindering their empowerment in Sri Lanka. DLM focuses on women's empowerment at three levels (High, Mid and Low), measuring the effectiveness of women's leadership in the legislative, executive, judicial and security sectors.

The study was conducted in two segments, quantitative data collection via desk research, and qualitative data collection through a series of face to face interviews with 48 key individuals/ experts. The study successfully measured the representation and leadership share of women in the legislative, executive, judicial and security sectors and provided key recommendations for its findings on the current status of women leadership in Sri Lanka, contributory factors for women Political empowerment, impeding Factors for women political empowerment, and forms of assistance for further progress.

The [findings of this study were included in a report](#) which aims to help the government and civil society institutions working on women's leadership and political empowerment, to design and implement their respective programs and policy initiatives more effectively. The repo



Constitutional Reform

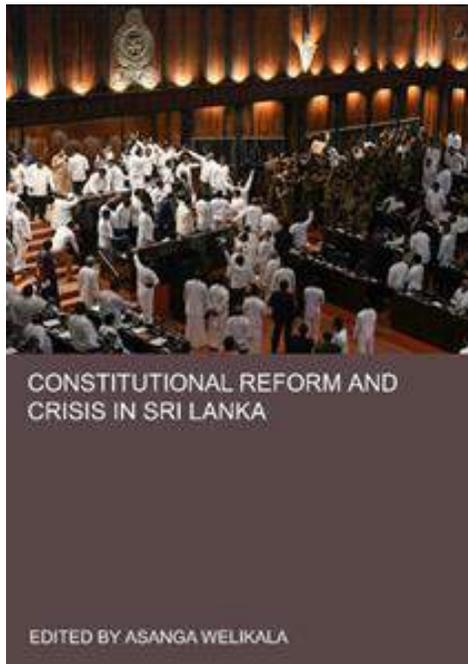
The Constitution is the country's foremost legal document, intended to represent and protect the public, whilst curtailing powers of the ruling elite. To ensure that the interests of the political leadership are truly reflective of the needs of the people, it is imperative that the citizens are well informed about the Constitution and that their sense of ownership would drive a demand for accountability. Over the years CPA has developed a strong background in strengthening and advocating for positive constitutional reform.

Strengthening Civil Society Contribution to Governance and Constitutional Reform

CPA hosted a residential workshop on Constitutional Reform and Crisis in Sri Lanka: Navigating Democratic Backsliding and Institutional Resilience (2015 to 2020) with the support of the Edinburgh Centre for Constitutional Law and the International Working Group on Sri Lanka. The workshop was held in March 2019 with the participation of Members of Parliament, lawyers, and members of civil society.

The conference explored the trajectory of the reform process since 2015 and the constitutional crisis of 2018, in a global context in which populism, democratic backsliding and institutional resilience are receiving heightened attention from scholars, policy makers, politicians and citizens. The discussions were led by seven papers dealing with analyses of the process, the crisis, the future, as well as with the results of a specifically commissioned public opinion survey. Ideas shared in the workshop influenced the publication of the book *Constitutional Reform and Crisis in Sri Lanka* – edited by Dr Asanga Welikala in March 2019.

Constitutional Reform and Crisis in Sri Lanka



This is a collection of essays that looks back at the constitutional reform process since 2015 and the constitutional crisis of 2018. The essays authored by Kumar David, Jayadeva Uyangoda, Pradeep Peiris, Sanjana Hattotuwa, Suri Ratnapala, Dharisha Bastians, and Asanga Welikala cover the politics of regime change, constitutional reform and the crisis, political communications and social media, public perceptions of constitutional democracy, democratic backsliding and institutional resilience, and the culture of constitutional law and politics.

CPA printed 400 books in March 2019 and disseminated among Members of Parliament (MPs), Embassies, UN, NGOs, civil society, libraries and other stakeholders.

