

BYPASSING PARLIAMENT

225 MPS

(NORMALLY APPROVE THE BUDGET)



IS SRI LANKA ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING A DICTATORSHIP?



GOTABAYA RAJAPAKSA
PRESIDENT



MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA
PRIME MINISTER | Controls 50% of budget
88 state institutions



CHAMAL RAJAPAKSA
STATE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, MINISTER OF MAHAWELI, AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF INTERNAL TRADE, FOOD SECURITY AND CONSUMER WELFARE | 37 state institutions



BASIL RAJAPAKSA
PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL ENVOY | Chair of the Economy Task Force



MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) KAMAL GUNARATNE
SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE | Controls 10% of Budget
31 state institutions
Chair of the archaeology task force
Chair of the virtue task force



MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) JAGATH ALWIS
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE



MAJOR GENERAL SURESH SALLAY
DIRECTOR OF STATE INTELLIGENCE SERVICE



REAR ADMIRAL (RETIRED) ANANDA PEIRIS
DIRECTOR GENERAL, CIVIL SECURITY DEPARTMENT



MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) VVITHA RAVIPRIYA
DIRECTOR GENERAL, SRI LANKA CUSTOMS



MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) SHANTHA DISSANAYAKE
CHAIRMAN, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AUTHORITY



MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) SUMEDHA PERERA
SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF MAHAWELI, AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (UNDER CHAMAL RAJAPAKSA)



MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) SUDANTHA RANASINGHE
DIRECTOR GENERAL, DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE (COMES UNDER PRESIDENT)



FORMER NAVY COMMANDER, ADMIRAL (RETIRED) JAYANTHA PERERA



MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) NANDA MALLAWARACHCHI
DIRECTOR GENERAL, MULTI-PURPOSE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE (PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT)



LIEUTENANT GENERAL SHAVENDRA SILVA
ACTING CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF/
COMMANDER OF THE ARMY



VICE ADMIRAL PIYAL DE SILVA
COMMANDER OF SRI LANKA NAVY



AIR MARSHAL SUMANGALA DIAS
COMMANDER OF SRI LANKA AIR FORCE

TASK FORCES REPORT DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENT

(ALL CIVIL SERVANTS MUST ASSIST THEM)

RAJAPAKSA FAMILY

THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE TO BUILD A SECURE COUNTRY, DISCIPLINED, VIRTUOUS AND LAWFUL SOCIETY

PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE

PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE IN CHARGE OF ECONOMIC REVIVAL AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS ON MEASURES TO BE TAKEN BY ALL ARMED FORCES TO PREVENT CORONAVIRUS INFECTION AMONG MEMBERS OF THE TRI-FORCES

INTERNATIONAL TRUTH AND JUSTICE PROJECT

UPDATED VERSION

INTERNATIONAL
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PROJECT

W ITJPSL.COM
E ITJPSL@GMAIL.COM

7 July 2020

Press Release: Sri Lanka - A Parallel State?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
YASMIN SOOKA

Johannesburg: A new **infographic** reveals how President Gotabaya Rajapaksa is ruling Sri Lanka, as if he is autonomous, through powerful militarised task forces that bypass the usual checks and balances of a democratically elected parliament¹. These bodies are unelected and report directly to the President requiring the full cooperation of the Sri Lankan civil service and are not subject to the usual scrutiny and oversight of parliament. Not just secretaries but Ministers (currently 16²) and ministerial committees will have to serve and obey these unelected bodies and if they don't will be referred to the President with unspecified consequences to their careers³. This is made more worrying because of the forthcoming parliamentary elections in which the President hopes to gain a two thirds majority to be able to alter the Constitution⁴.

"The Task Forces risk creating a parallel state and potentially give the President, his family and former military comrades unparalleled control over patronage networks and the use of public assets," said the ITJP's executive director Yasmin Sooka. *"More worrying is that this new schematic for exercising control could survive beyond the next elections, which are anyway expected to return a parliament compliant and subservient to the Rajapaksa family".*

¹ CONSTITUTION Art 33A. The President shall be responsible to Parliament for the due exercise, performance and discharge of his powers, duties and functions under the Constitution and any written law, including the law for the time being relating to public security.

