

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) submits the answers to the questions of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in preparation for the forthcoming written update in September 2026.

1) Number and the most common types of complaints received since January 2025 to April 2026 disaggregated data by gender, age, ethnicity and location. Any emerging patterns or new types of violations appearing in recent complaints.

- I. The data presented below pertains to the total number of complaints received by the Regional Offices and the Head Office from January 2025 to the first quarter of 2026, including the overall grand total.

Number of Complaints		
	2025	1 st Quarter 2026
Regional Offices	4,391	1,448
Head Office	2,087	1,126
Grand Total number of Complaints	6,478	4,012

- II. The Following data illustrates the number of complaints received by each Regional Office and the Head Office, together with the most common categories of complaints reported from January 2025 to the first quarter of 2026.

In 2025

Types Of Complaints	Ampara	Anuradhapura	Badulla	Batticaloa	Jaffna/Kilinochchi	Kalmunai	Kandy	Matara	Trincomalee	Vavuniya/Mannar	Puttalam	Rathnapura	Hatton	Head Office
Torture	4	-	-	7	31	1	19	43	8	10	32	16	4	254
Degrading Treatment	-	-	4	-	18	3	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	144
Harassment	-	-	2	26	53	12	41	40	15	6	28	-	-	204
Arbitrary Arrest/Detention	12	-	10	21	21	13	64	192	15	8	65	25	15	664
Employment	27	108	73	39	55	55	191	117	42	6	48	30	49	96
Education	5	13	21	10	31	19	54	51	-	-	22	5	13	20
State Welfare Services	2	8	2	-	14	19	20	8	1	2	-	3	13	15
Complaints about Inaction of Gov.Entities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	-	-	-	8	-	209
Police Inaction	11	51	74	65	33	-	70	-	27	9	45	10	79	56
Other Gov.Authorities	47	85	10	57	22	-	125	-	32	14	32	28	47	88
Land & Property Rights	12	145	67	2	19	-	37	28	29	7	45	13	6	154
Administrative Matters	10	-	38	-	2	-	144	41	32	-	61	-	2	-
Other Categories (not within the mandate)	36	77	19	1	7	-	1	121	7	5	-	-	9	77

In 1st Quarter 2026

Types Of Complaints	Ampara	Anuradhapura	Badulla	Batticaloa	Jaffna/Kilinochchi	Kalmunai	Kandy	Matara	Trincomalee	Vavuniya/Mannar	Puttalam	Rathnapura	Hatton	Head Office
Torture	2	13	-	-	10	-	4	20	3	4	3	4	1	46
Degrading Treatment	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
Harassment	-	1	-	10	10	2	14	12	6	1	4	-	-	63
Arbitrary Arrest/Detention	7	26	14	13	3	9	16	50	4	1	25	18	5	170
Employment	14	31	22	7	99	24	55	46	10	3	10	6	12	182
Education	-	5	4	1	9	4	38	13	-	-	4	4	2	17
State Welfare Services	2	5	-	3	5	4	5	-	-	-	6	1	13	18
Police Inaction	2	21	15	8	6	12	7	-	5	2	9	11	10	-
Other Gov. Authorities	9	31	-	4	4	4	31	-	19	9	1	19	8	-
Land & Property Rights	8	28	12	3	28	2	12	4	4	2	4	3	-	45
Administrative Matters	3	1	7	-	-	-	35	-	5	-	7	-	4	93
Other Categories (not within the mandate)	9	21	7	3	2	-	-	36	-	-	-	-	4	-

2) Information on results of any investigations undertaken by the HRCSL into deaths in custody (prisons, police stations and other places of detention), allegations of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests/detention and torture and ill-treatment by police, military, prison officials and other public officials. Information on the outcomes of these complaints as well as the number of recommendations issued during the last 12 months regarding arbitrary arrests and detention, torture and deaths in custody.

	2025	To April 2026
Death in Custody	18	03
Enforce or involuntary Disappearance	05	0
Torture and Degrading Treatment	602	138
Police Inaction	530	108

In 2025, 11 recommendations were issued by the HRCSL with respect to arbitrary arrests and detention, 13 recommendations with respect to torture or other forms of degrading treatment and 02 recommendations with respect to deaths in custody. As of 31 March 2026, 04 recommendations were issued by the HRCSL with respect to arbitrary arrests and detention, 04 recommendations with respect to torture or other forms of degrading treatment.