Public Opinion Poll on the Constitution of Sri Lanka

Against the backdrop of the constitutional reforms introduced through the 19th Amendment, the setbacks faced, and the constitutional coup that transpired, CPA conducted an opinion poll to capture public perception on the constitution and the constitutional crisis of October 2018.

The survey was carried out in both Sinhala and Tamil languages across all 25 districts. The dataset was weighted to reflect the actual district and ethnic proportion of the population. A total of 40 male and female field researchers from Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim ethnic communities were mobilised. The survey report '[Public Opinion Poll on Sri Lanka's Constitutional Reform](#)' was published online in May 2019. Data gathered from the national poll was presented to academics, members of parliament, and civil society at the workshop "Constitutional Reform and Crisis in Sri Lanka: Navigating Democratic Backsliding and Institutional Resilience, 2015-2020" in March 2019. Data from the report also informed a chapter titled 'Possibilities of Democratic Constitutional reforms' authored by Dr. Pradeep Peiris, in the publication 'Constitutional Reform and Crisis in Sri Lanka Edited by Dr. Asanga Welikala.



Right to Information (RTI)

CPA has been at the forefront of advocacy for the right to information for over 15 years, helping draft earlier versions of RTI legislation and being involved in the advocacy and public awareness efforts for the current RTI Act which was passed in 2016 and came into operation in early 2017.

Empowering Citizen's Use of RTI

This project seeks to shape and refine precedents on the RTI Act's national security exemption by encouraging information requests relating to Transitional Justice issues from citizens across Sri Lanka. CPA completed a number of workshops with partner organisations across the country (with Families of the Disappeared in Galle, Matara, Hambantota and Batticaloa; Women's Resource Centre in Kurunegala; Muslim Women's Development Trust in Puttalam; and the Mannar Women's Development Federation) where 213 persons were trained in this regard. The RTI request ideas sourced from the workshops were submitted as RTI requests progressively through 2019.

The focus during the reporting period in 2019 was following through on these requests and in particular following up on the appeals to requests which received unsatisfactory responses (non-responses or refusals of information). The Research and Advocacy Team was able to progress a number of appeals to public authorities and to the RTI Commission. 52 information requests filed.

A follow up workshop was conducted for which participants from Galle, Matara, Hambantota and Kurunegala districts joined. Additionally, select participants identified through the initial workshops carried out by CPA were trained to become RTI resource persons in their respective communities. CPA also pursued discussions with officials on instituting the RTI Help Desk facility as a national hotline and with partner organisations on project impacts and possible follow ups.

Public Advocacy: Awareness Campaign



CPA also conducted awareness campaigns targeting government institutions (local government authorities, grama niladhari offices, post offices, schools, public utility offices), religious sites (temples, kovils, mosques and churches), and transport outlets (bus stands, train stations, trains, trishaws) across three Provinces (Southern, Sabaragamuwa and Central Province) where stickers, leaflets and posters on RTI were distributed. The awareness campaigns also included producing and circulating user-friendly resources such as guides, infographics and other informative material in all three languages on social media, and radio programmes discussing RTI and encouraging calls to the RTI Help Desk aired on 12 community radio stations.

RTI Helpdesk Hotline (0113-030-463)

The CPA Outreach Unit continues to maintain an RTI help desk (Contact no: 0113030463) to ensure that citizens will be guided and provided with necessary assistance on filing cases, drafting their concerns, and resolving their questions and ambiguities with regards to RTI complaints on a day to day basis. The unit has currently assigned three personnel in this regard. Two employees attend to inquiries in Sinhala and Tamil during office hours and an officer (attorney at law) with a sound background in the area of RTI, maintains a database of complaints and follows up with responses and feedback received by the relevant parties.

Effective Use of Right to Information Act

The project aims to raise awareness on the importance of active public engagement in exercising RTI. For this, CPA developed a more integrated and responsive network at the grassroots level by promoting RTI among newly appointed local governance representatives, public servants at local level and civic activists which will be helpful in future engagements of CPA.

