



SLAPSW

Founded in 1962

Incorporated by Government of Sri Lanka 2014

Sri Lanka Association of Professional Social Workers

Statement regarding the current political and economic turmoil in the country

Massive public protests are taking place in Sri Lanka amidst the government declaring a state of emergency, and a curfew imposed nationwide. The public initially started gathering peacefully to protest over escalating inflation, shortages in medicine and medical supplies, paper, cooking gas, diesel, petrol, and essential food items requiring to stand and wait in lines for several days. The people are dissatisfied with the government's mismanagement of the economy, the collapse of the agriculture sector due to an overnight ban on the use of chemical fertilizer, neglect to seek timely monetary assistance from IMF and World Bank, as well as the government's gross corruption, breach in the rule of law, and allegations against the ruling party (Rajapakse families') hoarding of funds in off-shore money laundering sites. The government's failure to provide justice to victims of the Easter Bombings where over 300 lost lives leaving hundreds wounded are among the grievances against the President and his government.

Peaceful demonstrations began on 31 March 2022 near the residence of the country's President, Mr Gotabaya Rajapakse, and spread within weeks to Colombo's Galleface Green adjacent to the Presidential Secretariat Office. The people's basic demands were for the president to step down, the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mr Mahinda Rajapakse his own brother, and the withdrawal from office all of 225 Members of Parliament. Protestors mostly comprised of youth continue to gather in cities around the country demanding changes to the current constitution, in particular the 20th amendment that has given undemocratic, unprecedented authoritative powers to the executive President. With the prime minister's resignation announcement on 9 May, allegations have been made that his supporters coming out of his office attacked the demonstrators protesting outside. This incident is considered as a direct attack on the citizens coming together for the first time in history irrespective of their ethnicity, race, religion, cast, and party politics.

Human Rights Watch announced, "The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka and the Bar Association, as well as foreign diplomats, condemned the attack on protesters and called for an impartial investigation." The report highlighted that, during the entire period in total 150 were injured while the death toll stands at five.

The social workers are called to rebuild Sri Lanka and maintain citizen's aspiration for one voice.

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