

## Sri Lanka – Summary Report 2025

In 2025, the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) conducted its second human rights expert survey in Sri Lanka. Through the survey, HRMI asked practitioners and experts monitoring the situation in Sri Lanka for their insights about the human rights landscape in the country in 2024. These expert responses allowed HRMI to produce a complete human rights dataset for Sri, which includes scores for nine civil and political rights, five economic and social rights, and some contextual information about people groups at risk of their violations. All these data are freely available on the [Rights Tracker](#).<sup>1</sup>

### Civil and political rights<sup>2</sup>

#### Safety from the State / Physical Integrity Rights

Sri Lanka's summary score for the five **physical integrity rights** is **6.3 out of 10**, which shows some improvement compared to last year's score. The score on the right to freedom from torture and ill-treatment is 5.1 out of 10, which is the lowest score in this category of rights. It is followed by 5.2 out of 10 on freedom from arbitrary arrest, and both these scores fall in the 'bad' performance ranges. The scores for freedom from extrajudicial execution (6.6 out of 10) and freedom from forced disappearance (7.5 out of 10) are relatively better. Sri Lanka's score on freedom from death penalty is 10 out of 10.

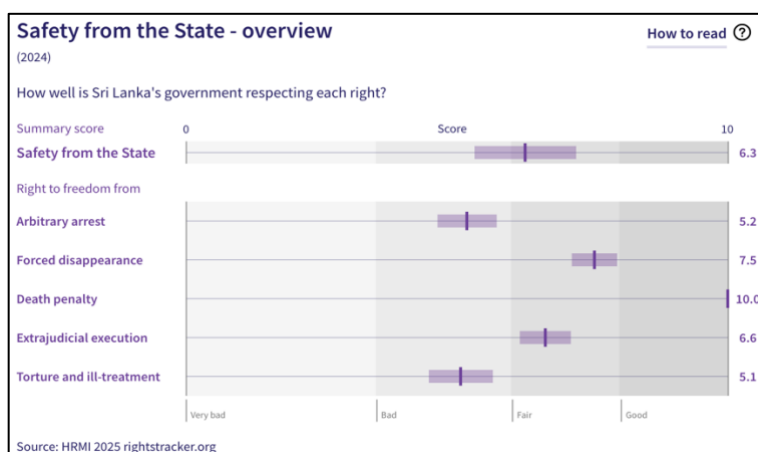


Image 1

#### People at risk

Experts identified **human rights advocates, LGBTQIA+ people, protestors or political activists, people suspected of terrorism or those accused of crimes, people from particular ethnicities, people with particular political affiliations and beliefs, journalists, and sex workers**, among others, as being at risk of violation of these rights.

Qualitative responses<sup>3</sup> given by experts reported that:

- Muslim and Tamil ethnic minorities, people affected by the anti-drug Operation *Yukhtiya*, HRDs, protestors, political activists, students, and workers were at risk of being arbitrarily arrested.
- Tamil people were identified to be at risk of forced disappearance, while drug trafficking related suspects in police custody were identified to be at risk of extrajudicial killings.
- Ethnic minorities, political activists, journalists, those accused of crimes, people who use drugs, workers (especially Free Trade Zone workers and women), sex workers, and school students facing corporal punishment were at risk of being tortured or ill-treated.

1 All the data are freely available on the [HRMI Rights Tracker](#), and more information can be found on the [HRMI website](#).

2 Civil and political rights scores are measured based on the responses received from human rights practitioners from the country through HRMI's annual human rights expert survey. HRMI's methodology for constructing CPR scores can be found here: <https://humanrightsmmeasurement.org/methodology/#cpr>.

3 You can explore the rich qualitative information from expert survey responses by clicking 'Show more information' under the 'People at risk' word clouds. All these data are available in the 'People at risk' tab for Sri Lanka: <https://rightstracker.org/country/LKA?tab=atrisk>.

### Overtime graph for 'Safety from the State' / 'Physical Integrity' Rights

These overtime graphs of Sri Lanka's scores for the five physical integrity rights over the last three years from 2022 to 2024 show a gradual but steady progress. There has been a marked improvement in the scores for freedom from arbitrary arrest and freedom from torture and ill-treatment compared to last year, although these scores are among Sri Lanka's lowest scores. Freedom from death penalty remains a 10 out of 10 since there were no reports of a formal death penalty execution in 2024.



Image 2

### **Empowerment Rights**

Sri Lanka's summary score for the four empowerment rights is **5.8 out of 10**, and it largely falls in the 'bad' performance range. The scores for both the right to freedom of assembly and association and for the right to freedom of opinion and expression are 5.2 out of 10, which are the lowest scores in this category. This is followed by the scores for freedom of religion and belief (6.6 out of 10) and freedom of participation in government (6.9 out of 10), both of which fall into the 'fair' range.