Activities carried out include 40 sensitisation workshops on RTI targeted at Local governance representatives and civic activists, awareness workshops for over 1000 individuals in 24 districts on challenges related to implementation of the Official Language Policy and the public dissemination of trilingual, user-friendly booklets, application forms and other material on RTI.



Transitional Justice

CPA has continually engaged in the protection and promotion of transitional justice and in filling key gaps in public knowledge regarding the transitional justice processes. In 2019, CPA focused on a nation wide awareness campaign following the Easter Sunday terror attacks and the social upheaval that followed.

‘The Time is Now’ Campaign

The key objective of this project was to raise awareness on issues related to transitional justice and human rights in a post war context. For this purpose, a media campaign was launched in June 2019, engaging diverse actors and influential personalities who advocated for the need for reflection as Sri Lanka marked 10 years since the end of the war, in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks and the violence that followed.

A series of [English](#), [Sinhala](#) and [Tamil](#) videos as well as [English](#), [Sinhala](#) and [Tamil](#) audio versions were aired on television channels and radio stations. The videos were also posted on and circulated via CPA’s social media pages, primarily on Facebook and Twitter. The key message highlighted throughout the campaign was that Sri Lankans have suffered through decades of violence, and continue to do so. Over 70 years after independence, ten years after the end of the war, and as the country undergoes another period of crisis, this is a time to remember and reflect, in the hope that we never have to experience such violence again.

Statement on the Death Penalty and Public Awareness

As mentioned in the section under Public Interest Litigation, CPA denounced President Maithripala Sirisena's position on signing the death warrants of four persons convicted of drug-related offences. For the reasons given in the above-mentioned section, CPA stood against the decision to revive the death penalty in Sri Lanka. The Executive Director of CPA made [a statement](#) on the issue. CPA also produced [a series of trilingual infographics](#) on the death penalty in Sri Lanka to create better public awareness.

A study on Sri Lanka's Criminal Justice System and Areas for Reform



This project explored Sri Lanka's criminal justice system through an exhaustive study of the existing legal and policy framework and interviews carried out with a range of stakeholders in order to map key areas where reforms are needed. The project aims to raise awareness in relation to areas that require attention and to facilitate a discussion on legal, policy and structural reforms that guarantee that justice is accessible to all.

The report [*The Need for Accountability in Sri Lanka's Criminal Justice System: A Glance at Seven Emblematic Cases*](#) examines seven emblematic cases to evaluate the levels of accountability in the prosecution of cases of human rights violations within Sri Lanka's criminal justice system. The three-part report first establishes several recurrent trends causing system failures and exacerbating the culture of impunity in Sri Lanka. Secondly, it makes recommendations for structural and legal reforms to address those trends and finally, it presents an analysis of the seven selected cases with a timeline of incidents, investigation and prosecution.

75 reports and infographics based on the report were printed and disseminated to universities, libraries, civil society, Members of Parliament, lawyers, media, embassies, the UN, NGOs and INGOs for greater public awareness on the issue.



Civic Media

CPA's Civic Media Team is a network of civic media platforms: Groundviews in English, Vikalpa in Sinhala and Maatram in Tamil. The team uses a range of genres and media to highlight alternative perspectives on governance, human rights, hate speech, peace-building and other issues often not covered in mainstream media, particularly targeting the 18-34 year old demographic. Collectively, the sites have over 65,000 followers on Facebook, over 80,000 followers on Twitter and over 2800 followers on Instagram, over 8200 subscribers on YouTube, while its WhatsApp groups collectively have over 500 participants. The work of the Civic Media Team is followed by key opinion and policymakers locally and internationally and is often re-published on mainstream media.

Civic Media Reporting

In 2019 the Civic Media Team continued their work reporting on issues relating to rights, democracy, and governance, using technology to tell stories in an engaging and interactive way, through photostories, infographics and data-driven reporting. CPA's citizen journalism platforms remain unique actors in the country's media landscape, often covering issues ignored or underreported in mainstream media. The emphasis on trilingual coverage of underreported issues is a rare and appreciated occurrence in Sri Lanka where polarisation across language is common.

