



CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES
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மாற்றுக் கொள்கைகளுக்கான நிலையம்

CPA Statement on the declaration of a State of Emergency on the 18th July 2022

18th July 2022, Colombo, Sri Lanka: The Centre of Policy Alternatives (CPA) expresses its grave concern about yet another declaration of a State of Emergency by way of Gazette Extraordinary No. 2288/30, dated 17th July 2022. This is the first such declaration by Acting President Ranil Wickremasinghe since assuming office on the 15th of July 2022, and the third such declaration in the country in the past four months. Former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa previously declared a state of emergency twice this year, and thrice in the course of his presidency.

CPA reiterates that a State of Emergency can only be declared in limited and exceptional circumstances, and deplores the abuse of this power by successive Presidents when no such emergency exists, as a form of suppression of public dissent. This extraordinary power, which allows the President law making power which goes beyond ordinary legislative bounds, should be limited to the most critical of instances, and not as a personal tool of abuse by Presidents seeking to protect their own interests. CPA does not believe that circumstances exist which warrant the imposition of a State of Emergency, and call on the Acting President to make clear the circumstances in which a State of Emergency was imposed. In the absence of any credible explanation the declaration of Emergency is indicative of more insidious means, ultimately stifling dissent.

CPA notes that this measure is anyway counterproductive at a time when Sri Lanka is facing an unprecedented political and economic crisis, and when the priority of the government must be to ensure stability and address the economic hardships and the food insecurity experienced by a significant portion of the population. It is unfortunate that the government is failing in its primary responsibility of providing for and protecting the rights of the citizenry, and opting for arbitrary measures that further erode the trust in government and governance. Thus, CPA urges the Acting President to immediately revoke the Proclamation declaring a State of Emergency and to take all steps to uphold the fundamental rights of citizens and democratic processes in Sri Lanka.

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