² http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.lk/cab/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=18&lang=en

³ "AND, I do hereby require and direct the said Task Force to report to me all instances where any Government employee or an officer in any Ministry, Government Department, State Corporation or any such Institution who delay the performance of duties and fulfilment of responsibilities or fail to perform such duties and responsibilities to be entrusted by the said Task Force." Task Force for Poverty Eradication and Livelihood Development Gazette Notification. This warning is included in every one of the gazette notifications.

⁴ "Instead of pandering to the needs of NGOs and various interested parties at the international level, we must promulgate a new constitution that reflects the aspirations of our people." Manifesto: Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour, <https://gota.lk/sri-lanka-podujana-peramuna-manifesto-english.pdf>

The President is allegedly allocating government funds and operating directly on a Budget on Account⁵ enabled by the absence of a sitting parliament for more than three months. According to the Sri Lankan state run newspaper and other media, approximately half the funds this quarter have reportedly gone through the Ministry controlled by his brother the Prime Minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa, and ten percent to the Ministry of Defence, headed by Major General Kamal Gunaratne, with no apparent independent oversight⁶.

“The latest developments centralise power and give even more untrammelled authority to the President’s key military allies who already enjoy enormous power through formal appointments,” said the ITJP’s Executive Director Yasmin Sooka. *“This is the ‘deep state’ coming into the open,”* she added. *“It’s a structure of governance reminiscent of the President’s early role as an all-powerful district military coordinator during the crushing of the JVP in 1989 in Matale; he appears to be replicating this model of unfettered control over the entire nation”.*

Lawyers in Sri Lanka have argued that the establishment of the Task Forces is legally questionable and administratively murky⁷. The task forces have no time limit, while the drafting is sloppy and ungrammatical⁸. The name itself - *task force* - is redolent of militarism and the composition of the bodies is overwhelmingly military, male, Sinhala and unelected, save for the bureaucrats who are included, whose only role is to execute the commands of the Task Forces.

Members who are Civil Servants

It is worth noting some of the bureaucrats in the Task Forces were under investigation reportedly for corruption during the last government.

- The Secretary to the *Presidential Task Force to build a Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and Lawful Society* is Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Defence, D.M.S. Dissanayake⁹. The

⁵ State run media: <https://www.dailynews.lk/2020/06/05/local/220068/rs1-trillion-govt-services-development-projects>
Colombo Page: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_20A/Jun06_1591467379CH.php
Also Hiru news <https://www.hirunews.lk/english/242355/budget-circular-for-three-months-up-to-august>
Sri Lanka weekly news: <https://www.srilankaweekly.co.uk/sri-lanka-president-authorizes-rs-1-trillion-consolidated-fund-run-government/>
DBS Jeyaraj: <http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/69133>
FT Lanka: <http://www.newswire.lk/2020/06/06/president-authorises-rs-1-trillion-in-3rd-voa-daily-ft/>
Sunday Morning: <http://www.themorning.lk/general-elections-2020-prez-gets-key-to-consolidated-fund/>
RS 546 bn of Rs 1043 goes to the Finance, Economic and Policy Development Ministry held by Prime Minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa. Rs 107 bn. to the MOD run by Kamal Gunaratne.
March- May 2020 reported in state run paper: <http://www.dailynews.lk/2020/03/19/local/214821/president-authorises-rs1224-bn-consolidated-fund>

⁶ THE APPOINTMENT OF THE TWO PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCES Discussion Paper, CPA, <https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Commentary-Two-Task-Forces-CPA-Final.pdf> “Thirdly, it is unclear how funds will be allocated to these Task Forces for the implementation of their functions. The Secretary of a Ministry is also its chief accounting officer, and since the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence is also the Chairperson of both these Task Forces, concerns regarding a conflict of interest are raised. This issue is compounded by the absence of oversight that can be provided by a functioning legislature. “

