



**SLRMUN 23**



**United Nations  
Human Rights Council**

# **STUDY GUIDE**

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# WU Welcome



Hi Delegates!

We, the chairpersons of the United Nations Human Rights Council, would like to warmly welcome you to the Model United Nations Conference organized by the University of Moratuwa for the 3rd consecutive year.

The violation of Human rights in Sri Lanka has been a continuing issue that has raised international concerns for far too long; hence we believe this to be a crucial point for us to acknowledge this issue and discuss what we can do to combat and preserve them.

We present you with this study guide as a starting point for your research, hence, the debate won't be limited to the rights and areas listed, and delegates have the freedom to discuss numerous subjects that fall under the scope of our mandate.

All the best for the conference!

Your Chairs,

**Dojitha Atapattu and Naveera Abhayawickrama**

# Introduction



## Committee

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a United Nations body whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world. The Council has 47 members elected for staggered three-year terms on a regional group basis. The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and making recommendations on them.

## Topic

Discussing the threat to fundamental rights including the freedom of expression with special regard to the political and economic crisis of Sri Lanka.

# Background



## Fundamental rights

They are a group of rights that have been recognized by the supreme court as requiring a high degree of protection from government encroachment and are set out in Chapter III of the Constitution.

In Sri Lanka, freedom of expression is guaranteed under Article 14 of the constitution. As recognized everywhere, it is one the most basic, but most important rights.

And the value of this luxury could be seen when observing the current situation in Sri Lanka.

## Background

According to a UN report in September 2022, it is highlighted that impunity of Sri Lankan officials for the violations of human rights and crimes of economic nature paired with corruption at its peak are the pillars of the wave of economic crisis washing over the island as of now.

The political crisis in Sri Lanka was due to the tug war for power between the president Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the citizens of Sri Lanka. Further, fueled by the anti-government protests and sentiments spreading throughout the country, rise of an unprecedented political instability was inevitable.

The freedom to bear and to express differing opinions was evidently practiced during these trying times in Sri Lanka and successfully as well, as seen through the eventual resignation of the president and several of the family members they were protesting against. The months long protest was recognized globally due to fellowship and the abundant support of the public from provision of food and water to free legal representation for the mass number of protestors.



# Conflict



However, after the most awaited resignation of the officials, the ones appointed in place started their work on bringing down the power of the protesters by arresting them for various reasons. Furthermore, the usual tear bomb and water attacks continued more viciously coupled with violence.

As the dust settled down, regrettably, those who were rejected are gradually making their way back to the surface. As the saying goes, unless removed from the root, it is never truly removed.

Due to this unfortunate reason we see the freedom of expression that was once practiced successfully to some extent is disappearing through the grasp of our hands.

When the 4 pillars of democracy are infested with the powers of individuals riddled with extreme nepotism, the importance of fundamental rights can be waived to their needs.

To ensure these rights such as freedom of expression, what is needed is a purification of the system to the point where the highest power would belong to the law and democracy as it's originally intended to be.

A democracy, functions, best when the people of well-informed and are free to participate in public issues and have access to the widest choices, information and solutions to problems and issues that affect them.

# Conclusion



## Closing remarks

Freedom of expression is a constitutional right of all Sri Lankans, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or political views. This fundamental right must be protected and respected equally, especially in the face of growing threats by this government seeking to control the narrative to suit its own agenda. While this current government attempts to quell a rising tide of critical voices, they must be reminded that freedom of expression is a fundamental pillar of a democratic society where rights are respected and protected; and this is the society that we must work towards.

## What we expect

1. Good understanding of the topic that is to be discussed in committee
2. Understanding the foreign policy of the nation that the delegate will be representing
3. Identification of the key areas of discussion
4. Presenting creative and innovative solutions concerning the problems that need to be addressed within the committee.
5. Diplomacy

Fulfilling these requirements would undoubtedly help you present yourself as a competent delegate in the eyes of the chairs and would be instrumental in helping you achieve the various awards on the committee.

## References

Here are some links that might help you with your research. Happy researching!

[THE CONSTITUTION DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA](#)

[Human Rights Council Discusses Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar and in Sri Lanka | OHCHR](#)

[Sri Lanka: Rights under attack during economic crisis - Amnesty International](#)

[Sri Lanka: Economic Crisis Puts Rights in Peril](#)

[Five Things to Know about Sri Lanka's Crisis | United States Institute of Peace](#)

[Sri Lanka: Freedom of Expression in a Time of Crisis | Institute of Commonwealth Studies](#)

<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2023/01/08/sri-lankas-hard-road-to-recovery-from-economic-and-political-crisis/>

[Five Things to Know about Sri Lanka's Crisis | United States Institute of Peace](#)

[Latest News & Videos, Photos about sri lanka political crisis | The Economic Times - Page 1](#)

[An Agenda for Change: The Right to Freedom of Expression in Sri Lanka](#)