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Shalika Rukshan Senadheera, a performing artist involved in the struggle arrested



British woman who was active on social media supporting the Galle Face struggle was deported



The arrest of two youth activists of Galle Face struggle

This monthly report includes briefs on incidents related to press freedom and follow-up of previous incidents and relevant observations. We have also focused on new incidents related to freedom of speech and expression of people, new laws and the responses from the international community regarding legal reforms and relevant propositions. In August 2022, FMM observed 36 incidents relevant to the scope/criteria selected by FMM to monitor press freedom. They included five incidents related to the safety and security of the journalists and 28 incidents related to the criterion of legal conditions. August saw a wave of arrests of activists on various charges for participating in protests related to freedom of expression, and this report covers only a limited number of such incidents for which clear information could be provided.

Incidents monitored:

1. Ahnaf Jaseem, a poet and teacher by profession, was named as a person involved in terrorist activities.
2. Vimukthi Ranasinghe, a social media activist linked to 'Aragalaya' arrested.
3. Sithum Wasantha Jayakodi, an activist linked to 'Galle Face Aragalaya' arrested.
4. Joseph Stalin, a trade union leader cum human rights defender arrested.
5. The Criminal Investigation Department reports the facts to the court against journalist Tharindu Uduvaragedara.
6. The Liberal Youth Movement filed a fundamental rights petition against the emergency regulations imposed by the President.
7. Media secretary of National Bhikku Front, Ven. Koswatte Mahanama Thero was arrested.

8. Office-in-charge of Colombo Fort police station orders people staying in the 'Aragalaya' ground in Galle Face withdrawn.
9. The Visa of a young British woman who was active on social media supporting the Galle Face struggle was cancelled and deported.
10. Conclusions and recommendations of the Human Rights Commission regarding attacks on Sirasa journalists published
11. Two trade union leaders were arrested for participating in a demonstration against the President.
12. Former MP Hirunika Premachandra was produced before the court for participating in a demonstration near the President's House.
13. Fundamental rights petition filed against police curfew imposed against law.
14. Mangala Maddumage, a student activist, was arrested on charges related to a protest.
15. The arrest of two youth activists of Galle Face struggle.
16. The Attorney General's opposition to a fundamental rights petition filed seeking an order to prevent arrest in connection with an agitation.
17. UN human rights experts condemn the use of emergency regulations to suppress peaceful protests.
18. Eight social activists were produced in court in connection with an agitation.
19. A statement was recorded from journalist Tharindu Jayawardena by the Criminal Investigation Department concerning a complaint made regarding a threat.
20. Nineteen students engaged in protest were arrested and detention orders were obtained against three student leaders.
21. Arjuna Amadoru, an activist in the Paris protests arrested in Sri Lanka.
22. Sahaja Madhusanka, an activist of Galle Face struggle was arrested at Galle.
23. Social activist Chinthaka Rajapaksha was arrested.
24. Galle Face 'Aragalaya' activist Piyath Nikeshala was arrested.
25. Socialist Youth Union leader Rangana Lakmal Devapriya was arrested.
26. Police attempted to arrest Eranga Gunasekara, the national organizer of the Socialist Youth Union, while he was participating in a news conference.
27. Free Media Movement holds an open dialogue on 'reporting amidst dangers, responsibility, accountability and limitations of a journalist.
28. Shalika Rukshan Senadheera, a performing artist involved in the struggle arrested.
29. Senadhi Guruge, an activist of the struggle arrested.
30. A group of activists produced in court for addressing a press conference at the President's office.
31. Sister Mary Sonali, an activist of the Galle Face struggle, was produced in court.
32. Twenty-seven activists were arrested during an agitation.
33. Attorney-at-law Indika Attanayake, who was an activist in the protests against the government, was summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department.
34. Sanjay Apa Seneviratne, an activist in the field of art and a professional designer produced in court.
35. Human Rights Watch protests against the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act to suppress protesters.
36. Two activists of the 'Aragalaya' were granted bail after producing in court.

Table 1: Total number of incidents reported - August 2022

Covered criteria	Number of incidents reported
Safety and security	05
Legal conditions	28
Structural conditions	02
Professionalism	01
Total	36

Safety and Security

An environment in the journalists can perform their duties with physical and mental integrity is a basic condition of press freedom. Also, to safeguard press freedom and freedom of expression, people must enjoy freedom of expression through media and any other means without repercussions. Freedom for peaceful meeting, protesting and agitating are also included in the freedom of expression. Five instances of serious violation of these freedoms were reported in August 2022.

