



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SRI LANKA

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

This is the Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka on its activities in 2016. It is submitted in compliance with section 30 of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act No.21 of 1996.

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
Head Office
No.14, R A De Mel, Mawatha, Colombo 04
T.P: (94) 0112505580, 2505581, 2505582
Fax: (94) 0112505591
Email: sechrsl@gmail.com
Website: www.hrcsl.lk

Members of the Commission 2016

Chairperson

Dr. Nelum Deepika Udagama

Commissioners

Mr. H Ghazali Hussain

Mr. Saliya Peiris PC

Ms. Ambika Satkunanathan

Dr. Upananda Vidanapathirana

MESSAGE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

2016 marked an important year for the HRCSL. It could best be described as the year of reform. The new Commission appointed under the newly minted 19th Amendment (2015) to the Constitution of Sri Lanka took office in late October, 2015. As I pointed out in my Annual Report 2015 message, the Commission was acutely aware of heightened public expectations placed on it since its reconstitution with appointees nominated by the Constitutional Council under the 19th Amendment. The few months in office in 2015 provided the Commission with an opportunity to hold wide ranging consultations with staff, civil society, government officials and other stake holders. With that knowledge the Commission set out to commence reform-minded policy planning and also institutional development in 2016.

The beginning of the year saw the Commission engage in a senior level dialogue among the Commissioners with the participation of senior managers to achieve greater clarity regarding policy priorities and implementation strategies. Consequently, the year also saw the conducting of consultations with various stake holders around the country with a view to formulating the Commission's Strategic Plan for a three year period (2017-19). The ten Regional Offices made a key contribution in that regard. The Commission is cognizant that its Regional Offices are the public face of the Commission to the vast majority of Sri Lankans. After lengthy deliberations the HRCSL Strategic Plan was finalized and adopted.

Overall, the year witnessed the continuation of improvements in the human rights situation in the country observed in 2015. There were no reported cases of enforced disappearances and politically motivated extra-judicial executions. Expanded democratic spaces saw freedom of expression including media freedom, association and assembly exercised much more freely.

However, the Commission continued to receive a high number of complaints of torture. The regularity with which complaints of torture was received was of deep concern to the Commission. This was especially so coming five years after the lifting of the state of emergency in 2011 and the vastly reduced use of the PTA after the civil war ended in 2009. The Commission's concern led to the adoption of an island wide campaign 'Stop Torture' launched on International Day Commemorating Victims of Torture, June 26th, with the participation of the President of the Republic.

The Commission also prioritized working on rights of marginalized communities recognizing the importance of addressing discrimination, both in law and practice, if Sri Lanka is to build a robust post-war human rights culture that positively acknowledges diversity in society. In that regard a series of thematic sub-committees was set up comprising both HRC and civil society representatives on themes such as gender justice, rights of the disabled, sexual minorities, the elderly and migrant workers.

In keeping with the new Commissioners' position that its advisory interventions to the government must be prioritized, several key policy recommendations were made during the year, beginning with a call made on the government on January 01st to abolish the death penalty. Other key advisory recommendations included a set of proposals for constitutional reform that emphasized the need to incorporate economic, social and cultural rights as justiciable rights. A set of fundamental constitutional principles were also proposed for inclusion into a future constitution including supremacy of the constitution and power sharing. Similarly, the Commission focused sharply on the slowly emerging transitional justice regime for review and advice.

The year also saw the Commission strengthening efforts to renew and forge stronger linkages with civil society, particularly at the regional level. In keeping with the Commission's strongly held view that civil society at grass roots level holds great potential for community advocacy and change, each of the ten Regional Officers set up regional civil society committees during the year for consultation and partnership.

Running parallel was a major drive to engage in institutional development. This included staff development programs, streamlining of processes (especially on investigations and inquiries), encouraging use of IT and addressing long-standing grievances of staff, in particular commencing the process of obtaining approval for a Scheme of Recruitment. The obstacles were many, mainly outdated governmental administrative and financial regulations. Nevertheless, the Commission could function in a free environment without political interference.

A busy and fruitful year was capped with commendations from the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Bin Ra'ad. The Commission feels gratified that its efforts have been positively acknowledged. On behalf of the Commission I wish to place on record our warm appreciation of the unstinted support extended by so many to make our endeavors meaningful.

Dr. Nelum Deepika Udagama

Chairperson

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

CONTENTS

A. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION	3
B. MESSAGE OF THE CHAIRPERSON	4
C. CONTENTS	7
LIST OF ACRONYMS	9
CHAPTER 1: THE COMMISSION	11
1.1. Overview of the Commission	11
1.1.1. Vision	11
1.1.2. Mission	11
1.1.3. Core values	12
1.1.4. Crest of the Commission	12
1.2. Nature and Scope of the mandate	12
1.3. Organizational Structure	14
CHAPTER 2: YEAR IN REVIEW	17
2.1. Key achievements	17
2.1.1. Investigations and inquiries	18
2.1.2. Outreach programmes	18
2.1.3. Organizational developments	19
2.1.4. Strategic Plan	20
2.2. Recommendations to Government	20
2.3. Other advocacy for policy reform	24
2.4. Vetting of Sri Lankan Military personnel to be deployed as UN peacekeepers	25
2.5. Challenges	25
CHAPTER 3: INVESTIGATIONS AND INQUIRIES	27
3.1. Overview	27
3.2. Examples of individual complaints by right	33
3.2.1. Equality and non-discrimination	33
3.2.2. Custodial violence	36
3.3. <i>Suo Motu</i> inquiries	36

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH AND MONITORING	39
4.1. Thematic sub-committees	39
4.2. Studies conducted	40
4.3. Monitoring activities	41
CHAPTER 5: EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES	45
5.1. Public awareness raising	45
5.2. Engagement with media	49
5.3. Engagement with Civil Society	50
5.4. Mentoring	51
CHAPTER 6: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION	53
6.1. Promote compliance with international Human Rights obligations	53
6.2. Strengthening ties with the Asia Pacific Forum (APF)	55
6.3. Submission of reports and responses to international	56
6.4. Other collaborations with international organizations and experts	56
CHAPTER 7: REGIONAL & SUB-OFFICES	59
7.1 Overview	59
7.2 Complaints handled	60
7.3 Monitoring activities	62
7.4 Education and outreach activities	63
CHAPTER 8: HUMAN RESOURCES, ADMINISTRATION, AND FINANCE	65
8.1. Staff development Programmes	65
8.2. Employment benefits	67
8.3. Employment and vacancies	67
8.4. Annual financial statements	68
APPENDICES	72
Appendix 1: Presence of HRCSL in Sri Lanka: Map	72
Appendix 2: List of recommendations	73
Appendix 3: List of <i>suo motu</i> (on its own motion) inquiries undertaken	74
Appendix 4: List of Meetings/Programmes/Workshops and other events held with the participation of the Chairperson and Commissioners of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka-2016	75
Appendix 5: Letter of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights dated 08 March 2016	79

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APF	Asia Pacific Forum
BMICH	Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ESC Rights	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRCSL	Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IT	Information Technology
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning
NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMP	Office of Missing Persons
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
SCRM	Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms
SLBC	Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
SLRC	Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
TID	Terrorist Investigation Division
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CHAPTER 1:

THE COMMISSION

1.1. Strategic overview

1.1.1. Vision

1.1.2. Mission

1.1.3. Core values

1.1.4. Crest of the Commission

1.2. Nature and Scope of the mandate

1.3. Organizational Structure

01 THE COMMISSION

1.1 Overview of the Commission

1.1.1 Vision

Ensure Human Rights for all and Promote and Protect the Rule of Law.

1.1.2 Mission

To develop a better human rights culture in Sri Lanka through protecting and promoting human rights for all in law, policy, and in practice, adhering to universally recognized human rights norms and principles with a special emphasis on the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Sri Lanka Constitution for the citizens of Sri Lanka, with the coordination and corporation of all stakeholders that work towards protecting and promoting human rights for all.

1.1.3 Core Values

- Respect for human dignity
- Respect for diversity
- Equality and non-discrimination
- Peace, truth and justice
- Independence
- Accountability
- Service
- Humility
- Integrity
- Transparency

1.1.4 Crest of the Commission

The crest of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL or the Commission) conveys the responsibility of the National Human Rights Institution to protect and promote human rights at the national level. The colour blue reflects the liveliness and creativity of human beings. The two hands reflect protection and taking of action for protection. The globe reflects the universality of human rights and the protection afforded at the international level. The map of Sri Lanka reflects the necessity to take action for protection at the national level. The figures of a woman, man, and child symbolize that human rights protection should be afforded equally to all.

1.2 Nature and Scope of the mandate

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka is an independent Commission, established to promote and protect human rights in the country. The Commission is also mindful of Sri Lanka's international human rights obligations and strives to ensure the country abides by these obligations.

The Commission was established in 1996 by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act, No. 21 of 1996 (the Act). The Act sets out the legal basis and operational principles of the HRCSL. The HRCSL is a scheduled commission under the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka but it is not formally established by the Constitution. The Chairperson and Members of the Commission are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council. The Commission is answerable to the Parliament.

The Act recognized the jurisdiction in the Commission in terms of fundamental rights and human rights. Fundamental rights are certain civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights guaranteed in Chapter III of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Human rights are defined in the Act as "right declared and recognised by the international convention on Civil and Political Rights and the International Conventions on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" thus empowering the Commission to ensure national standards are in compliance with international law.

The statutory functions of the Commission (as set out in Section 10 of the Act) are:

- to inquire into, and investigate, complaints regarding procedures, with a view to ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Constitution relating to fundamental rights and to promoting respect for, and observance of, fundamental rights;

- to inquire into and investigate, complaints regarding infringements or imminent infringements of fundamental rights, and to provide for resolution by conciliation and mediation;
- to advise and assist the government in formulating legislation and administrative directives and procedures, in furtherance of, the promotion and protection of fundamental rights;
- to make recommendations to the Government regarding measures which should be taken to ensure that national laws and administrative practices are in accordance with international human rights norms and standards.
- to make recommendations to the Government on the need to subscribe or accede to treaties and other international instruments in the field of human rights; and
- to promote awareness of, and provide education in relation to, human rights.

To carry out the statutory functions, the HRCSL is empowered to (as set out in Section 11 of the Act);

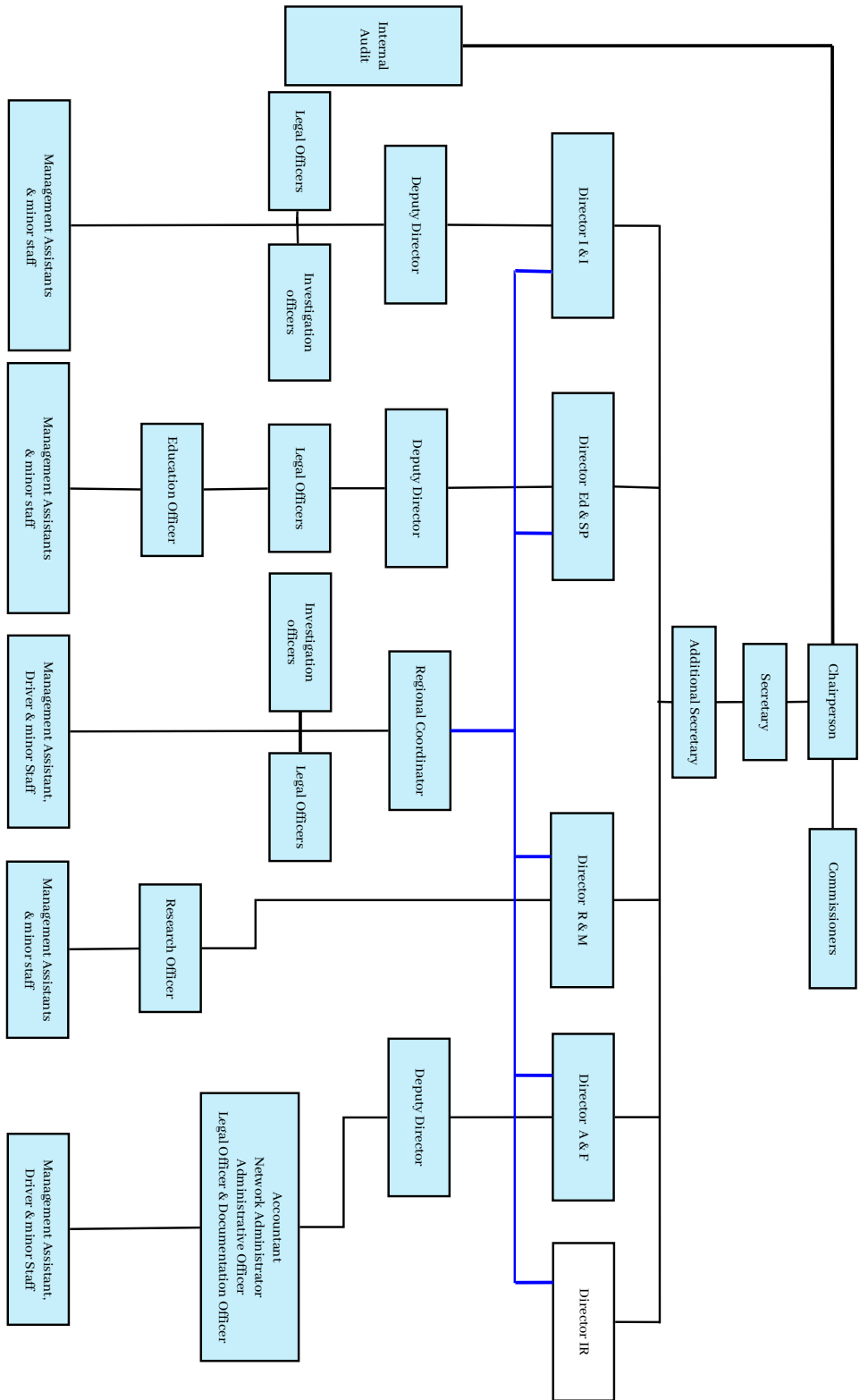
- investigate, any infringement or imminent infringement of fundamental rights;
- appoint such number of sub-committees at provincial level, as it considers necessary to exercise such powers of the Commission as may be delegated to them, by the Commission;
- intervene in any proceedings relating to the infringement or imminent infringement of fundamental rights, pending before any court, with the permission of such court;
- monitor the welfare of persons detained either by a judicial order or otherwise, by regular inspection of their places of detention, and to make recommendations necessary for improving their conditions of detention;
- take such steps as it may be directed to take by the Supreme Court, in respect of any matter referred to it by the Supreme Court;
- undertake research into, and promote awareness of, human rights, by conducting programs, seminars workshops and to disseminate and distribute the results of such research;
- award in its absolute discretion to an aggrieved person or a person acting on behalf of an aggrieved person, such sum of money as is sufficient to meet the

expenses that may have been reasonably incurred by him in making a complaint to the Commission.