The Commission continues to monitor the implementation of these recommendations. In May 2026, it wrote to H.E. the President recommending the strengthening of the HRCSL Act of 1996 to ensure non-implementation of the Commission’s recommendations constitutes an offence.

3) Information on the number of visits to police stations, detention centers, prisons as well as military-run detention/rehabilitation centers conducted by the HRCSL since January 2025, and the number and the types of complaints received, and number of individuals detained in military-run rehabilitation centers in the context of anti-drug campaign entitled “A Nation United” as well as the legal basis for arrest and detention in such centers.

Visiting Mechanism

Summary of the visits to Detention Centers – 2025

	Head Office	Ampara	Anuradhapura	Batticaloa	Badulla	Jaffna and Kilinochchi	Kandy	Kalmunai	Matara	Trincomalee	Vavuniya and Mannar	Total
Police Stations	672	42	255	142	45	-	227	104	328	150	196	2161
Prisons	04	02	02	09	01	-	03	04	08	04	04	41
Child Care/ Child homes	-	-	21	04	02	-	04	05	04	06	05	51
Foreign migrant detention centres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	03	03
Gazetted detention centres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Rehabilitation Centres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	02
Women’s Home	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	-	-	-	02
Disable Person’s Homes	-	-	02	-	-	-	-	03	-	-	-	05
Elder Homes	-	-	03	01	01	-	-	-	02	-	-	07
Crime Investigation Division	07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	05	12
Terrorism Investigation Division	05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	05
Other Places	07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	07
Total	695	44	283	156	49	0	234	118	342	160	215	2,296

Visiting Mechanism

Summary of the visits to Detention Centers – up to March 2026

	Head Office	Ampara	Anuradhapura	Batticola	Badulla	Jaffna and Kilinochchi	Kandy	Kalmunai	Matara	Trincomalee	Vavuniya and Mannar	Hatton	Total
Police Stations	201	04	72	44	-	50	58	26	59	26	44	07	591
Prisons	02	-	01	-	-	-	01	02	02	01	-	-	09
Child Care/ Child homes	-	-	04	01	-	-	-	03	-	01	01	02	12
Foreign migrant detention centres	-	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01
Gazetted detention centres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Rehabilitation Centres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	02	-	01
Women’s Home	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	01
Disable Person’s Homes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	-	01
Elder Homes	-	01	01	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	-	-	03
CID/TID	03	-	-	02	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	-	07
Other Places	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01	15	16
Total	29	05	78	48	0	50	59	32	63	29	48	24	642

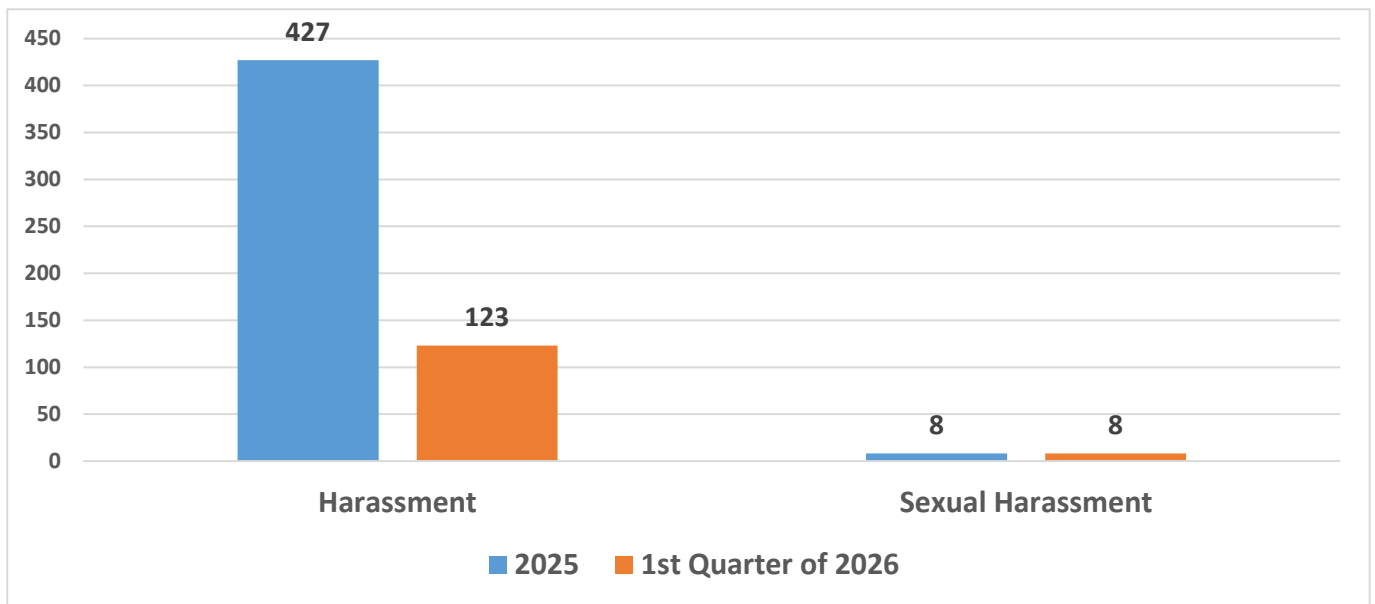
4) Number of cases of arrests and detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) notified by the authorities to the HRCSL in 2025 and in 2026, disaggregated by gender and region and number of visits made by HRCSL to PTA detainees.