⁷ See “2. The use of Article 33 of the Constitution to establish Task Forces of this nature”, which says: “This Article does not in fact give the President the wide power to set up bodies and bestow considerable powers on them as has been done with these Task Forces.”, THE APPOINTMENT OF THE TWO PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCES Discussion Paper, CPA, <https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Commentary-Two-Task-Forces-CPA-Final.pdf>

⁸ CPA: “At the outset, CPA states that due to certain grammatical errors in the wording of the English versions of the Gazettes, the powers of the Task Forces are unclear.”

⁹ Dissanayake Mudiyanseelage Saman Dissanayake. <https://www.sasa.lk/member/2000065>, <https://www.newsradio.lk/local/npc-secretary-saman-dissanayake-arrested/>

A DMS Dissanayake was suspect no 12 and referred to as having been Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Defence. Some reports call him former Senior Additional Secretary MOD (<https://www.onlanka.com/news/ag-instructs-acting-igp-to-arrest-chairman-of-avant-garde-and-seven-others.html>) He later became secretary of the National Police Commission on 21.03.2018. <http://www.npc.gov.lk/si/about/organizational-structure/> According to the English version of the site, he is no more the NPC secretary, <http://www.npc.gov.lk/home/>

Attorney General's office considered DMS Dissanayake to be a suspect in one of the cases involving the Avant Garde floating armoury which was established by Gotabaya Rajapaksa when he was secretary of defence¹⁰. In 2019, the Attorney General ordered the arrest of DMS Dissanayake who had been working under Gotabaya Rajapaksa in the MOD, but subsequently charges were withdrawn¹¹.

- *The Presidential Task Force in charge of Economic Revival and Poverty Eradication:*

One of the secretaries to this important economic Task Force, D.S. Jayaweera¹², was reportedly investigated in 2012 by the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption for allegedly submitting a bogus certificate claiming a doctorate from a University in USA¹³. He was then again investigated in 2016 over alleged misappropriation of funds (Rs.5.7 m) while Director General of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority¹⁴.

Another member, S.B.Divaratna, retired Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, should have been investigated regarding the lack of sufficient food supplies sent to the Vanni while he was Commissioner General of Essential Services in the last days of the war, resulting in a United Nations report alleging deliberate starvation¹⁵. He was also a member of the Cabinet Appointed Tender Board for the controversial MIG fighter deal exposed by journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge who was later assassinated in 2009¹⁶. Ahimsa Wickrematunge filed a damages case in California against Gotabaya

But there is no report of his re-appointment to MOD as Senior Asst. Secretary in 2020, except in the gazette establishing the Task force and news reports thereof. http://www.defence.lk/Article/defence_article/1688 which describes him as Defence Ministry's Senior Assistant Secretary (Civil Security and Development) Saman Dissanayake. He is not listed on the MOD page: http://www.defence.lk/About_us/contact_us but he would be junior to the Additional Secretary: http://www.defence.lk/About_us/organisational_structure. He is however described here <http://www.npc.gov.lk/si/about/organizational-structure/#> in Sinhala as DM Saman Dissanayake, Asst. Secretary sports and youth affairs, National youth services director (admin), Dep controller immigration, Senior Asst. Secretary MOD, Director National Police Commission from 21.03.2018.

¹⁰ http://www.dailymirror.lk/print/front_page/Avant-Garde-floating-armoury-case---AG-instructs-act--IGP-to--arrest-NPC--Secretary/238-171299

"D.M.S. Dissanayake, Senior Assistant Secretary in the Defence Ministry and the officer-in-charge of Civil Security, has come under investigation over the controversy surrounding the Avant Garde Maritime Services Limited. Dissanayake was said to be the official who wrote a letter to the Navy Commander to release the vessel containing a consignment of arms for Avant Garde Maritime Services Limited. Highly placed sources from the Defence Ministry told the Daily News that the ministry would investigate whether the senior official actually had a "mandate" to issue a letter of that nature, seeking the release of the vessel." <https://www.onlanka.com/news/avant-garde-vessel-matter-dissanayake-under-probe.html>

¹¹ <http://www.adaderana.lk/news.php?nid=56218>

¹² He is part of the 4- member Committee appointed to review the proposed Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact (MCC).