Collectively, the trilingual platforms *Groundviews*, *Maatram* and *Vikalpa* have outstripped mainstream media in the coverage of critical issues such as:

- Documenting the evolution of protests by the families of the disappeared, one year after they began (including through, to our knowledge the first use of Virtual Reality Video in Sri Lanka for documenting the day to day life of a family member of the disappeared)

- Marking 35 years since the Black July riots that resulted in the deaths of numerous Tamil civilians in a series reflecting on memories of violence, and the continued impact it has had in post-war Sri Lanka
- The continued impact of technology-based violence on women and the LGBTIQ community
- The exploitative nature of microfinance companies and the devastating impact it has had on the North and East, leading to despair and suicide. Following our coverage new legislation is being introduced to regulate the operation of such companies

Key approaches include

1. Trilingual campaign reflecting on issues important to citizens, in order to encourage participation in the upcoming elections.
2. Production of long-form content on underreported issues such as social inequality, constitutional reform and transitional justice, human rights issues, freedom of expression and hate speech.
3. The launch of the Social Media declaration – a code developed by Vikalpa over the course of a year through interaction with numerous members of civil society, media and others concerned with fostering responsible and inclusive speech online.
4. Photo essays humanising stories of social inequality, leveraging a range of tools (Microsoft Sway/Adobe Spark), and using immersive tools such as 360-degree photography and video, and the capabilities of platforms like Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to curate and create compelling stories.
5. Using data visualisation and online tools in order to produce data-driven reporting around corruption (building on past work highlighting, for instance, the cost of purchasing unnecessary aircraft by the national air carrier), rights issues, fostering civic participation and encouraging media literacy in the face of disinformation (a series begun in 2018 which has generated a positive response from civil society and journalists).
6. Translation – emphasis on cross-translation of content in concert with original authors and editorial staff. Given the paucity of critical content in Sinhala, and the lack of cross-translation of content between Sinhala and Tamil, communities remain polarised even post-war, as was evidenced when Vikalpa’s photo exhibition funded by NED “Unframed” was banned by a university in Peradeniya due to Student Union protests on the basis that the content was pro LTTE, since it featured many Tamil citizens, and those sympathetic to minority rights, such as Prageeth Eknaligoda. Content originally produced in English and for Groundviews will gain more traction and resonance when translated into Sinhala and Tamil on a systematic and professional basis.

7. Using social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp) to promote content produced by Groundviews, Vikalpa and Maatram, but also to engage with readers, and question shortfalls in governance, highlight inequality, and promote transparency and accountability.
8. Solutions journalism – highlighting good practice and possible solutions to underlying issues instead of grievances. Content that is focused on advocacy and education rather than simply highlighting division – with the aim of complicating the narrative and reducing polarisation.

Output across all three channels included 36 stories highlighting social inequality, humanising injustice and the ongoing reform processes, 12 stories revisiting the status issues covered in previous years, central to contemporary discussions around justice, rights and peace, yet neglected in mainstream media, 8 stories using data visualisation, 24 translated stories, relevant and issue-based content sharing on dedicated WhatsApp groups, regular posts and updates highlighting stories on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp, the launch of the Social Media Declaration, with discussions around responsible social media use and 12 stories focused on solutions journalism.

Embracing an agile, guerrilla media architecture and culture

Recognising the potential for censorship of online content, the platforms operates in a manner that makes attempts to block its content ineffective and carries high international visibility. This is done by leveraging the brand identity and reputation of Groundviews, as well as leveraging open data, data visualisation, translation and social media (both in terms of organic, virality as well as paid and sponsored visibility) to critique issues around governance like defence spending, corruption, nepotism, militarisation, censorship and state surveillance. The platforms also rigorously maintain institutional agility and cross-translation across the sites, so as to continue to content production and promotion even if one or more of the platforms associated with Groundviews are subject to cyber-terrorism, or face technical challenges.