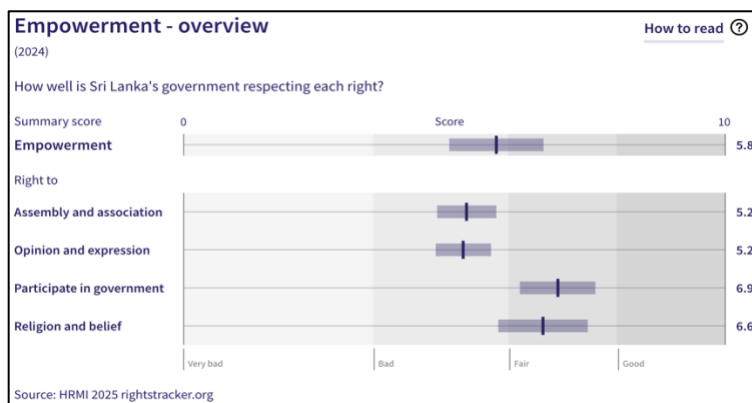


Image 3

### People at risk

Experts identified **labour union members, human rights advocates, LGBTQIA+ people, protestors, people suspected of terrorism or those accused of crimes, people of particular ethnicities, people with particular political affiliations or beliefs, sex workers**, among others, as being at risk of facing restrictions to these rights.

Qualitative responses<sup>4</sup> shared by experts noted that:

- Tamils protesting against land appropriation by the State in the Northern province, smaller leftist parties opposing the government, protestors, trade unionists, student unionists, NGOs, families of victims of enforced disappearances in the North and East, and detainees were at risk.
- 'All people', especially LGBTQIA+ people, faced restrictions on their freedom of opinion and expression due to the Online Safety Act.
- Experts also mentioned that all religious minorities, people living in the North and East whose religious sites were replaced by Buddhist sites, and members of evangelical groups were vulnerable to violations of their right to freedom of religion and belief.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

### Overtime graph for 'Empowerment' Rights

The overtime graphs indicate that there has been a visible improvement in the four empowerment rights in Sri Lanka compared to the last couple of years, especially on freedom of political participation.

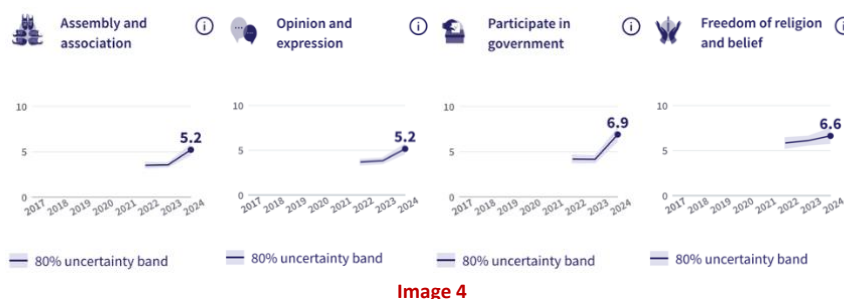


Image 4

### Economic and social rights<sup>5</sup>

Sri Lanka has an **'income adjusted' summary score of 83.9%** on the five economic and social rights. Since these scores are 'income adjusted', it means that attaining 100% for these rights is possible within a country's existing income (GDP per capita). Therefore, when Sri Lanka scores 76.9% on the right to education, it means that the government is only achieving 76.9% of what it is actually capable of achieving at its current income level. This is the lowest score in this category, followed by the scores for the rights to food (81.9%), housing (85.7%), work (87%), and health (87.9%). These 'income adjusted' scores indicate that the government can do much better within its existing income to ensure these rights of its people.



Image 5

### People at risk

Experts identified **socio-economically disadvantaged people, LGBTQIA+ people, homeless people, sex workers, people with disabilities, people of particular ethnicities, Indigenous peoples, people from particular geographic locations, and women and girls**, among others as being unable to fulfil these rights.

Malaiyaha Tamils, Indigenous communities, people from the North and East, sex workers and their children, among others were specifically mentioned to be at risk of being unable to enjoy these rights.

**Some highlights from the data:** While Sri Lanka has made visible progress in 2024 in the respect for civil and political rights, some scores such as on arbitrary arrest, torture, freedom of expression, and freedom of association are still in the 'bad' range. Similarly, there are some areas in economic and social rights that indicate some issues. For example, 'the income adjusted' score for the right to quality education (general) is only 51.8%; similarly, the score for reproductive health is 69.1%, with women and girls identified to be unable to have access to sexual and reproductive health services. These show some serious gaps in Sri Lanka's human rights landscape despite considerable improvement in other areas.

5 Economic and social rights scores are measured using the SERF Index. HRMI's methodology for constructing ESR scores can be found here: <https://humanrightsmasurement.org/methodology/measuring-economic-social-rights/>.