- do all such other things as are necessary or conducive to the discharge of its functions.

1.3 Organizational Structure

The Commission functions with 154 staff members. It consists of 04 Divisions namely: Inquiries & Investigations (I&I), Education & Special Programmes (ED&SP), Research & Monitoring (R&M), and Administration & Finance (A&F) Divisions. A Division on International Relations (IR) will be set up as soon as the Commission is in a position to recruit requisite staff. In addition, the Commission also has 10 regional offices (Ampara, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kalmunai, Kandy, Matara, Trincomalee and Vavuniya) and six sub-offices (Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaithivu, Nuwara Eliya, Polonnaruwa, and Puttalam,) to carry out its functions. (See appendix 1) Each Division is headed by a Director and each regional Office is headed by a Regional Coordinator. The Chairperson and/or a Commissioner/ Commissioners supervise each Division and the Regional Offices.



CHAPTER 2:

YEAR IN REVIEW

2.1. Key achievements

2.1.1. Investigations and inquiries

2.1.2. Outreach programmes

2.1.3. Organizational developments

2.1.4. Strategic Plan

2.2. Recommendations to Government

2.3. Other advocacy for policy reform

2.4. Vetting of Sri Lankan Military personnel to be deployed as UN peacekeepers

2.5. Challenges

02 YEAR IN REVIEW

2.1 Key achievements

This Chapter provides a summary of some of the Commission's key achievements for 2016. Details of the activities referred to in this chapter are given in subsequent chapters as well as annexes.

2.1.1 Investigations and inquiries

The Commission assisted a large number of people through its individual complaints mechanism and *suo motu* (on its own motion) action during the year of 2016. It introduced systems to streamline the investigation and inquiry process and focused on staff training to facilitate the reforms. The Commission also implemented an active referral system to direct persons with grievances not within the mandate of the Commission to entities best placed to assist them. It was noted that the public was forwarding all forms of complaints to the Commission as they were not adequately aware of other relief mechanism with specialized mandates such as the Office of the Ombudsman.

Notwithstanding the mandate of the Commission to issue recommendations to authorities directing the implementation of the recommendations in relation to violations of human rights, the Commission constantly made efforts to facilitate the settlement of disputes through mediation and conciliation, which provides a quick method and a less formal procedure for the settlement of disputes. The Commission also implemented a backlog clearing project to handle the backlog of inquiries prior to 2014.

In 2016, the Commission received 9171 complaints, which is an increase of 425 from 2015. 4739 cases were concluded during 2016. Relief was granted in 727 cases while 803 cases were identified as not giving rise to rights violations and 408 cases were identified as not within the mandate of the Commission. The Commission successfully mediated settlements in 1162 cases and referred 127 cases to other authorities for appropriate action. The Commission issued 44 recommendations in response to

individual complaints made to the Commission during 2016 and launched 17 *suo motu* (on its own motion) inquiries into a variety of issues.

2.1.2 Outreach programmes

In 2016 the Commission conducted a variety of outreach programmes in order to promote awareness and educate the public on human rights issues. Outreach programmes included studies, lectures, mobile clinics, workshops, public marches as well as media campaigns.

The most significant outreach program inaugurated in 2016 by the Commission was the **'Stop Torture'** campaign launched on June 26, the International Day in Commemoration of Victims of Torture. The Commission held public programs around the country through the Head Office and the 10 Regional Offices. A march was organized in the capital city by the Head Office with the participation of civil society, school children, youth groups, tri-forces and the police. It was noteworthy that HE The President and the Hon. Minister of Law and Order participated in the march signifying official support.



Launching the sticker campaign in commemoration of the international Women's Day

Other important outreach programmes included the sticker campaign and the short video competition in commemoration of International Women's Day, installation of Digital signage around the Colombo city carrying important messages on human rights to raise awareness amongst the public of their rights, the launching of the 'Human Rights snippets' campaign on radio channels of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) in both Sinhala and Tamil.

The HRCSL also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Human Rights Commission to build its institutional capacity to address and monitor access to public spaces for people with disabilities according to international best

practices. The Commission also initiated discussions with stakeholders on implementing the disability access project.

2.1.3 Organizational developments

After the current Commission assumed office in late 2015, 2016 saw many organizational developments geared towards increasing the efficiency and responsiveness of the Commission. In that spirit, a high level Dialogue was conducted in January 2016 to plan and prioritize the work of HRCSL with the support of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF). At the same time, a Policy on capacity development of HRCSL staff and a HRCSL Policy on information technology were introduced to strengthen the institutional mechanism of the Commission.

The Commission directed each regional office to establish a regional Coordinating Committee of State Officials and a regional Coordinating Committee of Civil Society Organizations in the 10 regional offices of the HRCSL, with the aim of providing a forum for civil society to raise human rights issues of concern and directing these issues to the relevant state authorities for resolution and action. The mechanism has proved successful in flagging issues of relevance to the HRCSL in the regions and allowing the Commission to respond to the issues fruitfully.

2.1.4 Strategic Plan

HRCSL held meetings and consultations with stakeholders with a view to identifying strategic focus areas which will form the core of the HRCSL Strategic Plan 2017-2019. While the Commission conducted a workshop for the senior management of the Commission on strategic planning, it also held several consultations with staff and Government Officials, Civil Society Organizations in all provinces as well as UN Representatives to obtain their views and thoughts on the future activities of HRCSL to be included in the Strategic Plan. Further, comments and suggestions were solicited through the HRCSL website from interested parties and citizens. The Strategic Plan was finalized in September 2016 to be implemented in 2017. APF assisted the Commission in this process.

2.2 Recommendations to Government

As per sections 10(c) and 10(d) of the Act, the Commission is required to advise and assist the government in formulating legislation and administrative directives and procedures, in furtherance of, the promotion and protection of fundamental rights and to make recommendations to the Government regarding measures which should be taken to ensure that national laws and administrative practices are in accordance with

international human rights norms and standards. In 2016, the Commission sought to prioritize its advisory role to the Government. During 2016, the HRCSL made several recommendations to the Government on human rights issues of concern, which the Commission viewed as requiring its intervention.

- **Proposals for Constitutional Reform**

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka presented its proposals for Constitutional Reforms to the Hon. Prime Minister, Hon. Speaker and to the Public Representation Committee on Constitutional Reforms. While welcoming the recommendation to include a substantive bill of rights in a future Constitution, the Commission drew attention to two critically important dimensions that should be taken into consideration in the reform process, i.e. the guaranteeing of a sound system of separation of powers and checks and balances; and a strong regulation of the public security regime. In addition, the Commission proposed including foundational Constitutional principles, a strong Bill of Rights, a strong system of checks and balances, a process of ratifying International Human Rights treaties with an obligation of presenting enabling legislation within a stipulated timeframe, Constitutional recognition to the HRCSL, and ensuring linguistic accessibility which is of fundamental importance to Constitution-building and in legitimizing Constitutional governance.

- **Recommendation to abolish the death penalty in Sri Lanka**

A recommendation was issued to abolish the death penalty in Sri Lanka in keeping with Sri Lanka's commitment to a more humane society consonant with human rights principles and values. The Commission urged the Government to consider abolishing the death penalty in light of the growing global recognition that the death penalty seriously violates several human rights including the right to life and freedom from cruel and inhuman punishment, is an extreme and irreversible punishment, and is ineffective as a deterrent to crime.

The recommendation further stated that the Commission is of the view that the death penalty amounts to cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and fails to respect the sanctity of human life and that the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka has held that although there is no express fundamental right to life, it is nevertheless implied in the 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka.

While recommending that Sri Lanka ratifies the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR and abolish the death penalty immediately, HRCSL also recommended that the death penalty should be substituted with periods of imprisonment that befit the seriousness of each crime.

- **The need to incorporate economic, social and cultural rights in the future Constitutional Bill of Rights**

The Commission issued a public statement on the need to incorporate Economic, Social and Cultural rights (ESC Rights) in the future Constitutional Bill of Rights as fully protected rights. The HRCSL conveyed its deep concern on attempts by certain quarters to prevent the inclusion of ESC Rights in violation of the principle of indivisibility of rights. It drew attention to the fact that the Constitution-making process must necessarily recognize the views articulated by the public in the public consultations process demanding the Constitutional protection of rights such as the right to education, an adequate standard of health, housing, and fair conditions of labour in the future Constitution. Failure to do so, the Commission opined is also a violation of legal obligations undertaken by Sri Lanka, particularly under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). It further stated that this would adversely affect Sri Lanka's improving human rights record and would seriously undermine public confidence in the future Constitution.

- **Recommendation to enable transgender persons to change their sex in their personal documentation**

The Ministry of Health to issue a circular to enable transgender persons to change their sex in their personal documentation, such as the National Identity Card (NIC) pursuant to a recommendation of the Commission. The Registrar-General too issued a circular instructing all registrars in the country to change the sex and name in the birth certificate based on the gender recognition certificate, developed by the Commission as a result of broad-based consultations with Ministry of Health, the Department of Registrar General, and civil society.

- **Directives on arrest and detention of persons arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act No. 48 of 1979**

The Human Rights Commission issued directives on arrest and detention of persons arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act No. 48 of 1979 (PTA). The Directives were issued to designated officials arresting persons under the PTA in order to ensure the fundamental rights of persons arrested or detained are respected and protected, and such persons are treated humanely. The Directives stipulate the PTA to be construed narrowly and used in very specific circumstances, and not to be used to arrest persons for ordinary crimes. The Directives are based on the Directives on Arrest and Detention issued by previous heads of state and binding international human rights law standards.

- **Acknowledgement of the Directives issued by His Excellency the President on arrest and detention of persons under the Prevention of Terrorism Act No. 48 of 1979**

The Human Rights Commission welcomed the Directives issued by His Excellency the President on arrest and detention of persons under Prevention of Terrorism Act No. 48 of 1979 by a public statement. The Commission believed that the Directives would facilitate the Commission to exercise its powers, functions and duties in this regard and would reinforce the protection afforded to persons subject to arrest and detention under extraordinary laws. The Commission also welcomed the government's decision to repeal the PTA and emphasized the need to ensure that the national securing legislation, which was proposed to replace the PTA, adhered to international human rights standards. It further opined that recognizing the need to protect human rights during states of emergencies is not unique to international human rights law and is found in Sri Lanka jurisprudence as well. Against this backdrop, the Commission recommended certain elements that have been identified by the UN Special Rapporteur on Protecting and Promoting Human Rights While Countering Terrorism as being integral to any future national security legislation such as the definition of terrorism, judicial review of detention orders, right to a fair trial, non-use of capital punishment, access to independent legal representation etc.

- **Proposals to the Parliamentary Sub Committee on Law & Order**

Submitting its proposals to the Parliamentary Sub Committee on Law & Order, HRCSL reiterated that while the public security regime is essential, it should be in line with Sri Lanka's Human Rights obligations. The Commission was of the belief that the main purpose of a public security regime is to protect the people, and hence must be crafted in a manner that serves the best interests of the people, and drew the attention of the Sub-Committee to the principles governing national security set out in Article 198 of the Constitution of South Africa.

The recommendations of the Commission were based on the jurisprudence of the Human Rights Committee, the Paris Minimum Standards of Human Rights Norms in a State of Emergency, and the Siracusa Principles on the Limitation and Derogation Provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The recommendations emphasized on the declaration and extension of a state of emergency, which should be declared only when the 'life of the nation is threatened'- which is an 'exceptional situation of crisis or public danger, actual or imminent', on the need to guarantee judicial review of a declaration of a state of emergency, emergency regulations and orders, and endorsed the provisions in the Draft Charter of Rights (2009) on derogation of rights during periods of emergency. The Commission also

recommended the review of the Public Security Ordinance for purposes of reforming the legislative regime applicable to public security.

- **Concerns regarding the proposed amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure Act limiting the rights of suspects to access a lawyer**

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka wrote to the Prime Minister (which was later made public) expressing concern about the bill published in the Gazette on 12th August 2016 proposing to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, which limited rights of suspects to access a lawyer. The letter called upon the Government of Sri Lanka to withdraw the amendment and to continue to recognize and enhance the rights of suspects to have access to their lawyers. Subsequently, the Commissioners also participated in a closed door meeting organized by the Bar Association of Sri Lanka on the proposed amendment.

