



## Centre for Policy Alternatives Statement in Regard to Police Shooting and Killing of Civilian Protestors in Rambukkana.

20<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Colombo, Sri Lanka:

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) is deeply concerned by the violence witnessed on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022 in Rambukkana, which has resulted in the death of one person and reports of dozens more injured, after law enforcement officers opened fire on protestors agitating on the recent increase on fuel prices. [Media reports](#) also suggest the destruction of property and the possibility of violence spreading further, resulting in the imposing of Police Curfew in the Rambukkana Police area. CPA urges law enforcement officers and others to refrain from resorting to violence and calls for an immediate independent investigation to be conducted into the incident; and to hold perpetrators accountable. A swift and transparent accountability process is essential to ensure the situation on the ground does not spiral out of control.

CPA has constantly [reiterated](#) that any response from law enforcement must be proportionate, and has condemned the use of disproportionate force when dealing with protestors. The Sri Lankan State has a long history of using violence when dealing with its citizens, and it is tragic that yet another life has been lost through this abusive practice. It is essential that the Fundamental Rights of citizens are respected, and any abuse of power and use of force under the guise of maintaining peace not be tolerated.

This incident took place in the background of several weeks of peaceful protests that have been taking place across the country, as people face extraordinary economic hardship.

The protests are at an unprecedented scale and CPA expresses solidarity with those engaged in peaceful methods of protest. These economic hardships are a direct result of mismanagement, by authorities who have yet to constructively engage with the demands of the protestors and provide solutions to the multiple challenges faced by the people. CPA hopes that this protest movement will lead to initiating essential structural and legislative reforms, addressing entrenched corruption and authoritarian governance, focusing on structural inequalities and assisting the most vulnerable in our society, addressing the root causes of conflict and genuine reckoning for Sri Lanka's cycles of violence, among others. Ignoring the demands of the protestors, which have so far only been met with token efforts at reform and empty promises, will further isolate the government, exacerbate the political and economic crisis and lead to further instability, create new triggers for violence and impede genuine transformation in Sri Lanka.

Finally, CPA also recognises that while the protestors have the right to peacefully protest, it is important that they remain peaceful, at the very least in order to prevent any excuse on the part of law enforcement to crack down on the expression of dissent through protest. Violence will not resolve the ongoing crisis and will disproportionately harm the most vulnerable members of our society. As such CPA calls on all citizens of Sri Lanka to ensure that ongoing protests are peaceful and be cautious of subversive elements who instigate violence.