Media Cover: [Witness](#), [The Sunday Morning](#), [Inter Press Service](#), [Aljazeera](#), [Global Issues](#), [The Guardian](#), [Strait Times](#), [Egypt Independent](#), [BuzzFeed](#), [The Economist](#), [The Washington Post](#), [ABC Action News](#), [Global Voices](#)



Electoral Reform

Promoting Free and Fair Elections Through the Monitoring and Observation of the Presidential Election 2019

CMEV deployed nearly 5,000 Long Term and Short Term observers from across the country to monitor the Presidential election of 2019. The primary intervention of the CMEV was to direct election-related complaints to the Election Commission and the Sri Lanka Police. Additionally, a comprehensive discourse on the impact of the election process was created through media reports and discussions in coordination with all stakeholders involved in Election Dispute Resolution (EDR).

The CMEV was also active in promoting Inclusive Elections particularly by making strong interventions towards protecting the right to vote for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and promoting voter education. Following the election, the CMEV published [a comprehensive report of the entire monitoring process](#).

Estimated Election Campaign Cost Monitoring Initiative of Sri Lanka

Among those key issues prevalent within the election process in Sri Lanka, the absence of campaign finance legislation to regulate unlimited campaign finances was identified as a pressing concern. To address this issue, CMEV together with another election monitoring group PAFFREL, prepared a basic document that can be used to understand election campaign costs and potential ways to regulate unlimited use of campaign finances. It is noteworthy that the Election Commission has also prepared a draft bill in this regard.

This observation and monitoring effort led by CMEV is a new and vital initiative no election monitoring organisation, civil society organisation, or any other institution has attempted in the electoral history of Sri Lanka. The initiative was an attempt to ensure electoral integrity, so that elections can truly be called the basic mechanism of choice and change in a functioning democracy.

Election Campaign Costs Monitoring				
Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV)				
Total Estimated Cost (Million LKR)				
From 13th October to 13th November 2019				
Party	Printed Media	Electronic Media (25% Discounted Cost)	Other costs (Meetings etc.)	Total Estimated Cost (Million LKR)
 Sri Lanka Podu Jana Peramuna (SLPP)	107	1126	593	1,826
 New Democratic Front (DNF)	216	793	728	1,737
 National People's Power (NPP)	14	39	116	169
 Jana Setha Peramuna (JSP)	0	7	0	7
 National People's Movement (NPM)	3	0	0	3
 Socialist Party of Sri Lanka - (SLSP)	1.5	2.5	0	4
Total	341.5	1967.5	1437	-
Estimated Cost of other 29 Presidential Candidates				50
Total Estimated Election Campaign Cost (Million-LKR)				3,796

In order to create more public awareness on the subject of campaign finances and to create public urgency in the monitoring of candidate's campaign spending, CMEV launched an extensive awareness campaign which focused on the need for campaign finance regulation. This effort involved national universities, civil society organisations as well as political activists and women activists throughout the country. Nearly 40 seminars and discussions were held throughout the country and a diverse range of activities related to campaign

finance regulation were also carried out. CMEV created a societal discourse by ensuring a wide-spread media coverage of printed, electronic, and social media material, influencing a diverse range of personnel to raise their voices while building greater public opinion on the consequences of unlimited and unregulated campaign finances.

CMEV hopes that this will give rise to a national debate on campaign finance and lead, eventually to legislation that will make elections freer and fairer. The [final report](#) on this initiative was also published on the CMEV website.

Media Cover: [Aljazeera](#), [Boston Globe](#), [Latin American Herald Tribune](#), [Counter Points](#), [Sri Lanka Brief](#), [News Radio](#), [Economy Next](#), [AFP Fact Check](#), [Turkish Press](#), [Millennium Post](#), [Gulf News](#), [Daily Mirror](#)

Financials



Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with SLAuSs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with SLAuSs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.