- **Office of Missing persons (OMP)**

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka in a public statement commended the adoption of Office on Missing Persons (Establishment, Administration and Discharge of functions) Act and reiterated a number of important elements that have to be given serious consideration in establishing the Office. Some of the salient elements are; the need for a public awareness campaign to dispel rumours and counter misleading and inaccurate information being placed in the public domain regarding the OMP, providing sufficient financial resources that will allow the Office to build a strong institution and hire competent, qualified and committed staff, to establish regional offices to improve accessibility and public ownership to the OMP, for the membership of the OMP to reflect the pluralistic nature of Sri Lanka, recruitment of persons with unimpeachable character and adequate and continuous training for the staff so recruited, presence of personnel to provide on-site psycho-social support to those who require it, to raise awareness amongst families of the missing on their rights regarding the Certificate of Absence, a feasible victims and witness protection procedure, and adequate and reliable data recording and protection procedures.

2.3 Other advocacy for policy reform

- **On the right to education**

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka and the National Child Protection Authority issued a press release signed by the Chairpersons of both institutions urgently calling the attention of authorities and members of the general public to the right to education of the 5 year old child who was denied admission to Sambodhi Primary School at Ilukhena in Kuliypitiya on the basis of he was HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) infected due to his

mother's health condition. The public statement emphasized the duty of the Government to ensure the right to education of the child and called upon the society to view the best interests of the child through the strong bond the child has formed with the mother. The statement further discouraged considering institutionalization of the child in these circumstances, and requested political leaders, officials, and media institutions to respect the privacy of the family and the confidentiality attached to the medical records of the mother.

- **On Article 16 of the Constitution**

HRCSL placed in the public domain its position on the reform of Article 16 of the 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka, having considered various representations on the above and Sri Lanka's international human rights obligations. It recommended that the future Constitution of Sri Lanka must recognize the principle of supremacy of the Constitution. And all written and customary laws will therefore be invalid to the extent of inconsistency with the Constitution of Sri Lanka.

2.4 Vetting of Sri Lankan military personnel to be deployed as UN peacekeepers

The HRCSL was invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2016 to a series of meetings to discuss the possibility of the Commission undertaking the vetting of military personnel to be deployed for United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Commission agreed to undertake the process and conveyed the same to His Excellency the President in September 2016. This is the first time the vetting of peacekeeping troops has been entrusted to a national entity.

2.5 Challenges

While the Commission achieved progress during the year 2016, it also faced many challenges. The newly appointed Commission in certain instances did not garner sufficient support to reform internal structures and processes, which it spearheaded in order to increase the efficacy of the Commission in discharging its mandate. The work of the Commission was also hindered by cumbersome bureaucratic procedures which delayed activities, and which could have impinged upon the independence of the Commission.

The lack of administrative independence further prevented the Commission from achieving progress at the level anticipated. It has had an adverse impact on

recruitment, establishment of new regional offices, and obtaining infrastructure facilities alike.

The response to complaints too was hampered due to the lack of adequate human resources. Several UN Special Rapporteurs in their reports on Sri Lanka too have recommended strengthening the HRCSL by providing adequate financial, physical and human resources, as well as sufficient staff training and expertise in order to effectively carry out its mandate.

The non-implementation of recommendations issued by the Commission has been a constant concern, posing a challenge to the Commission in realizing its mandate to protect human rights. The reports of both the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges & Lawyers and the Special Rapporteur on Minorities have highlighted the absence of enforcement powers to ensure that final determinations and recommendations are implemented as obstacles to the work of the Commission, recommending the state to ensure that institutions take greater cognizance of the recommendations to ensure the fundamental rights of citizens are protected.

CHAPTER 3:

INVESTIGATIONS AND INQUIRIES

- 3.1. Overview**
- 3.2. Examples of individual complaints by right**
 - 3.2.1. Equality and non-discrimination
 - 3.2.2. Custodial violence
- 3.3. *Suo Motu* inquiries**

03 INVESTIGATIONS AND INQUIRIES

3.1 Overview

The Commission receives complaints from the public, while at the same time the Commission is empowered through Section 14 of the Act to inquire into issues which reveal violations of fundamental rights on its own motion (*suo motu* inquiries).

At the beginning of 2016, HRCSL made a policy decision to vet the complaints it receives more rigorously in order to determine if the Commission is best suited to handle it. This decision was taken in response to the administrative justice related complaints the Commission is inundated with, as such complaints could be referred to other authorities for relief. This ensured the Commission maintained the integrity of its core mandate and channeled its resources into providing relief in instances of violations of human rights. Pursuant to this policy, the Commission also trained its officers on a comprehensive referral system which assisted investigation officers in identifying the appropriate authority to which complaints not within the mandate of the Commission could be referred. At present, every single complainant is instructed on the appropriate institution to which their complaint could be referred, if the Commission is not the appropriate forum.

At the same time, the Commission recruited new officers to address the backlog of inquiries prior to 2014 through a project funded by the Swiss Confederation. The project was granted for the Commission to efficiently and quickly investigate the backlog of complaints in order to enable the Commission to make timely interventions and contribute to rebuilding public confidence in the institution. The objective of recruiting additional staff members was to allow the current staff members to concentrate on current complaints while the Commission reviews and strengthens the current complaints handling process to avoid such backlogs in the future.

▪ Introduction of new working methods:

The Commission introduced and implemented new working methods in order to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of the Inquiries and Investigations division. As a first step, a new categorization of complaints was introduced with the objective of streamlining the complaints handling process.

New units were established within the Inquiries and Investigations Division to direct complaints. Dedicated units handling each category of rights were expected to enable the Commission to effectively and promptly respond to complaints received by it. The Units are;

- Economic Social and Cultural rights
- Education sector complaints
- Torture/Custodial violence
- General complaints unit

Additionally, new formats and guidelines were introduced to accept and conduct inquiries into complaints, again geared towards increasing the efficiency of the division.

▪ **Statistics of complaints received:**

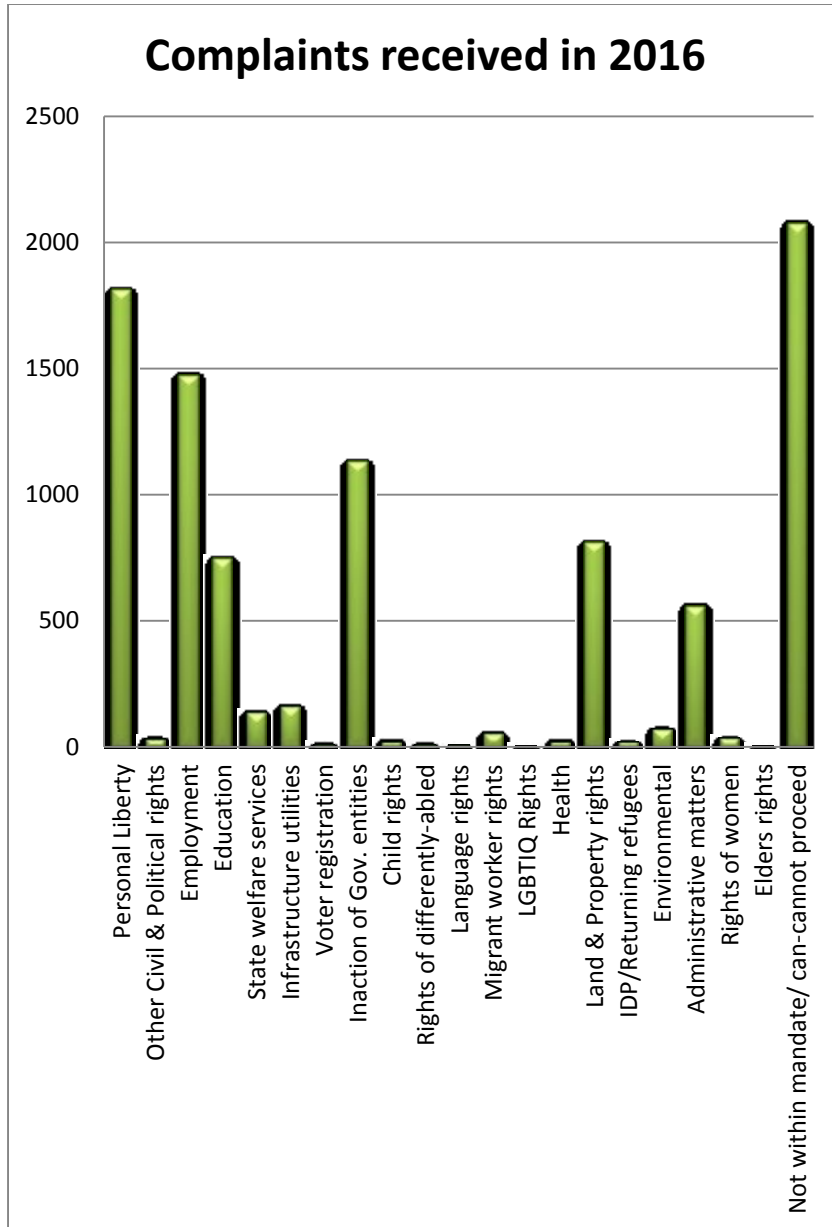
In total, the HRCSL received 9171 complaints in 2016. This is compared to 8949 complaints received in the previous year. The highest number of complaints, amounting to 20% of received complaints was in relation to violations of personal liberty, including torture in custody and arbitrary arrest and detention. Employment related complaints were the second highest, equaling 16% of the received complaints. Complaints relating to the inaction of government authorities were the third highest number of complaints received at 14%. Out of the 7712 complaints received, 3704 were received by the regional offices, while the remainder was received by the Head Office.

Types of Complaints	Regional Offices	Head Office	Grand Total
Personal Liberty	796	1018	1814
Torture (physical and mental)	129	286	415
General Harassment	52	193	245
Sexual Harassment	6	-	6
Threats	229	263	492
Degrading treatment	62	67	129
Arbitrary Arrests/Detention	251	190	441
Detention conditions	2	1	3
Death in custody	2	3	5
Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances	1	-	1

Abductions	1	-	1
Extra-judicial Killings	2	-	2
Encounter Deaths	-	-	-
Prisoner's Rights	6	4	10
Missing Persons ⁱ	51	11	62
Other	2	-	2
Other Civil and Political Rights	9	22	31
Freedom of Expression	2	3	5
Freedom of Assembly	2	-	2
Freedom of Association	1	1	2
Freedom of Religion	3	16	19
Freedom of Movement	-	1	1
Right to Information	-	1	1
Other	1	-	1

Employment	749	725	1474
Education	357	390	747
Admission to popular schools	157	207	364
Other complaints on education rights	200	183	383
State Welfare Services	123	14	137
Infrastructure Utilities	110	49	159
Complaints Relating to Voter Registration	3	4	7
Complaints about Inactions of Gov. Entities	769	362	1131
Police	464	190	654
Other Gov. Authorities	305	172	477
Child Rights	14	5	19
Rights of Differently-abled	7	-	7
Language Rights	3	1	4
Migrant Worker's Rights	33	20	53
LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex, & Questioning)	-	1	1
Health	13	6	19
Land & Property Rights	626	184	810
IDP/ Returning Refugees	17	1	18

Environmental	40	31	71
Administrative matters	212	346	558
Permits/Licenses	24	37	61
Misuse/abuse of power	107	265	372
Other Administrative matters	81	44	125
Rights of Women	29	3	32
Elders' Rights	-	1	1
Not within mandate/ Can, Cannot Proceed	292	1786	2078
Total	4202	4969	9171



▪ **Statistics of cases concluded:**

The Commission concluded a total of 4387 cases in 2016. Out of the 4387 cases concluded, 3418 were disposed by the regional offices. The Commission granted relief in 727 cases and successfully facilitated settlements in 1162 cases, while 127 cases were referred to other authorities for appropriate action. The Commission found no violation of a fundamental right in 803 of the cases. 896 of the complaints made were either withdrawn or the complainant did not pursue the matter.

Categories of complaints	Regional Offices	Head Office	Total
No FR violations	607	196	803
Settlement	1079	83	1162
Relief granted	640	87	727
Referred to other authorities	56	71	127
Directives given	00	34	34
Pending judicial proceedings	100	97	197
Complainant lacks interest	445	132	577
Not within the Mandate	328	80	408
Withdrawn	132	187	319
Time barred (prescribed)	31	2	33
Total	3418	969	4387

▪ **Recommendations:**

In 2016 the Commission issued a total of 44 recommendations. The majority of the recommendations were on the violation of Rights related to education, which, though not explicitly recognized in the Constitution, gives rise to violations of equality and non-discrimination provisions in the Constitution. (For a full list of Recommendations issued in 2016 see appendix 2)

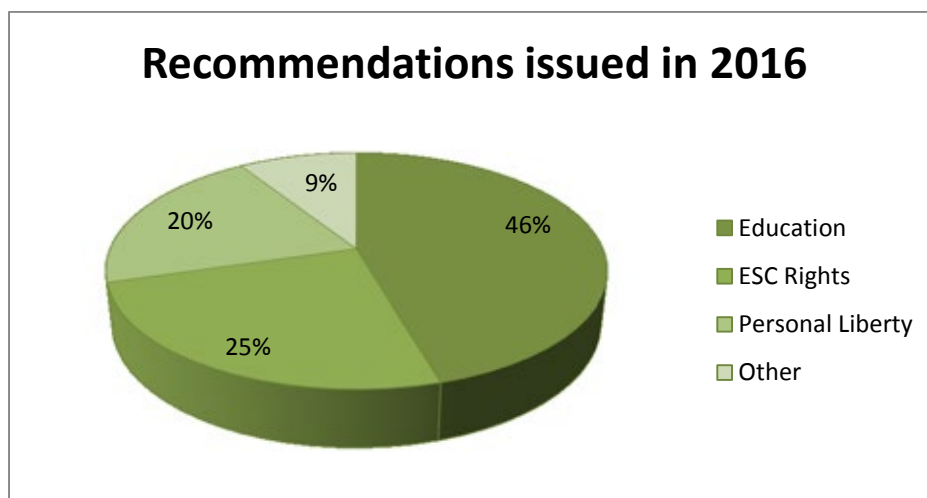
Subject/Area	No.
Rights related to education	20
Economic Social & Cultural Rights	11
Rights related to Personal liberty	09
Other	04
TOTAL	44

Source: Database of Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

While rights related to education come within economic social & cultural rights due to the large volume of complaints received, it is identified as a separate category. These recommendations pertain to violations in school admissions, students' disciplinary matters, university admissions, harassment in educational institutions, and promotions in educational institutions.