Number of Detainees informed to HRC under PTA

2025	Up to 31 st of March 2026
46	12

5) Number of cases categorized as ‘harassment’ reported in 2025 and up to April 2026 and actions taken to address complaints of intimidation, harassment and surveillance targeting any individuals or groups, including but not limited to civil society, media, religious leaders, families of the victims, private actors.

Complaints of Harassment and Sexual Harassment



6) With reference to statement issued by the HRCSL on the Freedom of Expression and Online Safety in Sri Lanka, information on the number of complaints related to freedom of expression, including those related to the application of the Online Safety Act and the Computer Crimes Act. The number of complaints which involved arrests, investigations, or prosecutions related to online speech.

In 2025

Number of Complaints	
Freedom of Assembly	04
Arbitrary Arrest/Detention	1,125

In 1st Quarter 2026

Number of Complaints	
Freedom of Speech and Expression	03
Freedom of Assembly	01
Arbitrary Arrest/Detention	351

7) Number of complaints received reported in 2025 and up to April 2026 related to freedom of assembly and/or association, including in the context of the administration of NGOs and memorialisation as well as other such activities and any actions taken to address such complaints including investigations and any outcomes

In 2025

Number of Complaints	
Freedom of Assembly	04
Administrative Matters	330

On 16 May 2025, the HRCSL wrote to the Inspector General of Police on the misapplication of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Act of 2007 with respect to peaceful commemoration events in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. This direction was circulated with relevant police divisions, and the Commission notes that reported violations with respect to the misapplication were notably lower in 2025.