15 January 2021
Colombo

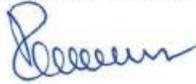
Centre for Policy Alternatives (Guarantee) Ltd

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2019

	Notes	2019	2018
		Rs.	Rs.
ASSETS			
Non Current Assets			
Property Plant and Equipment	6	3,675,142	3,509,520
		<u>3,675,142</u>	<u>3,509,520</u>
Current Assets			
Receivables	7	14,534,715	14,973,731
Short Term Investments	8	18,440,038	34,212,113
Cash and Bank Balances	17	15,727,359	10,433,926
		<u>48,702,113</u>	<u>59,619,770</u>
Total Assets		<u><u>52,377,257</u></u>	<u><u>63,129,290</u></u>
FUNDING AND LIABILITIES			
Accumulated Funds			
Unrestricted Funds	10	930,870	(3,911,457)
Restricted Funds	11	25,682,309	37,220,746
Capital Reserve		2,918,136	2,344,170
		<u>29,531,314</u>	<u>35,653,458</u>
Non Current Liabilities			
Retirement Benefit Liability	12	17,608,658	13,980,325
		<u>17,608,658</u>	<u>13,980,325</u>
Current Liabilities			
Payables	9	3,113,682	5,112,537
Tax Payable		-	-
Bank Overdrafts	17	2,123,604	-
		<u>5,237,286</u>	<u>5,112,537</u>
Total Equity & Liabilities		<u><u>52,377,257</u></u>	<u><u>54,746,320</u></u>

These Financial Statements are in compliance with the requirements of the Companies Act No : 07 of 2007.



Finance Manager

The Board of Directors are responsible for these Financial Statements. Signed for and on behalf of the Board by:



Director



Director

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 21 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



Centre for Policy Alternatives (Guarantee) Ltd
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
Year ended 31 December 2019

	Notes	2019 Rs.	2018 Restated Rs.
Incoming Resources	3	<u>150,193,772</u>	<u>117,042,103</u>
Project Expenditure	4		
Staff Costs		46,076,020	33,975,433
Other Direct Costs		53,743,758	41,309,212
Other Indirect Expenditure		<u>50,373,994</u>	<u>40,757,458</u>
Total Project Cost		<u>150,193,772</u>	<u>116,042,103</u>
Net Surplus on Projects		-	1,000,000
Revenue Earned from Other Activities	13	3,490,957	12,274,618
Administrative Expenses	14	(6,994,860)	(5,670,574)
		<u>(3,503,903)</u>	<u>7,604,044</u>
Finance Cost	15	(36,739)	(77,069)
Net Surplus Before Tax		<u>(3,540,642)</u>	<u>7,526,975</u>
Income Tax Expenses	16	-	-
Net Surplus for the Year		<u>(3,540,642)</u>	<u>7,526,975</u>
Other Comprehensive Income for the Year		-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year		<u>(3,540,642)</u>	<u>7,526,975</u>

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 21 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



Centre for Policy Alternatives (Guarantee) Ltd
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN RESERVES
Year ended 31 December 2019

	Restricted Funds Rs.	Unrestricted Funds Rs.	Capital Reserve Rs.	Total Rs.
Balance As At 01 January 2018	34,952,003	(11,438,432)	11,708,591	35,222,162
Additional Funds Received During the Year	118,281,362	-	-	118,281,362
Funds Transferred to Statement of Comprehensive Income	(116,042,102)	-	-	(116,042,102)
Transfer to Unrestricted Funds through Income Statement	29,484	-	-	29,484
Project Assets Capitalized through Capital Reserve	-	-	679,511	679,511
Funds Transferred to Project Funds Receivable	-	-	-	-
Funds Returned to Donor	-	-	-	-
Amortization of Capital Reserve	-	-	(1,660,962)	(1,660,962)
Net Surplus for the Year	-	7,526,975	-	7,526,975
Transfer from Capital Reserve	-	-	-	-
Balance As At 31 December 2018	<u>37,220,746</u>	<u>(3,911,457)</u>	<u>10,727,139</u>	<u>44,036,428</u>
Perior period adjustment	-	8,382,969	(8,382,969)	-
Additional Funds Received During the Year	138,699,972	-	-	138,699,972
Funds Transferred to Statement of Comprehensive Income	(150,193,772)	-	-	(150,193,772)
Transfer to Unrestricted Funds through Income Statement	(44,637)	-	-	(44,637)
Project Assets Capitalized through Capital Reserve	-	-	1,753,882	1,753,882
Funds Transferred to Project Funds Receivable	-	-	-	-
Funds Returned to Donor	-	-	-	-
Amortization of Capital Reserve	-	-	(1,179,917)	(1,179,917)
Net Surplus for the Year	-	(3,540,642)	-	(3,540,642)
Transfer from Capital Reserve	-	-	-	-
Balance As At 31 December 2019	<u>25,682,309</u>	<u>930,870</u>	<u>2,918,136</u>	<u>29,531,317</u>