The other recommendations pertaining to economic social & cultural rights comprise violations relating to pension, livelihood, salary increments, transfers, recruitment, service conditions, interdiction, terminations, compensations, and misuse of power.

Rights relating to personal liberty consist of violations such as illegal arrests and detention, torture, and deaths in custody.



3.2 Examples of individual complaints by rights

3.2.1 Equality and Non-discrimination

▪ Suspension from a public school (Complaint No.HRC/2124/16/I-23)

The Commission found a violation of the fundamental right to the equal protection of the law under Article 12(1) resulting in the violation of the right to education of a student who was suspended from a public school for a period of approximately 3 months on disciplinary grounds. The procedure to be followed if a student is found to have been involved in misconduct is laid down in circular No.2005/17 issued by the Ministry of Education, which had not been followed by the school authorities in this case. The Commission further opined that educators are the loco-parents of the students and therefore are bound to act in the best interests of the students. The Principal of the school had acted contrary to the concept of a loco-parent in contravening the Code of Ethics issued by the Ministry of Education by way of circular No.2012/37 which attracts disciplinary sanctions against the Principal. The Commission issued a recommendation directing the Principal to facilitate the continued education of the student without any disruptions. It further recommended the Ministry of Education to conduct awareness raising programmes on the above circulars as the lack of understanding of the content of these circulars contributes to arbitrary conduct by school authorities.

▪ **Admission to Grade 2 of a public school (Complaint No.HRC/2694/15)**

The petitioner alleged that her son's right to equality under Article 12 (1) of the Constitution was violated by the Ministry of Education in not recommending the admission of the child to Grade 2 of a public school in 2015 despite the application meeting the required criteria. The application of the child had initially been accepted by the principal of the school as per the requirements contained in circular No.2008/38 and submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval. However, subsequently, the Ministry of Education had appointed a special appeals committee to consider appeals against unsuccessful applications to all public schools. A notification had been publicized through national newspapers calling for appeals to be submitted. The mother of the aggrieved child had not made an application to such Committee as her child's application was successful. However, the Ministry had only approved the admission of children who submitted successful appeals to the special appeals committee, disregarding the decisions taken by the principal of the school in conformity of the provisions in the above circular.

The Commission found that circular No.2008/38 does not provide for the establishment of a special appeals committee and in doing so the Ministry of Education had acted in excess of its powers. Therefore, the Commission found a violation of article 12(1) of the Constitution and recommended the admission of the child of the aggrieved party to grade 3 of the said public school in the year 2016.

▪ **Recruitment to a public institution (Complaint No. HRC/2449/15)**

In May 2016, the Commission recommended the appointment of the petitioner to the position of an office assistant of the Ceylon Electricity Board, pursuant to finding a violation of Article 12(1) of the Constitution during the interview process. The Petitioner had applied for the position with more than the required qualifications including an external degree from a public university and prior experience in a similar position. The Commission was of the view that possessing qualifications in excess of the required minimum should not be a basis for disqualification. As such, the Commission disapproved of assigning only 10 marks out of 20 for the educational qualifications of the applicant, who should have scored the full 20 marks. Further, the Commission found that the respondents have failed to provide an adequate justification either for allocating 60% of the marks at the interview for performance based on the discretion of the interviewers or the criteria on which the interviewers assess the performance of the candidates. Therefore, the Commission found that the recruiters had not given adequate weight to the educational qualifications of the applicant nor had they acted with transparency in their assessment resulting in a violation of fundamental rights.

▪ **Examination policies of public universities (Complaint No. HRC/4326/15)**

The Commission made a recommendation directing a public university to release the results of the petitioner, a candidate of the Master of Laws programme of the University, for the subject of International Trade Law which the University had withheld on the basis that the student had not fulfilled the requisite percentage of attendance to be eligible to sit for the examination. The Commission made this recommendation confirming its interim recommendation which required the university to allow the petitioner to sit for the examination of the above subject after finding a violation of Article 12(1) of the Constitution. The petitioner alleged that the University had not, at any point in time during the course of study, properly communicated to the students the requirement of attendance at a minimum of 50% of lectures to be eligible to sit for the examination. Further, no such requirement had been insisted upon during the first three semesters of the programme. Despite the lack of prior notice, the University had decided to strictly implement the said policy two months prior to the final examination. The Commission observed that the university had not implemented a satisfactory standard method of communicating this information or any other information to its students preferring ad-hoc methods with no uniformity. Therefore, especially when a change of policy is likely to frustrate the legitimate expectations of individuals affected by such policy, the Commission was of the view that there was an obligation on the university to use a legitimate standardized method of communication designed to reach each and every candidate, which had not been fulfilled in this instance.

▪ **Discrimination of visual artists (Complaint Nos. HRC/2037/15, HRC/2038/15, HRC/1994/15)**

In October 2016 the HRCSL directed the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC) to re-telecast in its entirety a tele drama directed by one of the petitioners, as it was found that the decision of SLRC to discontinue telecasting it was arbitrary. The petitions were forwarded by the Director, Producer, and a viewer of the tele drama respectively, requesting the re-telecasting of the tele drama and compensation for damages to reputation and financial losses. The Commission found a violation of Article 12(1) of the Constitution when the SLRC decided to discontinue telecasting the tele drama citing low viewer ratings and low revenue generated by advertisements. It was found that the SLRC was in violation of its contractual obligations as well in not telecasting the tele drama during the time belt agreed between the parties nor telecasting it on 4 days of the week as agreed upon between the parties. Even though these were grounds on which the agreement between the parties could have been terminated as per the written contract, the Commission observed that the survey of

viewer ratings conducted by a private marketing research company had not been successful in capturing an adequate sample of viewers to justify the conclusion. It further observed that SLRC has not successfully proven that telecasting the tele drama had resulted in a loss of revenue for SLRC, which may have justified its decision. Therefore, the Commission directed SLRC to re-telecast the tele drama as per the terms of the contract entered into between the parties and to refrain from discriminating against or disregarding future work of the Petitioners if submitted to SLRC for telecasting.

3.2.2 Custodial violence

- **Physical torture in police detention (Complaint No. HRC/AP/734/2013)**

The petitioner complained to the HRCSL that he was arbitrarily arrested by the police and subjected to torture in detention. Refuting this charge, the police claimed that the petitioner was arrested for drunkenness and indecent conduct, which claim was substantiated by entries in police field records. As the petitioner was not successful in producing evidence to the contrary the Commission did not find a violation of Article 13(1) of the Constitution. However, based on medical reports produced by the Petitioner for residential treatment received for injuries at the Anuradhapura teaching hospital and the Anuradhapura Military hospital and the report of the Judicial Medical Officer of Anuradhapura Teaching hospital, the Commission concluded that the petitioner had been subject to a violation of his Fundamental rights under Article 11 of the Constitution. The Commission directed the Police to pay compensation of Rs.25,000/= to the Petitioner.

- **Physical and mental torture in a public school (Complaint No. HRC/1862/15/I-23)**

In August 2016, the HRCSL found that the unprovoked physical assault on a student by the master in charge of discipline in a public school resulting in physical injuries and psychological trauma amounted to a violation of Article 11 of the Constitution. The Commission informed the Ministry of Education to take appropriate disciplinary measures against the teacher responsible for the violation and directed the principal of a public school to implement a long term procedure to apply the content in circular No.2005/17 relating to the conduct of discipline within schools to his school and to keep the Commission informed of its progress.

3.3 *Suo Motu* inquiries

The Commission intervened in several issues exercising its suo motu (on its own motion) power under Section 14 of the Act. Often, issues meriting intervention are identified through media monitoring and individuals bringing such issues to the attention of the Commission. In total, the Commission launched 17 suo motu inquiries into different incidents, such as the following: (For a full list of suo motu inquiries see appendix 3)

- **Inquiry into the death of a person during a clash between the police and the organizers of a function in Embilipitiya**

The HRCSL launched an investigation into the death of a person resulting from a clash between the police and the organizers of a function in Embilipitiya. The incident was brought to the notice of the Commission through media reports which reported that the person had died of multiple injuries sustained by falling off the upper floor of a house during the clash. However, the Commission halted the investigation as the family of the deceased person filed a fundamental rights application in the Supreme Court, which precludes the Commission from pursuing an investigation.

- **Inquiry into the incidents of a politician forcing two school Principals in Kalutara and Matugama to enroll children to Grade 1 of the two schools**

Pursuant to media reports of a politician forcefully entering the premises of a school in Kalutara and forcing the principal to enroll a child in the school and another incident involving the same politician attempting to strangle a school principal in Matugama and threatening to commit suicide over a similar demand, the Commission launched an investigation into the incidents. At the same time, the Commission wrote to the Western Province Ministry of Education calling for details of action taken by the Ministry in this regard.

- **Intervention in the demolition of homes in Kajimawatte, Colombo**

Responding to a report in the media of a protest by the residents of Kajimawatte, Colombo against the demolition of their homes without prior notice, HRCSL intervened exercising its suo motu power. Pursuant to a fact-finding visit to the locality, the Commission identified several issues as requiring immediate intervention, including emergency shelters for the families who were evicted. The Commission called a meeting of relevant authorities regarding the eviction, bringing to their attention the lack of prior notice received by the residents and proposed alternative measures which could have been taken during the eviction. The Commission requested the authorities to plan the relocation or resettlement of the said community promptly.

CHAPTER 4:

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

- 4.1. Thematic sub-committees**
- 4.2. Studies conducted**
- 4.3. Monitoring activities**

04

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

4.1 Thematic sub-committees

HRCSL in keeping with its mandate to provide advice and recommendations to the Government of Sri Lanka on policy issues to promote respect for and protect Human Rights, appointed nine (09) Sub-Committees on specific thematic issues. The Sub-Committees were expected to review legislation, policies, and official practices pertaining to each theme in order to make recommendations to the Commission on the policy interventions to be made to the Government of Sri Lanka as well as to advise the Commission on respective themes in regard to making necessary representations to international human rights mechanisms. The membership of the sub-committees comprises experts and civil society activists. Each Committee is chaired by one or more Commissioners while HRCSL staff members act as secretaries to each sub-committee. The sub-committees are;

1. Sub-Committee on persons with disabilities
2. Sub-Committee on education policy
3. Sub-Committee on the Rights of LGBTIQ Persons
4. Sub-Committee on Plantation Workers' Rights
5. Sub-Committee on prevention of torture and custodial violence
6. Sub-Committee on Gender
7. Sub-Committee on rights of elders
8. Sub-Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural rights
9. Sub-Committee on migrant workers' rights

During 2016, many of the sub-committees were engaged in identifying issues of priority within the scope of each thematic area. For instance, the sub-committee on rights of elders identified as areas requiring its intervention the adequacy of policies and legislation to safeguard the rights of elders, access to services for elders including to healthcare and legal aid, the need for an international convention for the protection of elders; the sub-committee on persons with disabilities discussed the passage of the

disability rights bill and the HRCSL's recommendations on the bill; the sub-committee on the Rights of LGBTIQ Persons identified legislative changes pertaining to the rights of LGBTIQ persons, monitoring of the implementation of the circulars on issuance of Gender Certificates, Government support for medical needs of transgender persons, sex education in the school curriculum as some of the areas that would require intervention; the philosophy of education, teacher development, structure of schools and content of programmes, and the need to regulate preschool education were identified as areas requiring further study.

4.2 Studies conducted

The Commission launched a multidisciplinary Study of Children deprived of Liberty. The study entailed 12 visits to child care institutions. The multidisciplinary team which undertook the research consisted of a lawyer, a psychologist, and a social worker. The team was assisted by the coordinators and staff of the regional offices in carrying out the study. Recommendations are to be presented to the state officials such as the Department of Probation, Commissioners of probation, National Child Protection Authority, Ministry of Women and child affairs in 2017.

4.3 Monitoring activities

Under Articles 11 and 28(2) of the Acts mandate, the Commission is empowered to visit places of detention to monitor the wellbeing of detainees and to make recommendations to improve conditions of detention with the objective of ensuring the rights of detainees are respected and protected. Exercising its powers, the Commission conducts unannounced (surprise) visits to places of detention throughout the year, including in the night and during weekends. These visits are carried out both by the head office and by regional offices. Apart from regular monitoring of police stations, the Commission also visits other places of detention such as prisons, remand homes, homes for children, homes for the disabled, and immigration detention centres. The Commission conducts investigations into allegations of torture and illegal treatment made by detainees during these visits.