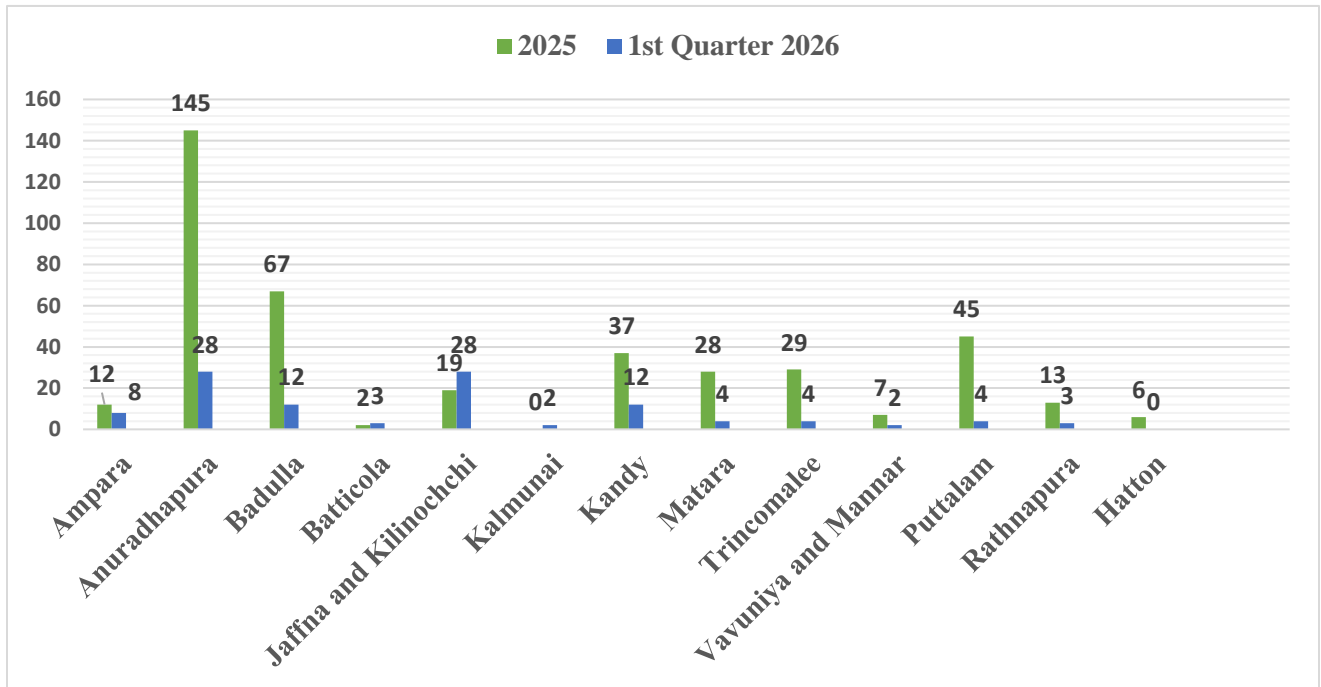
In 1st Quarter 2026

Number of Complaints	
Freedom of Assembly	04
Administrative Matters	155

8) Number of complaints received by the HRCSL since January 2025 relating to land disputes connected to religious sites, or continued military occupation of private land or cases of seizure of civilian land by military and other state actors disaggregated by provinces. Please also briefly describe action taken by the HRCSL in relation to each complaint.

These data included total complaints regarding land and property rights, but lacked specific details, disaggregated by province concerning land disputes related to religious sites, continued military occupation of private land or the seizure of civilian land by military and other state actors.

Land and Property Rights



Number of Complaints on Land & Property Rights			
	Total(Regional Offices)	Head Office	Grand Total
2025	410	154	564
1st Quarter 2026	110	45	155

9) Advocacy and action taken in relation to the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights

(i) in the context of austerity measures by the Government;

(ii) following Cyclone Ditwah and

(iii) in relation to the economic impacts of the ongoing war in the Middle East/West Asia, particularly with respect to vulnerable and/or marginalized groups, including the Malaiyaha Tamil community.

Summary of HRCSL Actions and Interventions (2025–2026)

Year: 2025

- March 2025: The HRCSL completed its first comprehensive gender audit in early 2025 in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Forum (APF). This initiative aims to strengthen internal operations, workplace culture, and external engagement regarding gender equality.
- June 2025: The HRCSL conducted International Day in Support of Victims of Torture – 2025 a four-day programme from 23 to 26 June 2025, under the theme “It Could Be Me” This four-day programme was part of the HRCSL’s ongoing efforts to raise public awareness, promote legal reform, and enhance institutional accountability regarding torture and custodial violence.
- August 2025: HRCSL issued an initial formal statement outlining the Commission’s observations, position, and recommendations concerning the proposed reforms to the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA), emphasizing the need for a rights-based and gender-responsive legal framework consistent with constitutional and international human rights standards.

Year: 2026

- January 2026: The HRCSL received a formal invitation from the Ministry of Justice requesting further observations on the proposed MMDA reforms. In response, the Commission submitted updated recommendations and legal observations aimed at strengthening the protection of equality, non-discrimination, and access to justice.
- February 2026: HRCSL issued a formal statement on Freedom of Expression and Online Safety in Sri Lanka, emphasizing the importance of balancing digital regulation with the protection of fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, privacy, and civic participation.
- March 2026: The HRCSL continues to take forward the recommendations arising from the Gender Audit conducted in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Forum. As part of the initial steps in implementing the Commission's Gender Strategy, the first sensitization session for Head Office staff was successfully conducted on 9 March 2026 at the HRCSL Head Office.
- 10 March 2026: HRCSL commemorated International Women's Day at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall under the theme "Women, Climate Change, and Disasters." The programme focused on promoting rights-based responses to environmental crises and drew particular attention to lessons learned from Cyclone Ditwah and its disproportionate impact on women and vulnerable communities.
- The HRCSL formally engaged the Ministry of Public Security and the Inspector General of Police (IGP) regarding the harassment and intimidation of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The Commission highlighted concerns relating to enforced disappearances, land disputes, militarization, and the heightened vulnerabilities faced by women-headed households.