Table 2: August 2022: Safety and security of journalists - 5 instances

Criterion	Number of reported incidents
Psychological influence	04
Loss of freedom	01
Total	05

01. Ahnaf Jaseem, a poet and teacher by profession, was named as a person involved in terrorist activities.

Ahnaf Jaseem, who was detained for 579 days under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for writing and publishing a poetry book, was released later on bail by the court. Sri Lankan government published his name in a list of persons 'involved in terrorist activities' gazetted on August 01.

Sources: twitter.com
www.youtube.com

02. A statement was recorded from journalist Tharindu Jayawardena by the Criminal Investigation Department concerning a complaint made regarding a threat.

Journalist Tharindu Jayawardena appeared at the Colombo Criminal Investigation Department headquarters on August 9 to record a statement regarding an ongoing investigation into a death threat made by Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police Deshbandu Tennakoon in a Facebook conversation that occurred in June 2021.

Sources: twitter.com

03. The Visa of a young British woman who was active on social media supporting the Galle Face struggle was cancelled and deported.

Officials of the Immigration and Emigration Department of Sri Lanka seized the passport of Scottish national Kayleigh Fraser on August 3 on the charge of violating visa conditions and subsequently,

her visa was cancelled and she was ordered to leave the country before the 15th of August. She filed a petition before the Court of Appeal requesting that the decision be annulled, but it was rejected without being heard.

Sources: www.bbc.com

04. Police attempted to arrest Eranga Gunasekara, the national organizer of the Socialist Youth Union, while he was participating in a news conference.

While representatives of civil organizations were holding a press conference at Maradana CSR Hall on August 23 against the crackdown on protesters, several police teams raided the place. They said they were looking to arrest Eranga Gunasekara on charges of violating a court order. Later, the police teams left and lawyer Sunil Watagala claimed that the relevant accusation was false.

Sources: www.facebook.com

05. Attorney-at-law Indika Attanayake, who was an activist in the protests against the government, was summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department.

Lawyer Attanayake, a social activist from the Monaragala area, was called to the Colombo Criminal Investigation Department for questioning on August 31. He was questioned about his connections with the anti-government protests.

Sources: www.youtube.com

Legal conditions

Twenty-eight incidents under the criterion of legal conditions related to press freedom were observed during the month of August. Most of them were the arrests of activists involved in the protests urging the president and the government to resign. It is evident from the observed incidents that the police are continuing to crack down on activists of the struggle on the charges of violating court orders and damaging public property.

Table 3: August 2022: Legal conditions - 28 instances

Indicator	Number of reported incidents
Legal actions	24
Imposing new laws	01
Constitutional protection over press freedom	03
Total	28

01. Vimukthi Ranasinghe, a social media activist linked to 'Aragalaya' arrested.

On August 2nd, Ranasinghe was called to the Crime Division in Dematagoda and questioned about his social media activities. On the morning of the 3rd, he was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department at his home in Maharagama. He was remanded until August 12 after being produced before Colombo Additional Magistrate Keminda Perera on August 5. He was granted bail on August 12 and the hearing was adjourned until November 24.

Sources: twitter.com

02. Sithum Wasantha Jayakodi, an activist linked to 'Galle Face Aragalaya' arrested.

Jayakodi was arrested on August 2 by the officers of the Criminal Investigation Department and remanded until August 5 after being presented to the Colombo Fort Magistrate.

Sources: www.facebook.com

03. Joseph Stalin, a trade union leader cum human rights defender arrested.

Stalin was arrested on August 3rd on the charge of 'violating a court order' by participating in a protest march held on May 28th and was remanded until August 12th after producing before Colombo Fort Magistrate Thilina Gamage. When the case was recalled on a motion on August 8, the court ordered

his release on two sureties of Rs 500,000 each.

Sources: lankadeepa.lk

04. The Criminal Investigation Department to report the facts to the court against journalist Tharindu Uduvaragedara.

Under case number 22659/22 police reported facts against Uduvaragedara to the Fort Magistrate Court on August 3 in relation to criticizing the government on YouTube and the extract of the investigation has been sent to the Attorney General. Meanwhile, a fundamental rights case was filed by journalist Tharindu Uduvaragedara (SC/FR/226/2022) for questioning by the Criminal Investigation Department. The Digital Journalists Collective said in a statement that the prosecution against Tharindu is a malicious decision.

Sources: www.facebook.com

05. The Liberal Youth Movement filed a fundamental rights petition against the emergency regulations imposed by the President.