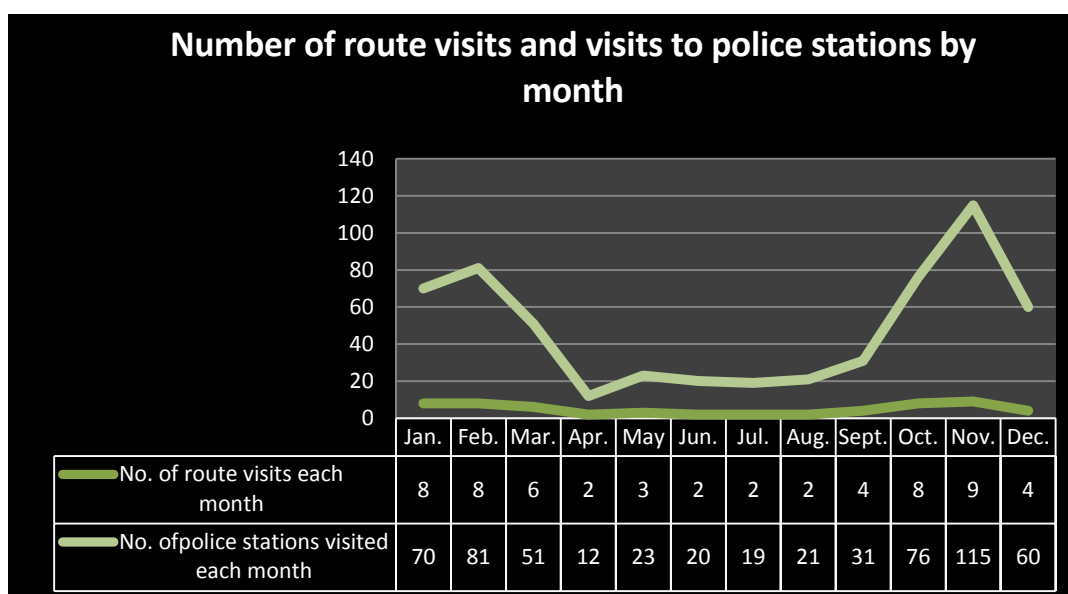
- **Monitoring of police stations**

In 2016, the Commission, through its head office, made 579 visits to police stations. The visits are conducted on 16 identified routes spanning the entire country. The objective of these visits is to eliminate incidents of torture in Sri Lanka through efficient proactive and reactive measures, to initiate steps to identify officers who commit such violations, and recommend remedial action, in addition to coordinate and

collaborate with other relevant government and non-governmental institutions to prevent the incidence of torture.

Route (No.)	Total route visits in 2016
Dematagoda – Modara (1-A)	04
Maradana – Piliyandala (1-B)	03
Narahenpita – Kollupitiya (1-C)	07
Mt. Lavinia – Aluthgama (2)	08
Kadawatha – Kegalla (3)	04
Maharagama- Ratnapura (4)	03
Beyond Ratnapura- Kalawana – Udawalawa (5)	02
Beyond Kurunegala – Abanpola (6)	01
Minuwangoda- Kuliypitiya (7)	01
Naranmala – Anamaduwa (8)	02
Wattala – Negombo (9)	07
Wellampitiya – Yatiyantota – Awissawella (10)	04
Peliyagoda – Dompe (11)	08
Kochchikade-Kalpitiya (12)	04
Dodangoda- Matugama (13)	01
Wewelwatta – Panamura (14)	00
Total Route visits	58
Total number of Police station visits	579

The following graph illustrates the distribution of route visits during the year by month and the number of police stations visited during each month by the HRCSL head office. (See Chapter 7 for details of visits to police stations carried out by the regional offices)



Certain common issues were identified during these visits, including:

- Failure to follow due process during arrest
- Ill-treatment and torture in custody
- Delay in producing before courts
- Overcrowding and lack of basic amenities in the cells

HRCSL repeatedly highlights these observations in its policy interventions to address torture, ill-treatment, and conditions of detention.

▪ **Monitoring of other places of detention (non-police stations)**

Every month, the Commission makes at least two visits to places of detention that are not police stations. These visits are usually conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of the Commission. During visits to prison, the Commission observed overcrowding and lack of adequate access to health facilities, which were in certain instances addressed on site following consultations with the authorities. Any lapses in protection and conditions of detention observed in other places of detention are brought promptly to the attention of relevant authorities. (See Chapter 7 for details of monitoring visits to other places of detention carried out by the regional offices)

Institution	No. of visits by Head Office
Prisons	14
Terrorist Investigation Division(TID)	14
Child Care Homes	13
Gazette places of Detention	1
Rehabilitation Centre	-
Elders Homes	-
Foreign National Holding Center	3
Total	45

[Monitoring visits to other places of detention]

▪ **Other monitoring activities**

The Commission facilitated the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms by appointing a focal point at the Commission to receive and respond to complaints regarding threats and harassment of those participating in the consultation process.

Additionally, the Commission made several fact-finding visits and follow-up visits to different locations in discharging its mandate and investigated into a plethora of issues

from the denial of education rights to a child to environmental issues plaguing different areas of the country.

- HRCSL made a follow-up visit to the Rathupaswala area subsequent to its report on the responsibility of government institutions on the right to drinking water issued in 2014 in response to an attack on a protest by the inhabitants of the area against water contamination caused by the operation of a factory. A review meeting on the issue was also held with the Young Journalists Association of Sri Lanka.
- A Fact-finding visit was made to Kuliypitiya on the issue of a child facing danger of denial of his right to education on the suspicion of him being affected with HIV/AIDS.
- Another visit was made to investigate the explosions due to the conflagration which took place in the Army Camp in the area of Salawa and its impact on civilians.
- The Commission visited Ambuluwawa in Kandy to inspect the environmental pollution caused by the garbage disposal area, which has caused severe health hazards and environmental issues to the public in the area.
- Taking on the task of monitoring relief efforts in the aftermath of natural disasters, the Commission made visits to the victims of the landslides in Aranayake and Meeriyabedda, and monitoring of flood affected areas during the heavy rains in 2016.

CHAPTER 5:

EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

- 5.1. Public awareness raising**
- 5.2. Engagement with the media**
- 5.3. Engagement with civil society**
- 5.4. Mentoring**

05 EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

5.1 Public awareness raising

As mandated by the Act, the Commission strives to actively engage in raising public awareness and sensitivity on issues of human rights. The Commission considers the public an integral part of their work as the very purpose for its existence is to promote and protect the human rights of the citizenry. Therefore, the year 2016 is marked by many important events in realizing this objective.

▪ International Human Rights Day

The International Human Rights Day organized by the HRCSL was held on 9th December 2016 at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies auditorium, BMICH, Colombo with the participation of members of the civil society, security forces, UN agencies, the diplomatic corps, and Government officials.



The celebration of International Human Rights Day 2016

Based on the theme ‘Stand up for someone’s rights today’, the Chairperson in her welcome address emphasized that we have completed a full cycle of the protection of Human Rights comprising four main stages: recognizing the Human Rights Standards; recognizing Human Rights Mechanisms; facilitating Human Rights Education; and recognizing our duty towards the protection of Human Rights, while also identifying the acceptance of diversity as the greatest challenge in standing for the rights of others in today’s world.

The keynote speaker was the programme coordinator of the ‘Dabindu’ collective, a workers’ collective representing women workers in Sri Lanka’s Katunayake Free Trade Zone, who shared her experiences of 21 years working for the advancement of women in the Free Trade Zone. In addition, several other human rights activists working on issues such as harassment of women, disability rights, and women empowerment shared their experiences of ‘standing up for the rights of others’.



A disability rights activist addressing the audience

▪ **International Women’s Day commemoration**



Logo of the campaign

The theme for the 2016 International Women’s Day commemoration was “A World without Her?”. Several events with an island wide reach were conducted as part of the commemoration. Mr. Changraguptha Thenuwara of the University of Visual and Performing Arts volunteered to design a logo for the campaign in keeping with the overall theme.

The highlight of the event was the panel discussion organized by the Commission inviting a diverse panel of women who demonstrated unique leadership qualities in various sectors. The panel consisted of a female technician from the apparel sector; a member of the Central Province Provincial Council; Head of the Civil Society Resource Protection of the Monaragala District; A HIV infected civil society activist from the Positive Women Network; the Secretary of the Mullaitivu District Citizens Committee; a young female lawyer; and two civil society activists in leadership roles. The objective of the panel discussion was to highlight hidden women leadership in the country that goes unacknowledged.



A panelist addressing the gathering



Another panelist sharing her experiences

Dr. Saumya Liyanage of the Visual and Performing Arts University of Sri Lanka delivered the keynote speech, sharing interesting insights into the role of women in society from a male perspective. Dr. Liyanage spoke of the multiplicity of roles played by women in the family as well as the wider society, the challenges they encounter as women, and the colonization of the female body by the society.

As part of the commemoration, a sticker campaign was launched in order to raise awareness among the general public on the importance of women and their rights. Stickers depicting the theme of 2016 were displayed in long distance as well as short distance buses originating from the Pettah bus stand followed by an informal discussion with commuters in an attempt to disseminate the message of the importance of protecting women’s rights.



Dr.Saumya Liyanage delivering the keynote speech

Further, a video competition was held which was open to school children as well as to an open category of any other interested parties. The HRCSL intended through this competition to further encourage the general public to envisage and understand the role played by women in contemporary society. The competition was publicized through Sinhala, Tamil, and English newspapers. In response, the Commission received seven videos (two from school children and 5 from the open category). Unfortunately, none of the videos qualified for selection.

▪ **Display of digital signage**

Embracing the Digital age, the HRCSL entered into an agreement with Abans Pvt Ltd to display Digital signage carrying important messages on the right of people in three prominent places around the city of Colombo for a period of one month. The Company agreed to display the messages at one of the locations (R.A. de Mel Mawatha) for an additional two weeks free of charge. The displays also carried 12 Second video animations on the theme of ‘Stop Torture’ developed by the Commission. The Commission chose this mode of display for the ability it afforded in disseminating its messages amongst a larger audience.

▪ **commemorated the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**

HRCSL commemorated the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture based on the theme “**Stop Torture**”. The island wide campaign was launched at the head office of the HRCSL and observed by its ten regional offices. The national campaign was launched with a public march and a commemorative event held at the Independence Square attended by His



Participants of the public march



Performance at the commemorative event

Excellency, the President and the Hon. Minister of Law and Order together with various groups such as religious leaders, representatives of independent commissions, government officials, personnel of the tri-forces, the Police, Civil Security Defense personnel, school children, youth, civil society groups, family members of victims of torture and members of the public.

- **Hosting the workshop on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in relation to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Sex Characteristics (SOGI Rights)**

The Commission hosted a regional workshop on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in relation to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Sex Characteristics (SOGI Rights), organized by the APF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to strengthen the capacity of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Civil-Society organizations in the region in engaging with LGBTIQ communities to strengthen advocacy for promotion and protection of their human rights. This included a blended learning course consisting of two components; an online course and a face to face workshop held in Colombo. Representatives from 07 countries participated at the workshop.

- **Resources for mobile services**

Meanwhile, the Commission provided resources for mobile services organized by the Ministry of National Co-Existence, Dialogue and Official Languages for marginalized groups in urban areas of Colombo.

- **Invitations received by the Commissioners and senior officials of the Commission as resource persons**

As in other years, the Commissioners and senior officials of the Commission were invited as resource persons to many diverse fora both within the public sector as well as by civil society organizations. The Directorate of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the Sri Lanka Army invited officers of the HRCSL to a seminar on Minority rights and Human Rights for army personnel, while the Commission was invited to a workshop for Investigation officers of Postal management training college, Colombo, and to a session on patients' Rights/Human Rights, for nurses at the Colombo South teaching hospital. The Heart to Heart Organization invited the Commission to a workshop on Human Rights and Right to Identity for transgender people.

- **Participation at external events**

The Commission also participated in many events organized by external parties such as the Open Dialogue Session with Civil Society on the Office of the Missing Person and the National Consultation Process organized by the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms (SCRM).

5.2 Engagement with the media

As part of its outreach efforts, the Commission engages with the media to keep the public informed of critical issues, as well as on the activities of the Commission. The Commission employed traditional print and electronic media well as online platforms for promotional activities.

- **Human Rights Snippet campaign**

HRCSL held discussions with the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) to broadcast the “Human Rights snippet campaign” in both Sinhala and Tamil Languages through National and regional channels of the SLBC. The initial agreement was for 5 months which was later extended to 1 year. In 2016 the Commission aired three snippets each related to women's rights the freedom from torture respectively.

- **Engagement with traditional print and electronic media**

A press conference was conducted on 29.06.2016 to brief the public on the Anti-Torture Campaign of the Commission to commemorate the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

The Commission also conducted a training programmed on Human Rights for Journalists in the Kilinochchi and Jaffna Districts.

- **Use of online platforms**

The Commission initiated uploading all its recommendations on the Commission’s website. The Commission also uses the APF bulletin to disseminate its work to a wider audience in the region and globally.

5.3 Engagement with civil society

The commission, especially via the regional offices, engages closely with the civil society. It views the civil society as a great resource which enriches the work of the Commission, while the Commission in turn contributes to the work of the Civil Society on human rights. HRCSL engages with the civil society in numerous ways, such as:

- **Regional civil society coordinating committees**

The close cooperation fostered by the Commission through the civil society coordinating committees at regional level assists the Commission in identifying human rights violations or situations warranting the intervention of the Commission. The sub-

committees also assist the Commission in monitoring the protection of human rights in the public sphere.

- **Civil Society representatives as members of the thematic sub-committees**

Prominent members of the civil society and civil society organizations are members of the thematic sub-committees, further contributing to the work of the Commission. The sub-committees are an opportunity for the Commission to benefit from the expertise of civil society members in enriching the policy level efforts of the Commission.