ii) Cyclone Ditwah

- The HRCSL conducted field visits and monitoring missions to areas affected by Cyclone Ditwah and carried out district-wise observations and assessments concerning the human rights impact of the disaster on affected communities. Based on its findings, the Commission issued a series of recommendations to relevant state institutions and authorities with the objective of strengthening disaster preparedness, protection of vulnerable populations, rehabilitation measures, environmental sustainability, access to public services, and rights-based disaster response mechanisms. The Commission's recommendations focused on ensuring a coordinated, inclusive and human rights-based disaster response, with particular attention to the protection of women, children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, plantation communities and other vulnerable groups affected by the cyclone.
- The HRCSL, by letter dated 10 December 2025 addressed to the Secretary to the Treasury, acknowledged and appreciated the issuance of Circular No. 08/2025 dated 5 December 2025 concerning the emergency situation arising from the adverse weather conditions caused by Cyclone Ditwah and the implementation of the related Empowerment Programme for affected communities. While noting that the circular aimed to facilitate the rapid restoration of livelihoods and covered a broad range of affected persons and sectors, the Commission observed that insufficient attention had been given to the specific needs and concerns of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Accordingly, HRCSL emphasized the importance of adopting an inclusive and rights-based approach to disaster response and recovery measures, ensuring equal access, targeted support and adequate protection for PWDs within all relief, rehabilitation and livelihood assistance programmes.

10) Any investigation reports, guidance notes, comments on legislation issued by HRCSL to protect and promote human rights since January 2025 to April 2026.

Guidelines

- The HRCSL issued General Guidelines and Recommendations No. 01 of 2025 to the Sri Lanka Police on the prevention of custodial and encounter deaths. These guidelines emphasize the duty of law enforcement officers to uphold the right to life, ensure lawful and proportionate use of force, strengthen arrest and detention procedures and maintain strict accountability and transparency mechanisms.

Letters and Statements

- The HRCSL has recommended that the Government of Sri Lanka ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure (CRC-OP3). The HRCSL submitted its recommendations to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Women and Child Affairs on 5 March 2026.
- On 3 February 2026, the HRCSL expressed its deep concern regarding emerging threats to the freedom of expression in Sri Lanka, particularly the ability of journalists to carry out their professional duties without interference.
- On 23 May 2025, pursuant to its mandate under section 10(d) of the HRCSL Act, the Commission submitted formal observations to the Ministry of Justice advocating for the decriminalization of consensual same sex relations. The Commission urged the government to reform sections 365 and 365A of the Penal Code, reinforcing its previous recommendations to align national legislation with international human rights benchmarks.
- The HRCSL wishes to reiterate the legal obligation of all state institutions to implement the Commission's recommendations issued following inquiries conducted under the HRCSL Act of 1996. On 19 June 2025, the Commission issued an official communication to all secretaries to ministries, provincial and chief secretaries, heads of departments, heads of corporations, and statutory boards, reminding them of this obligation.

- The HRCSL has formally advocated for the harmonization of personal laws including the MMDA, the Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act and Jaffna Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance with international human rights standards. The Commission's recommendations focus on eliminating gender-based discrimination and ensuring that legislative frameworks prioritize constitutional equality and the safeguarding of children.

Legislative Reform

- On 19 June 2025, HRCSL wrote to Minister of Justice with respect to the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979 (PTA).
- The HRCSL has submitted its observations on the proposed reforms to the MMDA. The Commission received a letter on 13 January 2026 from the Ministry of Justice, addressed to the Chairman of the HRCSL, inviting its feedback on the ongoing reform process.

Fact-Finding and Inquiry Reports

Fact-Finding Report on the Chemmani Mass Grave Site

- September 2025: The HRCSL conducted a fact-finding mission regarding the ongoing investigation into the Chemmani Mass Grave Site in Jaffna. The report examined the excavation and exhumation processes, institutional coordination, forensic capacity, accountability concerns and the rights of families of disappeared persons. It also provided recommendations aimed at ensuring a credible, transparent and scientifically guided investigation process consistent with international human rights standards.

Report on the Digana Violence

- September 2025: The HRCSL updated and published its report on violence against the Muslim community in the Digana and surrounding areas in 2018. The report assessed the response of law enforcement authorities, the role of organized groups, failures in intelligence and prevention mechanisms and broader issues relating to communal harmony

and accountability. The report further recommended legal, administrative, and institutional reforms to prevent future incidents of communal violence.

