



Joint Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 51st Session

Agenda Item 2: Interactive Dialogue on OHCHR report on Sri Lanka

12 September 2022

Amid the economic crisis in Sri Lanka, Christians continue to face unreasonable and unlawful denial of permission to construct churches, arbitrary prohibition from gathering for worship, and denial of access to public cemeteries. Since January 2021, 120 such cases have been documented island-wide.

Muslims face these same violations as well as arbitrary arrests. And Hindus have had their religious sites taken-over by the state.

Three years on, no one has been held accountable for the Easter Sunday Attacks. On the other hand, hundreds of Muslims remain in indefinite detention without trial under the PTA and the ICCPR Act.

Surveillance of religious worship places and faith-based organisations in the guise of national security has increased following the 2019 Easter attacks.

We urge the Government of Sri Lanka:

- To repeal the PTA and to ensure that counter-terrorism laws adhere to its human rights obligations.
- To withdraw unlawful circulars and policies pertaining to registering places of worship.
- To ensure full accountability for the Easter Sunday Attacks, as well as subsequent acts of violence, discrimination and harassment against religious minorities.