- **Participation at events organized by civil society organizations**

Commission participated at many events organized by civil society organizations, such as the panel discussion organized by the Economic, Social & Cultural Rights Programme of Law and Society Trust on the right to information, the launch of the report on 'Transition in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Service in Sri Lanka (2004- 2015)' organized by The Asia Foundation, the workshop on 'Prevention of Sexual Violence: Tackling Stigma in Sri Lanka' organized by the British High Commission and FOKUS, and the Consultation on Gender Responsive Policy Making organized by the Women and Media Collective.

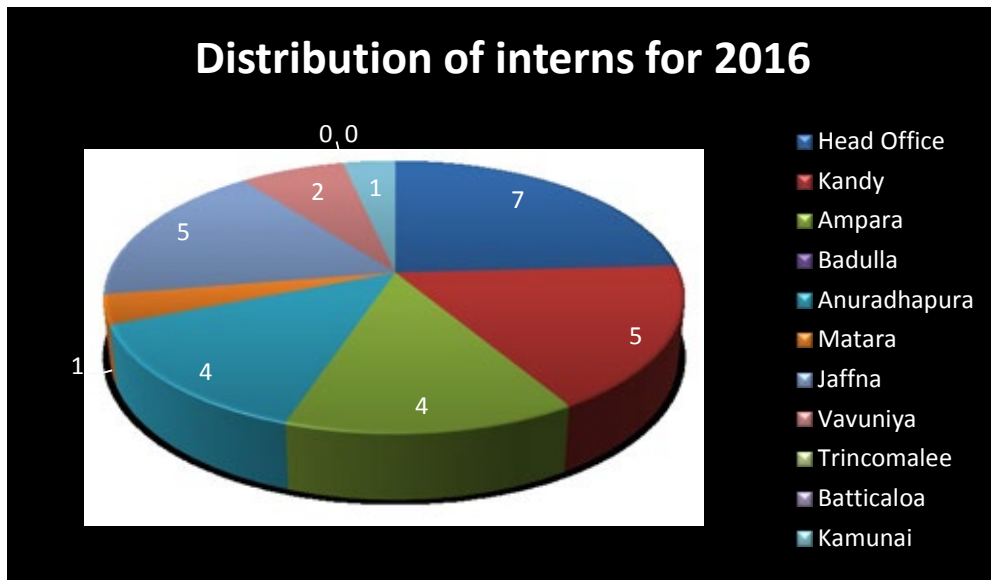
The chairperson attended the Sub Regional Workshop for Lawyers on Public Interest Litigation and access to Justice for Migrant Workers organized by Solidarity Centre, Sri Lanka and in a follow up meeting regarding the initial national networking meeting on protecting and promoting freedom of religious belief in South Asia organized by Minority Rights Group International.

5.4 Mentoring

After a hiatus of many years, the Commission revived the HRCSL internship programme due to the conviction that investing in the youth of the country, especially in the promotion and protection of human rights, is a right step forward. Applications were called from undergraduates and recent graduates of any discipline to serve on a voluntary basis throughout 2017. The objective of the programme was to give the successful candidates exposure to the role of HRCSL, promotion and protection activities of the Commission including research, and to foster commitment to public interest activities in the youth. The internships were for a minimum period of 3 months, and the interns had the choice of serving it at the Head Office or at a

Regional Office. The Commission received 282 applications during 2016 with 24 successful candidates being placed at the head office (07) and regional offices (17).

A feedback session was held in June 2016, to receive feedback from the interns on the learning they obtained from the programme and on means of strengthening the programme.



CHAPTER 6:

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

- 6.1. Promote compliance with international Human Rights obligations**
- 6.2. Strengthening ties with the Asia Pacific Forum (APF)**
- 6.3. Submission of reports and responses to international bodies**
- 6.4. Other collaborations with international organizations and experts**

06 INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

6.1 Promote compliance with international Human Rights obligations

In 2016 the recently appointed Commission continued to actively communicate and cooperate with international and regional human rights organizations and protection mechanisms in promoting compliance with international human rights obligations of Sri Lanka.

The active engagement and commitment of the Commission for the promotion and protection of human rights was acknowledged by the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights in the letter dated 08 March 2016 in which the High Commissioner commended the work of the Commission (See appendix 5). The commitment and work of the Commission gained further recognition when UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon commended the work of the HRCSL in his speech during his visit to Sri Lanka in September 2016. The Commission met the Secretary General as well as officials from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) during 2016.

In the Report of the OHCHR on Sri Lanka assessing the progress made in the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 30/1, on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka between October 2015 and January 2017, the OHCHR has acknowledged that it continued to work closely with the HRCSL. The report further states that “Even though the Human Rights Commission has been vocal and active with regard to crucial issues, its potential in advising on legislative processes remains underutilized. The High Commissioner reiterates to the Government the importance of supporting the Human Rights Commission, of efficiently and effectively engaging with it, and of taking into account its recommendations”. The report also recommends supporting “the Human Rights Commission, including by ensuring it receives adequate resources in order to fulfil its mandate to the fullest, including the review of legislation and draft legislation”

HRCSL met several special mandate holders of the UN in 2016. Those were the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges & Lawyers, UN Special Rapporteur

on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantee of Non-recurrence, the Special Rapporteur on Torture & other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment, the UN Special Rapporteur on Minorities, and the UN Special Rapporteur on HR Defenders. The chairperson and Commissioners discussed issues of mutual relevance with the representatives, and acknowledged certain issues highlighted by the special mandate holders as needing immediate responses.

Both the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges & Lawyers and the Special Rapporteur on Minorities have in their respective reports pursuant to visits to Sri Lanka have acknowledged that “new and highly credible and competent commissioners were appointed to head the Human Rights Commission” but also placing emphasis on the fact that “the Commission continues, to face challenges, including inadequate financial, physical and human resources, as well as insufficient staff training and expertise, institutional resistance from government entities, including the police, as well as the absence of enforcement powers to ensure that final determinations and recommendations are implemented are additional obstacles”. Both these reports recommend extending “full institutional cooperation to these institutions and mechanisms, ensuring that sufficient human and financial resources are provided”

The Special Rapporteur on Torture & other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment reiterated the concern of the HRCSL “over the recently proposed amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, which, contrary to international human rights standards, denies a suspect access to a lawyer until his or her statement has been recorded, thereby eliminating any safeguard against torture and ill-treatment and defeating the Code’s very purpose, and also impinging on the fundamental right to a fair trial as guaranteed in article 13 (3) of the Constitution”. The report, reiterating the need for institutional development of the HRCSL, further recommended that the authorities “Study and incorporate the recommendations made by the National Human Rights Commission in relation to the drafting of new national security legislation... Digitize all registrations and records of all persons deprived of their liberty and make them accessible to the National Human Rights Commission... Authorize and facilitate regular, effective and independent monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty by international and national bodies, including the National Human Rights Commission ...”

Additionally, the chairperson also participated in the review of Sri Lanka's periodic report to the UN Committee on Migrant Workers Rights via teleconferencing, and highlighted pertinent issues to the Committee.

In furtherance of its commitment to foster compliance with international human rights obligations, the Commission participated at several meetings with Government entities

such as with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 2nd Periodic Report of SL to the UN Committee on the Migrant Workers Rights, with the same Ministry to discuss the Preliminary observations of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in a discussion on the concluding observations on the 8th periodic report to the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee) at the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and civil society organizations such as the consultation on the draft response to the request for information from the Special Rapporteur on Persons with Disabilities organized by the Law & Society Trust.

6.2 Strengthening ties with the Asia Pacific Forum

The chairperson attended the Annual General Meeting of the APF held in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2016 to share the progress made by the Commission and the situation of human rights in Sri Lanka. The APF is a regional network of NHRIs supporting to build stronger National Human Rights Institutions, through knowledge sharing, expertise, and collaboration at the regional and international level. It is an important platform for the Commission to connect with its counterparts in the region.

6.3 Submission of reports and responses to international bodies

In October 2016 HRCSL forwarded its report to the UN Committee against Torture, which reviewed the 5th periodic report of Sri Lanka. One of the Commissioners participated in the session held from 14 – 17 November 2016 in Geneva. In the report, the Commission set out its concerns relating to the prevalence of torture and other forms of ill-treatment in Sri Lanka, the measures taken by the Commission to counter the incidence of torture, and recommended the government to take such measures as, amending the definition of torture in Section 12 of the Convention Against Torture Act and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Act no 22 of 1994 to expand the definition of torture to all acts of torture, including those causing severe suffering, in accordance with article 1 of the Convention Against Torture, the conduct of arresting officers, monitoring of places of detention, and the ratification of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

6.4 Other collaborations with international organizations and experts

HRCSL broadened its international collaborations through bi-lateral meetings with multiple entities. The Commissioners met with members of the foreign diplomatic corps such as the High Commissioner of South Africa to discuss issues of common interest and possible collaborations. Representatives of several international organizations also met the HRCSL such as the mission from the European Union and the Head of the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The chairperson attended the 29th General Meeting of the International Co-ordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Geneva from 21 – 23 March 2016. It is the global alliance of national human rights institutions and provided an important platform to meet with personnel of the Alliance and other fellow NHRIs in order to share experiences, thoughts, and ideas. HRCSL found the meeting especially important as it gave the Commission the opportunity to communicate to the global community of NHRIs the vision and plans of the new HRCSL as an independent commission.

Further, a member of the Commission represented HRCSL at the World Congress on the Death Penalty held in Norway from 21 – 23 June 2016. The congress was an occasion for the Commission to discuss its stance on the death penalty at an international forum, pursuant to the recommendation issued by the Commission to the Government recommending the abolition of the death penalty in January 2016 which drew international attention. The forum was also important to learn of and from global developments relating to the death penalty.

CHAPTER 7:

REGIONAL & SUB-OFFICES

7.1 Overview

7.2 Complaints handled

7.3 Monitoring activities

7.4 Education and outreach activities

07 REGIONAL & SUB-OFFICES

7.1 Overview

The Commission operates through 10 regional offices (Ampara, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kalmunai, Kandy, Matara, Trincomalee and Vavuniya), and six sub-offices (Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaithivu, Nuwara Eliya, Polonnaruwa, and Puttalam,) in order to increase protection of human rights and bring the work of the Commission closer to the people. The majority of the population accesses the Commission through these offices. Regional and sub-offices therefore play a crucial role in the effective discharge of the Commission's mandate, going beyond that of a mere conduit between the head office and the people in the regions. These offices conduct a full range of activities including receiving complaints, investigating into allegations of violations, providing consultations on alleged violations of human rights, mediating in the settlement of disputes, referral of violations to the head office for recommendations, carrying out monitoring activities, conducting awareness raising at regional level, and collaborating and coordinating with civil society organizations.

7.2 Complaints handled

▪ Complaints received

In 2016 regional and sub-offices received 4202 complaints in total. The highest received were complaints relating to personal liberty 796 (19%). While 769(18%) complaints were on inaction of government officers, at 749, complaints in relation to employment were the third highest number of complaints received. Overall, the regional and sub-offices witnessed only a negligible decrease in complaints received in 2016, which is reflective of continued public trust in the Commission.

Types of Complaints	Region											Regional Offices (total)
	Ampara	Anuradhapura	Badulla	Batticaloa	Jaffna	Killinochchi Sub Office	Kalmunai	Kandy	Matara	Trincomalee	Vavuniya	
Personal Liberty	16	116	13	41	87	24	50	106	175	48	120	796
Torture (physical and mental)	2	36	1	7	2	-	10	27	27	7	10	129
General Harassments	-	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	52
Sexual Harassments	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	2	6
Threats	1	-	9	12	38	14	17	23	68	14	33	229
Degrading treatments	3	-	1	-	12	5	10	11	4	2	14	62
Arbitrary Arrests/Detention	9	51	2	14	28	3	10	34	67	12	21	251
Detention conditions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
Death in custody	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Abductions	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Extra-judicial Killings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2
Encounter Deaths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prisoner's Rights	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	6
Missing Persons ⁱ	1	1	-	8	5	1	3	5	2	11	14	51
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Other Civil and Political Rights	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	1	3	-	-	9
Freedom of Expression	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Freedom of Assembly	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Freedom of Association	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Freedom of Religion	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Freedom of Movement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Right to Information	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Employment	43	161	55	36	39	6	75	165	120	19	30	749
Education	6	30	24	21	30	3	37	103	82	7	14	357
- Admission to popular schools	-	6	6	3	1	-	7	81	48	-	5	157
- Other complaints on education rights	6	24	18	18	29	3	30	22	34	7	9	200
State Welfare Services	5	12	1	26	13	5	6	23	28	2	2	123
Infrastructure Utilities	13	20	16	1	1	-	6	14	30	1	8	110
Complaints Relating to Vote Registration	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Complaints about Inactions of Gov. Entities	33	117	33	102	80	12	90	190	36	46	30	769

Police	16	64	26	71	62	7	68	92	20	11	27	464
Other Gov. Authorities	17	53	7	31	18	5	22	98	16	35	3	305
Child's Rights	2	3	1	1	2	-	2	-	1	-	2	14
Rights of Differently-abled	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	2	7
Language Rights	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Migrant Worker's Rights	-	1	1	13	1	1	3	5	-	3	5	33
LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex & Questioning)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health	-	2	3	2	1	-	2	2	1	-	-	13
Land & Property Rights	44	161	37	36	14	61	35	69	89	27	53	626
IDP/ Returning Refugees	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	14	17
Environmental	-	1	2	8	-	-	4	14	11	-	-	40
Administrative matters	1	34	18	34	7	8	7	40	33	22	8	212
Permits/License	-	2	8	1	-	1	3	3	2	2	2	24
Misuse/Abuse of power	1	23	-	29	6	7	-	5	18	13	5	107
Other administrative matters	-	9	10	4	1	-	4	32	13	7	1	81
Rights of Women	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	2	23	1	-	29
Elder Rights	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not within mandate/ non-accepted	24	30	32	5	11	7	-	112	30	15	26	292
Total	187	690	236	332	291	129	318	846	666	192	315	4202

▪ Statistics of cases concluded

Categories of complaints	Regional Office											
	Anpara	Vavuniya	Badulla	Kalmunai	Kandy	Matara	Trincomalee	Kilinochchi	Anuradhapura	Jaffna	Batticaloa	Total
No FR violations	33	79	82	-	305	187	36	17	66	74	33	912
Settlement	33	94	23	52	59	35	11	49	51	102	52	561
Relief granted	34	34	31	159	58	77	29	10	111	19	136	698
Referred to other authorities	-	-	-	1	05	52	1	-	-	2	-	61
Pending judicial proceedings	-	-	-	-	-	42	4	7	-	11	36	100
Complainant	30	-	78	40	130	97	20	14	104	17	45	575

lacks interest												
Not within the Mandate	35	-	54	-	110	99	18	6	-	6	-	328
Withdrawn	5	43	4	-	13	37	5	1	20	8	9	145
Time barred (prescribed)	-	-	-	-	07	27	3	-	-	-	1	38
Total	170	250	272	252	687	653	127	104	352	239	312	3418

7.3 Monitoring activities

The monitoring activities of the regional and sub-offices are crucial in expanding the reach of the Commission in terms of its mandate to monitor places of detention to ensure the rights of detainees. The staff of these offices carries out the majority of the monitoring activities of the Commission, including regular visits to police stations, as well as periodic visits to other places of detention within the region.