Submissions to UN Bodies/Processes

Parallel Report to the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances – 21 July 2025

- January 2025: The HRCSL submitted a parallel report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ahead of Sri Lanka's ninth periodic review under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- July 2025: The HRCSL submitted a parallel report to the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearance addressing issues relating to enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka, including accountability, investigations, victim protection, reparations and compliance with international obligations under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

11) Any other information the HRCSL may deem relevant.

- The HRCSL also undertook regular monitoring of human rights situations in vulnerable communities, handled public complaints and conducted inquiries into alleged violations, and issued recommendations and advisory opinions to state authorities to strengthen compliance with human rights standards. The Commission continued its focus on protecting vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities and marginalized communities, while also promoting human rights education, training programmes and legal and policy reforms to further integrate human rights principles into national governance and public administration.
- The HRCSL has continued to formally engage civil society organizations (CSOs) and human rights defenders (HRDs) through its thematic sub-committees on the following themes: (1) Personal Liberty;¹ (2) Gender and SOGI (sexual orientation and gender

¹ This theme covers issues such as torture, custodial and encounter deaths, arbitrary arrest and detention, and enforced disappearance.

identity); (3) Child Rights; (4) Freedom of Expression; (5) Socioeconomic Rights; (6) Persons with Disabilities; (7) The Malaiyaha Tamil Community; (8) Business and Human Rights.² Each Sub-Committee comprises a chairperson, who is a commissioner of the HRCSL, a Rapporteur, who is a director or senior officer of the HRCSL, up to ten members who are representatives of CSOs working on the specific theme, up to two members who are thematic experts, and up to four staff members of the HRCSL. The sub-committees have provided an important opportunity for the Commission to constructively engage civil society representatives and HRDs. For instance, in May 2026, the Sub-Committees on Business and Human Rights and Socioeconomic Rights are currently in the process of developing General Guidelines and Recommendations on Business & Human Rights. The sub-committees have also provided a forum for HRDs to raise important issues and assist the Commission in formulating its policy positions. Earlier, in February 2026, the HRCSL benefited from the input of the Sub-committee on Freedom of Expression in formulating a statement on the Freedom of Expression and Online Safety, which called for the repeal of the Online Safety Act of 2024. The Commission also currently mediating a consultative law-making process with respect to the draft Mental Health Act, where it is constructively engaging the Ministry of Health and the drafting committee to negotiate the inclusion of feedback from relevant CSOs.

- The HRCSL continues to operate in accordance with internationally recognized standards for National Human Rights Institutions and has been accredited with GANHRI “A status” accreditation, reflecting its adequate compliance with the Paris Principles and its independence, effectiveness and credibility in the promotion and protection of human rights in Sri Lanka. The HRCSL also continued to engage with United Nations mechanisms and international partners through submissions, parallel reports, consultations and participation in international human rights processes, with the aim of strengthening Sri Lanka’s compliance with international human rights obligations and standards and improving overall accountability and human rights governance in the country.

² This theme covers issues such as rights of workers, labour reform, rights violations ensuing from development projects, and environmental issues.

- In May 2026, the HRCSL wrote to H.E. the President with a detailed update on the implementation of the recommendations of the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA). The HRCSL outlined measures already undertaken to strengthen its operations, including conducting unannounced visits to places of deprivation of liberty, enhancing cooperation with international and domestic human rights bodies, engaging civil society organizations, promoting financial autonomy, ensuring pluralism and diversity among staff, and addressing human rights violations such as torture, custodial deaths, enforced disappearance, discrimination, and violence. The HRCSL also submitted several proposals to amend the HRCSL Act with the objective of fully implementing the recommendations made by the SCA. The proposed amendments include: (1) strengthening the HRCSL's mandate to engage with international human rights mechanisms; (2) ensuring greater financial autonomy through direct budgetary allocations and independent financial management; (3) promoting pluralism and gender diversity in staff appointments; (4) limiting commissioners to a maximum of two terms; (5) improving transparency and inclusiveness in the appointment process of commissioners through public calls for applications and consultation with civil society organizations; and (6) strengthening the implementation of HRCSL recommendations by recognizing non-compliance as an offence of contempt against the authority of the Commission.