



ACTION BRIEF

SRI LANKA PENALIZED FOR PROTESTING

“Many of us got travel bans, and surveillance and tear gas attacks and baton charged and, at times, court orders and imprisonment. the state is always protecting and only defending political power and does not stand on the side of the people.” – A protestor

The people of Sri Lanka are bearing the brunt of a collapsing economy. Government corruption and impunity have imperiled lives and livelihoods and squandered the country’s resources. In March 2022, Sri Lankans across the country responded with protests and calls for accountability. The Sri Lankan authorities sought to crush this dissent through militarized intimidation, smear campaigns that demonize protestors and the weaponization of the draconian **Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)**. The PTA has been used for over 40 years to enable prolonged arbitrary detention, extract false confessions through torture, and target minority communities and political dissidents in Sri Lanka. The repeal of the PTA by the Sri Lankan government is long overdue. The Sri Lankan authorities have promised to respect and promote human rights. **We must hold them accountable to their obligations to the people of Sri Lanka and implore them to repeal the PTA and that any successor legislation to the PTA complies with Sri Lanka's obligations under international law.**

During 2021, the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka, the State Department, members of the US Congress, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, key European countries, and Canada have called on the Sri Lankan authorities to respect the right to peaceful protest and to protect and ensure the safety of all protesters. The following year, the right to protest in Sri Lanka was under attack.

We must urge influential governments to use all diplomatic means to ensure that the government of Sri Lanka protects the right to peaceful protest. Protests are especially important as a means of enabling the expression of popular perspectives during crises, when inequalities and marginalization worsen. Through protest we can create a better world where everyone is treated fairly, and inequalities are eradicated. The right to peaceful protest is under attack, not only in Sri Lanka but in many countries across the world.

We must send a clear and united message to governments of the world, starting with the government of Sri Lanka. When governments fail to protect human rights, it is up to us to demand accountability and action.

**Together we are stronger,
together we can achieve more.**

TAKE ACTION

- 1 **Participate in our Photo Action from March 3-5 in solidarity with protestors in Sri Lanka!** Follow the guidelines below to enter a raffle. Three winners will be announced by March 31!
 - Print and hold the signs or use them as a background and snap a picture [[Access Digital signs](#)].
 - Post the picture on social media using the hashtags **#ProtectTheProtest #SriLanka** and tagging **@RW_UNP @wijerajapakshe** and **[@the Ambassador of Sri Lanka in your country.]**
 - Challenge three friends to join the Photo Action by re-posting your post on your social media channels stating “When we mobilize to protect and defend human rights, we win and bring real change. I challenge @Name @name @name to take a picture in solidarity with protestors in #SriLanka. Download your sign here [[Access Digital signs](#)]”
 - WIN A PRIZE: after completing the actions, e-mail us at campaigns@aiusa.org with a link to your social so we can include your name in the mix to win one of three \$50 gift cards!
- 2 [Click here](#) to send a message to Sri Lanka’s Minister of Justice Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe, and Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United States, Mahinda Samarasinghe, urging them to repeal the PTA and ensure no legislation is used to target dissent or prevent peaceful protest.
- 3 [Click here](#) to learn more about the Campaign and explore our calls to Action.
- 4 Post on Social media: *@RW_UNP @wijerajapakshe we implore you to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act and ensure no legislation is used to target dissent or prevent peaceful protest in #SriLanka. Any new legislation should comply with human right standards.* <https://www.amnestyusa.org/slcampaign/>
- 5 For US audience: [Click here](#) to send a message to your two Senators and Representative asking them to call for the immediate repeal of the PTA.
- 6 For US audience: [Click here](#) to tweet at Ambassador Julie Chung and demand that she promotes, defends, and protects the right to peaceful protest in Sri Lanka.

Please let us know if you took action by emailing campaigns@aiusa.org so that we can keep a tally.

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