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2020/02/18/local/211779/preliminary-report-mcc-presented-president?page=1>

¹³ Bribery Commission interrogates top Finance Ministry official Over allegation of bogus doctorate from US University, January 14, 2012. http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=43235

¹⁴ SRI LANKA: FINANCIAL FRAUD CASES SOON AGAINST FORMER SL STATE OFFICIALS INCLUDING GOTABHAYA AND PBJ, 18 Feb 2016, <https://srilankabrief.org/2016/02/sri-lanka-financial-fraud-cases-soon-against-former-sl-state-officials-including-gotabhaya-and-pbj/> Also: <https://srilankabrief.org/2016/03/details-of-the-22-investigations-into-rajapaksa-regimes-crimes-concluded-by-the-fcid/>

¹⁵ "On 20 November 2008, noting that requests by the United Nations and international NGOs for transporting humanitarian assistance were largely based on requests from Government Agents, the Commissioner General of Essential Service prohibited the agents of Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Killinochchi from making any further requests for food and non-food items to United Nations agencies and international NGOs, and instructed that all requests had to be processed through him - OISL para 946.

OISL para 1169: "OISL has reasonable grounds to believe that the Government knew or had reasons to know the real humanitarian needs of the civilian populations in the concerned areas, including from its own Government agents who were organizing assistance in the conflict zone, and yet it imposed severe restrictions on the passage of relief and the freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel. This apparently resulted in depriving the civilian population in the Vanni of adequate basic foodstuffs and medical supplies essential for their survival, which has been well documented. If established by a court of law, these acts and omissions point to violations of international humanitarian law, which, depending on the circumstances, may amount to the use of starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare, which is prohibited under international humanitarian law."

Wikileaks: "At the Minister's request Commissioner General for Essential Services Divaratne briefed on GSL humanitarian efforts. He indicated that the Government Agents of Killinochchi and Mullaitivu had briefed the Government on October 23 that there was sufficient quantities of food in the north and that the supply and distribution of the food is good."

https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08COLOMB0985_a.html

¹⁶ <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2019/02/14/news-features/more-bombs-drop-%E2%80%98mig-deal%E2%80%99>

Rajapaksa in 2019 under the Torture Victims Protection Act alleging the former secretary of defence (now President) was responsible for ordering the killing of her father in 2009¹⁷.

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There are two additional members against whom allegations of involvement or knowledge of irregularities have also been levelled in the Sri Lankan media, which they deny.

- The *Presidential Task Force to direct, coordinate and monitor the delivery of continuous services for the sustenance of overall community life*, which is now replaced, included:

Secretary to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Gamini Sedara Senarath, whom Sri Lankan media reports said was charged in 2016 under the Penal Code, the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and the Public Property Act¹⁸, but then acquitted in August 2019 from charges of misappropriation of state funds¹⁹.

Another member was Dr. Priyath Bandu Wickrema, Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, Water Supply and Housing Facilities, whose portfolio falls under the Prime Minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa²⁰. Wickrema faced a corruption case in November 2019 after the Bribery Commission alleged that he had unlawfully employed 319 employees for election work around October 20, 2014, and January 7, 2015, while he was serving as the Ports Authority Chairman²¹. The final outcome of this case remains inconclusive.