The petition, filed by lawyers Namini Pandita and Rusiru Egoda on behalf of the Liberal Youth Movement, claims that the President has the power to prevent peaceful and non-violent public gatherings through these emergency regulations, thereby interfering with the freedom of speech and peaceful assembly guaranteed by the Constitution. . The three-judge bench of the Supreme Court,

which considered this petition, decided to take it up for hearing on August 12. Attorney-at-law Dr. Gehan Gunathilaka appeared for the petitioners.

Sources: <https://www.facebook.com>

06. Media secretary of National Bhikku Front, Ven. Koswatte Mahanama Thero was arrested.

Kirulapana Police arrested Ven. Koswatte Mahanama Thero on August 3rd on the charge of violating a court order by participating in a demonstration in front of the police headquarters on June 9th. He was remanded after being produced before the court on the 4th. When the case was called again on the 5th, the court ordered him to be released on bail of Rs. 500,000.

Sources: www.dinamina.lk

07. Office-in-charge of Colombo Fort police station orders people staying in the 'Aragalaya' ground in Galle Face withdrawn.

On August 3, the police announced through loudspeakers that all those staying in the Aragalaya area of Galle Face should vacate by August 5 and all the construction and cultivation work that had been done there should also be removed. When the petition was called on August 5, the Attorney General agreed that the protestors and the construction would not be removed until a court makes a decision.

Sources: www.facebook.com

08. Conclusions and recommendations of the Human Rights Commission regarding attacks on Sirasa journalists published

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka has concluded that the attack on Sirasa journalists near the private residence of Ranil Wickramasinghe on July 9 was a deliberate attack conducted after identifying them as journalists. The Commission said that the Senior Superintendent of Police Romesh Liyanage of the Special Task Force was directly responsible for it. The Commission has recommended to the IGP that the concerned officer should be transferred to an area outside Colombo until the investigations are completed. The Commission also said that unidentifiable uniforms were unsuitable for civil duties and that

necessary measures should be taken to provide a suitable uniform for that purpose.

Sources: www.themorning.lk

09. Two trade union leaders were arrested for participating in a demonstration against the President.

Dhananjaya Siriwardena, secretary of the Bank of Ceylon Employees' Union and former president of the union Palitha Atampawala were arrested by the Colombo Central Division Criminal Investigation Unit on August 4 and released on bail after being produced in court. The charge against them was, trespassing into the President's House during the protest on July 9.

Sources: www.newswire.lk

10. Former MP Hirunika Premachandra was produced before the court for participating in a demonstration near the President's House.

When the case was called at the Colombo Fort Magistrate's Court on August 5th, the magistrate accepted the initial objection of the lawyers representing Premachandra and others that the charges filed by the police regarding the protest held on July 6th were incorrect. Accordingly, police could not name their clients as suspects, in this case, they claimed. The magistrate declined to name Premachandra and others as suspects. Hirunika Pemachandra and 9 others who were arrested by the police during the protest were later released on police bail.

Sources: medialk.com

11. Fundamental rights petition filed against police curfew imposed against law.

Journalists Tharindu Jayawardena and Tharindu Uduvaragedara have filed this petition, representing the Young Journalists' Association, claiming that their fundamental rights are violated by the imposition of a police curfew on July 8, contrary to the provisions of the law. The Inspector General of Police and the Attorney General have been named as respondents in the petition.

Sources: theleader.lk

12. Mangala Maddumage, a student activist, was arrested on charges related to a protest.

As initially reported, Maddumage was abducted by a group in civvies in a three-wheeler near the Colombo Public Library on August 8. Later the police said that he was arrested on charges of violating court orders. After being produced before the Fort Magistrate Court, he was remanded until August 12th and for the second time until August 24th. He was released on bail on August 25th.

Sources: ceylontoday.lk
www.youtube.com

13. The arrest of two youth activists of Galle Face struggle.

Bhanu Prabhashana, a member of 'Youth for Change', and Sasindu Taraka, an activist of the Gotagogama library, were called to the Bambalapitiya police on August 8 and arrested after recording a statement. The next day, they were brought before the Colombo Fort Magistrate's Court and the Magistrate ordered to release them on bail.

Sources: twitter.com

14. The Attorney General's opposition to a fundamental rights petition filed seeking an order to prevent arrest in connection with an agitation.

his fundamental rights petition filed by Father Jeewantha Peiris, who was a leading activist in the Galle Face struggle, was taken for hearing before a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court on August 9. The senior government counsel who appeared on behalf of the Attorney General said that the police had reported facts to the court against Fr. Peiris regarding a number of offences committed during the protest. But the lawyer who appeared for Fr. Peiris pointed out that his client has not been notified to appear before the court. The petition was fixed for hearing on September 1.