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 21 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



Centre for Policy Alternatives (Guarantee) Ltd
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
Year ended 31 December 2019

	Notes	2019 Rs.	2018 Rs.
Cash Flow From/(Used in) Operating Activities			
Net Surplus/(Deficit) Before Tax		(3,540,642)	7,526,975
Adjustments for			
Depreciation	6	1,789,549	1,687,779
Provision for Defined Benefit Plans	12	3,952,833	2,145,975
Finance Cost	15	36,739	77,069
Interest Earned		(1,311,166)	(1,812,586)
Disposal gain		(34,250)	(5,000)
Transfer to Unrestricted Funds through Income Statement		(44,637)	29,484
Amortization of Project Assets Capitalized Through Capital Reserve		(1,179,917)	(1,152,648)
Write Back from Projects		(679,758)	(270,295)
Written Off		152,056	-
		(859,194)	8,226,752
(Increase) / Decrease in Receivables		439,015	(4,323,669)
Increase / (Decrease) in Payables		(1,998,855)	383,927
Cash Generated from Operations		(2,419,034)	4,287,010
Tax Paid		-	-
Finance Costs Paid		(36,739)	(77,069)
Defined Benefit Plan Costs Paid	12	(324,500)	(148,950)
Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities		(2,780,273)	4,060,991
Cash Flow From/(Used in) Investing Activities			
Acquisition of Property, Plant & Equipment	6	(201,289)	(965,497)
Sale Proceeds from Property, Plant & Equipment		34,250	-
Withdrawal/ (Investment)/from/in Government Securities and Fixed Deposits		15,582,799	(255,789)
Interest Earned		964,358	1,489,162
Net Cash Flow from Investing Activities		16,380,117	267,876
Cash Flow From/(Used in) Financing Activities			
Cash Received from Donors not Used for Projects		(10,430,015)	2,239,259
Funds received for restricted activities		-	1,000,000
Net Cash Flow from Financing Activities		(10,430,015)	3,239,259
Net Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents		3,169,830	7,568,126
Cash & Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Year	17	10,262,729	2,694,602
Cash & Cash Equivalents at the End of the Year	17	13,432,558	10,262,729

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 21 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



Donor List 2019

Foundation Open Society Institute (OSF / FOSI)
International Republican institute (IRI)
Friedrich Naumann Stiftung Fur Die Freiheit (FNF)
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
DAI Global LLC - USAID
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
American Institute of Research (AIR)
Democracy Reporting International (DRI)
Management system international (MSI)
Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Robert Bosch Stiftung
International media Support (IMS)
The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
U.S Embassy - U.S Department of State - Federal Assistance Award
Search for Common Grounds (SFCG)
European Union (EU Fund)
International working group (IWG)
Counterpart international INC – USAID
Institute of Integrated Transitions (IFIT)
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
London School of Economics (LSE)
University of Otago – New Zealand
University of Edinburgh
Theresa Leimpek - PhD Candidate
Dr. Amaranath Amarasingham

STAFF DETAILS: At the end of 2019 CPA staff numbered 47 including 4 part time staff members, with 03 new members joining, and 08 leaving.

End of Report