Regional Offices	Ampara	Anuradhapura	Badulla	Batticaloa	Jaffna	Kalmunai	Kandy	Matara	Trincomalee	Vavuniya
Police Stations	140	296	80	140	211	72	238	479	100	158
Prisons	-	03	01	18	04	-	02	03	05	04
TID Visits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	06	-	09
Child Care Homes Visits	03	08	04	08	02	08	02	04	03	-
Gazetted Places of Detention	03	03	-	01	-	-	-	-	01	-
Rehabilitation Cent.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	07
Elders Home	-	04	-	02	-	01	-	-	-	-

[Visits to places of detention in 2016]

Regional and sub-offices also regularly monitor the human rights situations in the region and intervene in appropriate circumstances. For instance, the Kandy regional office monitored and intervened in the collapse of the garbage dump in Ambuluwawa in Kandy, carrying out several inquiries with the participation of officials from the municipal council, the provincial council, divisional secretariat etc. The relevant authorities were advised to take all necessary steps to ensure that the resettlement is done promptly and to take measures to prevent such incidents from occurring again.

The Ampara regional office intervened in the issue of military occupation of private land in Shashtrawela and Raagamwela in Panama. The landowners who had been displaced during the conflict have been intimidated by an unidentified armed group

when they had returned to their lands before the military had taken over occupation. After inquiry, the Commission recommended the government to follow due-process in acquiring private property for military occupation and further recommended compensation or assignment of alternative land to the victims.

Staff of the Trincomalee regional office monitored the hearings of the Trincomalee Zonal Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanism held at Verugal DS Office on 26th August 2016 and the Trincomalee District Secretariat on 28th August 2016. The staff of the Commission ensured the witnesses testifying faced no intimidation or harassment within the premises.

7.4 Education and outreach activities

Regional and sub-offices conduct education and outreach programmes at regional level providing the Commission the potential of reaching a wider audience in its dissemination activities. At the same time, the Civil Society Meetings convened by regional offices at the regional level enabled identifying issues requiring the attention of the Commission which were referred to relevant government stakeholders at the Regional Coordinating Committee meetings in order to provide solutions. These meetings were held regularly during 2016.

Further, the Regional and sub-offices commemorated the International Women’s Day, the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, and the International human rights day at regional level with a variety of activities to mark the days.

These offices also conducted education and training for various institutions and communities, and provided resource support to awareness raising programmes organized by external parties. The target audiences are diverse and include school children, civil society organizations, journalists, public officials, and the general public.

Regional Office	Number of Programmes
Ampara	27
Anuradapura	09
Badulla	03
Batticaloa	44
Jaffna	13
Kandy	14
Kalmunai	22
Matara	07
Trincomalee	03
Vavuniya	03

[Human Rights awareness programs conducted and resource assistance provided by the Regional Offices in 2016]

CHAPTER 8:

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

- 8.1. Staff development programmes
- 8.2. Employment benefits
- 8.3. Employment and vacancies
- 8.4. Annual financial statements

08 ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

8.1 Staff development programmes

Since the tenure of the current Commission began, HRCSL has strived to develop professional excellence and capacity of the staff. The Commission understands that institutional excellence is essential to respond effectively to violations of human rights and promote human rights. Therefore, the staff of both the head office and regional offices is encouraged and required to benefit from the many training opportunities available, both locally and internationally, to improve their professionalism, efficiency, understanding of challenges, and the ability to utilize their skills to provide assistance to the communities they serve. Similarly, the staff of the Commission too requested and showed enthusiasm to participate in and benefit from the many training opportunities made available to them in 2016.

- **Local training opportunities**

- **Capacity assessment of IT skills**

As the IT knowledge among the staff of the Commission appeared to be inadequate, the Commission carried out a capacity assessment of IT skills among staff in 2016. The staff was assessed on their familiarity with the basic MS Office package and the use of internet and email by the University of Moratuwa. An intensive training is scheduled for 2017 based on the outcome of the assessment.

- **Training on the newly introduced referral mechanism**

The staff of the Investigation & Inquiry Division was given training on the newly introduced referral mechanism for Complaints and on the Inquiries & Investigations Procedure while the Commission undertook the preparation of a Manual on Inquiries & Investigations Procedure.

- **Sensitization on LGBTIQ persons**

A training was conducted to enhance the capacity of HRCSL officials to work with LGBTIQ persons with the objective of sensitizing the staff on the importance of

treating every citizen equally, and with respect regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity and to enable them to identify specific human rights violations LGBTIQ persons are subjected to.

- **A series of special lectures**

A series of special lectures was conducted for the staff throughout the year in an attempt to keep the staff abreast of current developments in the human rights and related spheres in Sri Lanka, on such topics as the Social and Legal perspectives on Death Penalty, use of Aesthetics to Promote Human Rights Values, and a special discussion on the Report of the Public Consultation Committee on Constitutional Reform and HRCSL Proposals for Constitutional Reform.

- **Training on international refugee protection**

Four Investigation Officers participated in the training on international refugee protection organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) while the UNHCR conducted an orientation on activities of the UNHCR for HRCSL Officials and Interns.

- **Training on minimizing audit queries**

The Secretary to the Commission participated in the training on “How to minimize Audit Queries” organized by the Association of Public Finance Accountants of Sri Lanka at Training Institute of Technology Professionals.

▪ **International programmes**

Staff of the Commission attended several training programmes organized by the APF especially tailored for staff of national human rights institutions.

- Asia Pacific Forum Blended learning programme on human rights education was held in Bangkok, Thailand.
- Asia Pacific Forum Blended Learning Course on allegations on Torture was held from 06– 09 June 2016 in Malaysia.
- Asia Pacific Forum Communications Network collaboration workshop was held from 26-28 April 2016 in Nepal.

An officer of the HRCSL participated at the capacity building programme on Human Rights Advocacy and Migrant Workers in the Middle – East held from 30 October – 3 November 2016 in Doha, Qatar organized by the Diplomacy Training Programme.

8.2 Employment Benefits

The Commission took a decision to implement the Public Administration circular on maternity leave which hitherto was not fully complied with, for the employees of HRCSL.

8.3 Employment and vacancies

In 2016, the Commission received approval for 233 cadre positions. However, the absence of an approved scheme of recruitment for the positions prevented recruitment.

At the same time, two inquiring officers and one project assistant were recruited to address the backlog of inquiries through a project funded by the Government of Switzerland.

8.4 Annual financial statements

HRCSL received a majority of its funding from the treasury to carry out core activities. However, the Commission also acknowledges and appreciates the financial assistance extended by external donors for some of the programmatic work of the Commissions. Accordingly, the Swiss Confederation extended financial support to clear the backlog of inquiries; the UNDP for identified programmatic work of the Commission such as redeveloping the HRCSL website to make information more accessible to the public, enhance IT capacity of the staff to increase efficiency and effectiveness, and to celebrate the international human rights day in partnership with civil society organizations; and the APF for facilitating the participation of staff of the Commission at the South Asia blended learning course on promoting and protecting human rights in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics. This support enabled the Commission to effectively carry out its mandate in 2016. The financial support extended by external donors is as follows:

Funding Agency	Amount (Rs.)
UNDP	2,503,000.00
Swiss Confederation	2,951,962.00
APF	109,458.00
Total	5,564,420.00

The total financial provisions for each quarter of 2016 are as follows:

▪ **Financial Provision from 01.01.2016 to 31.03.2016:**

Opening Balance	-
<u>Imprest Received from Treasury</u>	
Recurrent	44,352,000.00
Capital	4,300,000.00
Other Revenue	160,087.81
Total	48,812,087.81
<u>Expenditure</u>	
PERSONNEL EMOLUMENTS	23,698,131.61
TRAVELING EXPENSES	789,582.53
SUPPLIES	936,522.83
MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE	637,981.93
SERVICES	15,733,561.63
TRANFERS	297,747.45
REHAB. & IMPR. OF CAPITAL ASSETS	-
ACQUISITION OF CAPITAL ASSETS	-
CAPACITY BUILDING	285,752.90
OTHER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (Other Investments - HR Programs)	(Other 2,505,724.76)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	44,885,005.64

▪ **Financial Provision from 01.04.2016 to 30.06.2016:**

Opening Balance	3,927,082.17
<u>Imprest Received from Treasury</u>	
Recurrent	39,916,000.00
Capital	-
Other Revenue	447,460.90

Total		44,290,543.07
<u>Expenditure</u>		
PERSONNEL EMOLUMENTS		25,403,296.73
TRAVELING EXPENSES		94,368.50
SUPPLIES		1,057,648.88
MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE		779,503.41
SERVICES		8,606,750.72
TRANFERS	-	
REHAB. & IMPR. OF CAPITAL ASSETS	-	
ACQUISITION OF CAPITAL ASSETS	-	
CAPACITY BUILDING		224,047.58
OTHER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	(Other	811,893.90
Investments - HR Programs)		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		36,977,509.72

▪ **Financial Provision from 01.07.2016 to 30.09.2016:**

Opening Balance		7,313,033.35
<u>Imprest Received from Treasury</u>		
Recurrent		30,400,000.00
Capital		2,000,000.00
Other Revenue		320,776.20
Total		40,033,809.55
<u>Expenditure</u>		
PERSONNEL EMOLUMENTS		24,361,495.14
TRAVELING EXPENSES		216,542.50
SUPPLIES		1,169,306.89
MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE		495,202.84
SERVICES		3,904,706.70
TRANFERS		721,947.22
<u>REHAB. & IMPR. OF CAPITAL ASSETS</u>		
ACQUISITION OF CAPITAL ASSETS		61,630.00
CAPACITY BUILDING		639,784.71
OTHER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	(Other	2,128,875.12
Investments - HR Programs)		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		33,699,491.12

▪ **Financial Provision from 01.10.2016 to 31.12.2016:**

Opening Balance		6,334,318.43
<u>Imprest Received from Treasury</u>		
Recurrent		56,025,000.00
Capital		5,300,000.00
Other Revenue		272,224.91
Total		67,931,543.34
<u>Expenditure</u>		
PERSONNEL EMOLUMENTS		26,717,669.48
TRAVELING EXPENSES		847,514.03
SUPPLIES		1,653,702.89
MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE		1,459,322.80
SERVICES		30,359,531.92
TRANFERS		359,159.00
REHAB. & IMPR. OF CAPITAL ASSETS		-
ACQUISITION OF CAPITAL ASSETS		1,994,866.92
CAPACITY BUILDING		1,186,270.08
OTHER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (Other Investments - HR Programs)		3,353,506.22
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		67,931,543.34

▪ **Total Annual financial provisions:**

Opening Balance	0.00
<u>Imprest Received from Treasury</u>	
Recurrent	170,693,000.00
Capital	11,600,000.00
Other Revenue	1,200,549.82
Total Receipts	183,493,549.82
<u>Expenditure</u>	

PERSONNEL EMOLUMENTS	100,180,592.96
TRAVELING EXPENSES	1,948,007.56
SUPPLIES	4,817,181.49
MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE	3,372,010.98
SERVICES	58,604,550.97
TRANSFERS	1,378,853.67
REHAB. & IMPR. OF CAPITAL ASSETS	-
ACQUISITION OF CAPITAL ASSETS	2,056,496.92
CAPACITY BUILDING	2,335,855.27
OTHER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (Other Investments - HR Programs)	8,800,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	183,493,549.82

APPENDICES

Presence of HRCSL in Sri Lanka: Map



List of recommendations:

	Case No.	Date	Subject matter
1	HRC/2694/15	07/1/2016	Admission to public schools
2	HRC/1982/15	07/1/2016	Admission to public schools
3	HRC/2497/15	01/2/2016	Admission to public schools
4	HRC/MT/398/11	21/1/2016	Arrest/ Detention
5	HRC/K/120/15	19/1/2016	Admission to public schools
6	HRC/AP/92/2015	21/1/2016	Transfers
7	HRC/3166/14	04/4/2016	Service conditions
8	HRC/2449/15	17/5/2016	Recruitment
9	HRC/2146/15	24/2/2016	Interdiction
10	HRC/3548/13	17/2/2016	Property Rights
11	HRC/K/258/15	04/28/2016	Admission to public schools
12	HRC/2444/15	20/6/2016	Nomination at election
13	HRC/2694/15	07/1/2016	Admission to public schools
14	HRC/4326/15	07/6/2016	Examination
15	HRC/2856/13	24/6/2016	Termination of employment
16	HRC/MT/49/16/N	27/6/2016	Admission to public schools
17	HRC/3939/15	12/8/2016	Admission to public schools
18	HRC/578/16	16/8/2016	Admission to public schools
19	HRC/2124/16	12/8/2016	Education : Harassment by teachers
20	HRC/K/52/16	12/8/2016	Admission to public schools
21	HRC/3358/15	10/8/2016	Admission to public schools
22	HRC/4706/15	10/8/2016	Admission to public schools
23	HRC/1622/15	09/8/2016	Torture
24	HRC/4743/14	16/8/2016	Inaction
25	HRC/K/09/16	16/8/2016	Admission to public schools
26	HRC/4504/14	16/8/2016	Promotion
27	HRC/1862/15	15/8/2016	Torture
28	HRC/3405/14	29/7/2016	Promotion
29	HRC/5005/13	12/8/2016	Transfers
30	HRC/2056/15	16/8/2016	Promotion
31	HRC/K/376/15	07/9/2016	Service conditions
32	HRC/685/16	20/9/2016	Misuse/abuse of power
33	HRC/4138/14	21/9/2016	Pension
34	HRC/AP/734/13	20/9/2016	Torture
35	HRC/2037/15	03/10/2016	Freedom of expression
36	HRC/2038/15	03/10/2016	Freedom of expression

37	HRC/1994/15	03/10/2016	Freedom of expression
38	HRC/4236/15	28/9/2016	Admission to public schools
39	HRC/08/16	03/10/2016	Admission to public schools
40	HRC/4691/14	04/10/2016	Issue re: Tender procedures
41	HRC/4718/15	22/11/2016	Admission to public schools
42	HRC/3469/15	07/12/2016	Admission to public schools
43	HRC/K/47/16	14/12/2016	Admission to public schools
44	HRC/4699/15	26/12/2016	Admission to public schools

List of *suo motu* (on its own motion) inquiries undertaken:

Date	Case No	Respondent
04/1/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/01/16 HRC/MT/28/16/N HRC/1033/16	Embilipitiya Police
23/2/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/02/16 HRC/931/16	Department of Pension
10/5/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/03/16	Principal –Kalutara Vidyalaya
12/5/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/04/16	T.I.D
05/7/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/07/16 HRC/2593/16	Ganemulla Police
14/7/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/08/16 HRC/2631/16	Zonal Director of Education Mathugama
14/7/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/09/16	I.G.P /D.I.G/T.I.Range
16/8/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/10/16	Kalutara prison
20/9/2016	HRC/MT/SUO/MOTU/01/16	Hambanthota police
22/9/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/11/16	Mahara prison
04/10/2016	HRC/K/SUO/MOTU/493/16/A HRC/114/17	Hatton police
04/10/2016	HRC/K/SUO/MOTU/477/16/w HRC/3643/16	Pussella police
06/10/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/12/16	Ganemulla Police
13/10/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/13/16	Zonal Director of Education – Kelaniya D/S, Wattala
26/10/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/14/16	National Child Protection Authority
20/11/2016	HRC/SUO/MOTU/15/16 HRC/1633/16	Ministry of Health

List of Meetings/Programmes/Workshops and other events held with the participation of the Chairperson and Commissioners of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka- 2016:

Date (2016)	Meeting/Theme of workshop/Objective
Official Meetings/Programmes	
14/01	Meeting with the Chairman of National Police Commission
01/02-03/02	Asian Region Conference on the task of Parliamentarians with regard to Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
15/02	Mapping of Sri Lanka Child Protection Network – Meeting with the Administrative Committee of the Ministry of Child Development
19/02	Discussion with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with regard to the 2 nd .Periodic Report to be sent to the United Nations Committee on Migrant Workers’ Rights
26/02	Special Meeting with Immigration and Emigration Officials
26/02	Special Meeting with the Commissioners General of Prisons
02/03	Dialogue on HIV/AIDS related problems and the Right to Education – National Child Protection Authority
09/03	Meeting organized by the Peoples’ Representation Committee on Constitutional Reforms to obtain the views of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka on Constitution Compilation
30/03	Meeting with the Hon. Attorney General
07/04	Discussion for evaluation of the implementation of National Action Plan of Eradication of Domestic Violence
25/04	Meeting with Mr. Mangala Samaraweera , Minister of Foreign Affairs
06/05	Discussion of Members including Chairmen of Independent Commissions with His Excellency the President
13/05	Creating Awareness on the activities of the Office of Missing Persons – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka
24/05	Consultation Discussion held with the relevant stakeholders with regard to the Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Sri Lanka Legal Aid Division – Ministry of Justice
08/07	Dialogue on Constitutional Reforms for Optimal performance of State Service organized by the Administrative Committee of Constitutional Sub Committee on state service
23/07	Meeting with the Chairman of Elections Commission
04/08	Meeting of Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
06/09	Discussion on Vetting Process of Sri Lanka Army personnel for United Nations Peace Keeping Operations
19/09	Participation at the inauguration of Purawara Serisara Programme
20/09	Open dialogue with the Civil Society Organizations on Office of Missing Persons and National Consultative Process
20/09	Dialogue on Procuration of Women – Ministry of Women’s Affairs
26/09-28/09	Workshop on Drafting of Constitution in simple language – Secretariat of Constitutional Council
30/09	Meeting with the Hon. Chairman of Constitutional Council
06/10	Participation at the meeting of Task Force on Counter-Procuration -Ministry of Justice
13/10	Meeting with the Hon. Chairman of Constitutional Council
24/10	Meeting with the Inspector General of Police
28/10	Participation at the Discussion on Final Observations on 8 th . Periodic Report submitted to CEDAW Committee.

09/11	National workshop on International Counter-Terrorism Legal Framework and Sri Lanka's Proposed Counter-Terrorism Act - USAID and the Ministry of Law and Order
23/11	Participation at the launching of National Action Plan on Eradication of sexual and gender based violence –Ministry of Women and Child Affairs
24/11	Meeting with Hon. Chairman of Constitutional Council
24/11	Participation at the Consultative Session on evaluation of National Housing Policy - Ministry of Housing and Construction
30/11	Universal Franchise – 85 th . Anniversary Commemoration – Elections Commission
Foreign States/Internal Organizations	
14/01	Meeting with the Officials of United Nations OHCHR
21/01	Meeting with the representatives of United Nations UNHCR Office
01/02	Meeting with the United Nations Special Rapporteur with regard to Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantee of non-recurrence
02/02	Meeting with the High Commissioner of South Africa
05/02- 06/02	High-level Dialogue with APF
08/02	Meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
12/02	Meeting to discuss the findings of ICRC 's Analysis of Requirements of the families of missing persons during the last war-period and Recommendations based thereon
15/02	Meeting with Operation-Officials from EU Headquarters
21/03	Meeting with the Second Secretary to the British High Commissioner
23/03	Meeting to discuss the task of National Human Rights Institutions with regard to the abolition of death penalty
05/04	Meeting with the Swiss Ambassador
26/04	Meeting with the Canadian High Commissioner
27/04	Meeting with the Deputy Head of Operations in German Embassy
02/05	Meeting with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Autonomy of Judges and Lawyers and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Other cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments
03/05	Meeting with Japanese Ambassador
04/05	Discussion on Sri Lanka's Human Rights Atmosphere with the participants in the Human Rights Conference of German Foreign Office
10/05	Meeting with the Australian High Commissioner
24/05	Discussion on the possibility of working in unison with Commonwealth Officials
24/05	Meeting to discuss preliminary observations with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments
30/05	Meeting with Mr. Chris Sidoth, Consultant, APF
21/06	Round Table on GSP+ Tax concessions - Sri Lanka- European Chamber of Commerce (ECCSR)
12/07	Meeting with Assistant Secretary of State with regard to Democracy in United States- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
01/09	State- Repast in honour of Mr.Ban Ki Moon, Commonwealth Secretary General
02/09	Discussion with Madam Ban Soon-taek on gender based violence
07/09	Meeting with Mr.Nicholas Booth of USAID
13/09	Discussion as to how to collaborate on future activities of USAID and SLHRC
27/09	Meeting with representatives of WHO

10/10	Reception to Australian Ambassador for woman and Girl child
18/10	Meeting with United Nations Special Rapporteur on problems of minorities
26/10-27/10	21 st .Annual General Meeting of Asian Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions
27/10	Participation at the meeting on Rights of Refugees held in the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
07/11	Discussion on 5 th .Periodic Report pertaining to Implementation of the Convention on Torture in Sri Lanka
08/11	High level dialogues on Terrorism and proposed Counter-Terrorism Act of Sri Lanka – United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes (UNODC)
08/11	Workshop on Eradication of gender based Violence jointly organized by the UK High Commission and FOKUS Organization
14/11	Meeting with United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Activists
15/11	Meeting with Mobina Jaffer, Canadian Senate Councilor – Asian Forum on Canadian Human Rights and Development
23/11	Launching of Project on Democratic Governance and Accountability of United Nations Agency for International Development
01/12	Meeting with ICRC Officials
12/12-16/12	Regional Workshop on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights related to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and sexual characteristics jointly organized by the Asian Pacific Forum and United Nations Development Programme
International Civil Society Organizations/ Professional Organizations	
23/02	Meeting with Norwegian ‘ Landinfo’ institution to discuss Human Rights status in Sri Lanka
06/04	Meeting with Executive Director of ‘ Democracy Reporting International’
06/04	Meeting with Special Co-ordinator and Special Advisor in ‘ Global Criminal Justice’
01/08-02/08	Sub-Regional Workshop on Migrant workers’ access to justice
Civil Society Organizations/ Professional Organizations	
02/03	Meeting to discuss action possible to be taken by the Mannar Citizens’ Committee in collaboration with Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
21/04	Consultative dialogue held with the University Grant Commission on ragging and eradication of sexual and gender based violence
04/05	Discussion with Mrs.Manori Muththettuwagama, Chairperson of Consultation Task Force for reconciliation mechanism
17/05	Discussion on Violence Prevention Process with ‘ Right to Life’ institution
14/06	Programme on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Law and Society Trust
27/06	Special festival organized in commemorating United Nations International Day to support violence victims - ‘ Right to Life’ institution
05/10	Discussion with Human Rights and Development Centre
17/10	Meeting on provision of consultation for compilation of Report to be submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Persons with disabilities- Law and Society Trust
18/10	Discussion on Proposed Amendments to Code of Criminal Procedure Act- Bar Association of Sri Lanka
05/11	Follow Up Discussion with Human Rights and Development Centre on Freedom of Religion related Initial National Network Meeting.
08/11	Consultative Programme on gender based policy compilation – Women and Media Collective

22/12	Meeting with 'Youth for Human Rights International' organization
23/12	Participation at International Human Rights Day Commemoration organized by Kurunegala Human Rights Organization.
Other Programmes	
11/02	Meeting with the Head of Department of Theory and History of Art in the University of Visual and Performing art
17/05	Discussion with the officials of the Centre for Study of Human Rights, University of Colombo
29/05-30/05	Conference on study of Human Rights for Parliamentarians – Commonwealth Secretariat
13/06	Dialogue on the theme 'Global Affairs and Sri Lanka : Way back from January 2015' – Presidential Secretariat and Policy Evaluation Division of Bandaranayaka Centre for International Studies
16/06	Meeting with the Organization on Refugees
28/06	Workshop on Modernization of Police Service - National Police Commission and Ministry of Law and Order
29/06	Participation at 'Ayubowan Subha Davasak' programme of Rupavahini in reference to International Day to support Torture Victims
12/08	Dialogue on the Convention of the rights of Disabled and the necessity and importance of the Bill on Disabled – International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES)
12/08	Lakshman Kadirgamar Commemorative lecture on Sustainable Development Goals
15/08	Participation at the meeting of National Counter-Procurator Task Force
26/08	International Summit on Human Rights, Citizenship and Democratization – Centre for study of Human Rights of the University of Colombo
18/09	Participation at a programme organized by Western Province Social Service Department to promote rights of persons with disabilities.
08/10	Participation at the launching of Report on Mental Health and Mental Relief Services in Sri Lanka
09/10	Participation at the Commemoration of International Day of Older Persons organized by Sri Lanka Association for Geriatric Medical Science
10/10	Participation at the commemoration of International Day of Mental Health organized by Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka
11/10	Participation as a Resources Provider for the National Programme of commemorating International Day of the girl child – National Child Protection Authority
13/10	Public petition insisting on the inclusion of Free Education as a fundamental right in the Constitution in commemorating the birth day of Hon.C.W.W.Kannangara – National Child Protection Authority
07/11	International Summit on the theme 'Reconciliation through Art' –Bureau of National Unity and Reconciliation
09/12	Participation at the National summit on Counter- Corruption - Ministry of Law and Order and Commission to investigate Bribery and Corruption

Letter of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights dated 08 March 2016