Fr. Peiris surrendered to the Colombo Magistrate Court on August 12 through his counsel the magistrate ordered to release him on bail.

Sources: www.runews.lk

15. Eight social activists were produced in court in connection with an agitation.

According to a notice issued by the Colombo Magistrate Court regarding a protest held near the entrance to the court on May 25, Fr. Satyavel, Damitha Aberathna, Rathindu Senarathna, Jagath Manuvarana, Joseph Stalin and eight others appeared before the court on August 9 and they were released on bail.

Sources: dailymirror.lk

16. Nineteen students engaged in protest were arrested and detention orders were obtained against three student leaders.

On August 18, during a protest of the Inter-University Student Federation, these persons were arrested on the charge of joining an 'unlawful assembly' and 16 of them were released on bail after being produced in court the next day. The President, as the Defence Minister, ordered the detention of the Inter-University Student Federation Convener Wasantha Mudalige, Hashantha Gunathilaka and Rev. Galweva Siridhamma Thero for a period of 90 days under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. UN Special Representative for Human Rights Mary Lawler has asked the President. not to sign the relevant detention orders.

Sources: www.bbc.com

17. Arjuna Amadoru, an activist in the Paris protests arrested in Sri Lanka.

Amadoru, a resident of France, who was an activist in the protests held in Paris in support of the GotaGoHome protest movement, was arrested by the Nittambuwa Police on August 20 while he was visiting Sri Lanka. After being produced before the court, he was remanded until September 5th. Police said he was in Sri Lanka on June 9 and was arrested in connection with the violence that occurred that day.

Sources: dailymirror.lk

18. Social activist Chinthaka Rajapaksha was arrested.

Rajapaksha, the convener of MONLAR, was on his way back from participating in a protest when he was arrested in Colombo on the 18th of August. He was remanded until the 26th of August after produced before the court. He is accused of participating in a press conference held at the

Presidential Palace which was seized by activists in July. He was granted bail on August 26. On the 23rd, representatives of civil organizations filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission against this arrest.

Sources: srilankabrief.org

19. Aragalaya activist Sahaja Madhusanka was arrested at Galle Face.

Madhusanka was arrested in Galle by the Criminal Investigation Department on August 20 and he was remanded after being produced before the Fort Magistrate Court. The case was ordered to be recalled on September 7.

Sources: twitter.com

20. Galle Face 'Aragalaya' activist Piyath Nikeshala was arrested.

Nikesala appeared before the Criminal Investigation Department on August 22 according to a notice given by the police. He was arrested and brought before the Colombo Fort Magistrate and ordered to be remanded until August 26. He has been named as an accused in three cases related to protests.

Sources: twitter.com

21. Socialist Youth Union leader Rangana Lakmal Devapriya was arrested.

Devapriya was arrested on August 22 while he was participating in a peaceful protest near the Slave Island police station. He was released on bail after being produced before the Colombo Fort Magistrate on the 23.

Sources: lankaweb.lk

22. Shalika Rukshan Senadheera, a performing artist involved in the struggle arrested.

Senadheera was arrested by the police after a news conference held by a group of Aragalaya activists at Vauxhall Street in Colombo on August 24 and he was remanded after being produced before the court. Police accused that a performance art piece he staged during a demonstration in front of the police headquarters a month ago resembled police

uniforms. The 'Teertha' international artists' collective issued a statement on this and emphasized that this artist should be released immediately.

Sources: facebook.com
facebook.com

23. Senadhi Guruge, an activist of the struggle arrested.

Guruge, the co-convener of the 'Aragalaya National Movement' was arrested by the Colombo Central Division Criminal Investigation Bureau on August 24. He was remanded until September 2nd after being produced before the Colombo Fort Magistrate's Court the next day. He has been named as a suspect in an incident involving the forcible detention of two army intelligence officers in the Galle Face struggle area.

Sources: youtube.com

24. A group of activists produced before the court for addressing a press conference at the Presidential Secretariat.

Joseph Stalin, Fr. Jeewantha Peiris, Duminda Nagamuwa, Rangana Devapriya and Mangala Maddumage were produced before the Colombo Fort Magistrate's Court on August 24th on the charge of forcibly entering the President's office and addressing a press conference. The magistrate ordered to release them on bail of Rs 500,000 each.

Sources: dailynews.lk

25. Sister Mary Sonali, an activist of the Galle Face struggle, was produced in court.

Sister Mary Sonali, who was called to the Wennappuwa police two months ago to investigate an "arson" incident on June 7, was released on bail after she appeared before the Marawila Magistrate's Court on August 30.

Sources: twitter.com

26. Twenty-seven activists were arrested during an agitation.

These activists who were arrested by the Pettah Police station during a demonstration called by the Inter-University Students' Federation on August 30 against the repression, were ordered to be released

on bail after being produced before the Maligakanda Magistrate's Court.

Sources: twitter.com

27. Sanjay Apa Senevirathna, an activist in the field of art and a professional designer produced in court.

Senevirathna was called to the Cinnamon Garden police on August 31 and questioned about the activities related to the recent anti-government agitations and he was released on bail after being produced before the court.

Sources: twitter.com

28. Two activists of the 'Aragalaya' were granted bail after producing in court.

Activists Sanka Jayasekara and Chamal Akalanka, named as suspects for trespassing the Presidential Secretariat, appeared before the court on August 31 and they were released on bail of Rs. 500,000 each. Sixteen activists have been produced before the court in relation to this incident.

Sources: dinamina.lk

Structural conditions

This dimension includes six potential indicators that are related to the overall structure of the media system as well as the overall environment that enables media freedom. Among them, two incidents that belong to the Indicator of 'active support for media freedom by monitoring groups' are included here. Although many interventions made by international human rights defenders and foreign diplomats regarding legal conditions are relevant to this Indicator, all of them are not mentioned here due to practical issues.

Table 4: August 2022: Structural conditions - 02 instances

Indicator	Number of reported incidents
Active support of the monitoring groups for press freedom	02
Total	02

01. UN human rights experts condemn the use of emergency regulations to suppress peaceful protests.

The announcement issued on August 8 further emphasized that it was to no avail despite expressing their concern to the government on many occasions regarding the misuse of emergency measures. The announcement also condemned the continued abuse of the recent emergency regulations to violate the right to peaceful assembly and expression.

Sources: ohchr.org

02. Human Rights Watch protests against the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act to suppress protesters.

Human Rights Watch urged the government including the President of Sri Lanka to immediately end the use of brutal anti-terrorism laws against the peaceful protesters and to respect their rights. The organization protested against a number of recent actions, including the detention of three student activists who participated in a demonstration on August 18 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) without trial.

Sources: hrw.org

Professionalism

Journalists having a good education, their working conditions, use of international guidelines by journalists and editorials, self-censorship, the autonomy of journalists promoted by trade unions and associations, journalists' understanding of their role, recognition of the media profession are included under the indicator of professionalism

Table 5: August 2022: Professionalism - 01 incident

Indicator	Number of reported incidents
Journalist's understanding about the role	01
Total	01

01. Free Media Movement holds an open dialogue on 'reporting amidst dangers, responsibility, accountability and limitations of a journalist.'

Journalist Amal Jayasinghe made the main presentation in this conversation held on August 23

via Zoom, and journalists Tharindu Uduvaragedara, Shantha Wijesuriya, and Ashanti Warnasuriya also expressed their views. Journalist Shan Wijetunga moderated the conversation.

Sources: [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

Table 6: Press freedom incidents reported to FMM from January 2022 to July 2022

Covered criterion	January-July 2022		August 2022
	New Incidents	Developments of the previous incidents	
Security and safety	45	-	05
Legal conditions	54	19	28
Independence of media	06	-	-
Professionalism	03	-	01
Structural conditions	12	01	02
Total	120	20	36

[FMM Press Freedom Reports - from January-July 2022 from here](#)

Postscript: FMM recognizes press freedom as a human right based on national and international conventions and judgments. Freedoms of thought, conscience, religion and knowing others' opinions are human rights. On that basis, FMM identifies press freedom as a collection of the following ten components. 1) Freedom of thought 2) Freedom of having opinions 3) Freedom of expression 4) Freedom to meet peacefully 5) Freedom for information 6) Freedom of audiovisual recording and storing records 7) Freedom of publication 8) Press freedom 9) Freedom of the electronic media 10) Freedom of the internet.

These freedoms are inter-connected, and blocking one freedom disturbs the enjoyment of all other freedoms. Therefore, FMM also emphasizes that misuse of these freedoms in an irresponsible and hateful manner is a wrongful practice.

These monthly reports are prepared by FMM based on the study and analysis of information available for the organization. For this analysis, FMM uses criteria selected through seven internationally recognized elements that cover the ten components mentioned above.

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