¹⁷ <https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/wickrematunge-v-rajapaksa/client/>

<https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/wickrematunge-v-rajapaksa/>

¹⁸ <https://www.dailynews.lk/2018/10/16/law-order/165633/case-against-gamini-senaraththree-others-fixed-october-23>

¹⁹ Gamini Senarath acquitted and released from charges of misappropriating State funds, 9 Aug 2019, <http://www.ft.lk/front-page/Gamini-Senarath-acquitted-and-released-from-charges-of-misappropriating-State-funds/44-683653>

<https://www.newsradio.lk/local/gamini-senarath-acquitted-of-all-charges/>

<https://srilankabrief.org/2015/07/mrs-aide-faces-money-laundering-charges/>

<http://caffesrilanka.org/posters/160315070324ACF%20Report%20%23%2015%20--%20%20Files%20with%20the%20AGs%20department.pdf>

<https://srilankabrief.org/2016/03/details-of-the-22-investigations-into-rajapaksa-regimes-crimes-concluded-by-the-fcid/>

Named in <http://caffesrilanka.org/posters/160315070324ACF%20Report%20%23%2015%20--%20%20Files%20with%20the%20AGs%20department.pdf>

<https://srilankamirror.com/news/9953-64-witnesses-in-case-against-gamini-senarath>

<https://www.dailynews.lk/2018/10/16/law-order/165633/case-against-gamini-senaraththree-others-fixed-october-23>

²⁰ "Priyath Bandu Wickrema has been appointed as Secretary to the Ministry of Urban Development, Water Supplies and Housing Facilities, a portfolio held by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa." <http://www.ft.lk/front-page/Ex-SLPA-Chief-now-Urban-Development-and-Housing-Secretary/44-69054>

²¹ <http://www.dailynews.lk/2019/11/02/law-order/201730/further-trial-fixed-jan-28>

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2017/04/26/law-order/114203/case-against-former-slua-chairman-priyath-fixed-trial>

He is now involved in the planned construction of a new cricket stadium <https://colombogazette.com/2020/05/17/sri-lankas-biggest-cricket-stadium-to-be-constructed-in-homagama/>

State run newspaper on him arriving at The Presidential Commission Investigating into Mass Scale Corruption and Frauds:

<https://dailynews.lk/2016/09/24/law-order/93973>.

He was also questioned by the Financial Crimes Investigation Division of the police in 2016 in connection with alleged tax fraud.

<https://www.asianmirror.lk/keyhole/item/14652-dr-priyath-bandu-wickrema-in-hot-water-over-multi-million-alleged-tax-fraud-involving-csn> , "Dr. Priyath Bandu Wickrema In Hot Water Over Multi-million Alleged Tax Fraud Involving CSN:".

He was also a member of the board of directors of a Chinese company that allegedly made a donation to Mahinda Rajapaksa's 2015 election campaign though he has denied being aware of the alleged contribution. ("Meanwhile according to the 'B' Report submitted to Fort Magistrate Court (Case No: B 586/15) by the Financial Crime Investigation Division (FCID), when questioned, former Chairman SLPA Priyath Bandu Wickrema and Managing Director SLPA, Nihal Keppetipola, have both stated that although they were in the CICT Director Board during the time, the 'donation' had been made to Pushpa Rajapaksa Foundation in 2012, they were unaware of the payment nor had they discussed the matter at a Board Meeting.")

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/expose/Questionable-Donation-from-CICT/333-152833>

New York Times:

"At least \$7.6 million was dispensed from China Harbor's account at Standard Chartered Bank to affiliates of Mr. Rajapaksa's campaign, according to a document, seen by The Times, from an active internal government investigation. The document details China Harbor's bank account number – ownership of which was verified – and intelligence gleaned from questioning of the people to whom the checks were made out.

With 10 days to go before polls opened, around \$3.7 million was distributed in checks: \$678,000 to print campaign T-shirts and other promotional material and \$297,000 to buy supporters gifts, including women's saris. Another \$38,000 was paid to a popular Buddhist monk who was supporting Mr. Rajapaksa's electoral bid, while two checks totaling \$1.7 million were delivered by volunteers to Temple Trees, his official residence.

It is worth noting that investigations were initiated by the former government into alleged corruption by officials in the first Rajapaksa government (2005-15), some of which investigations are now being themselves investigated by a new Presidentially-appointed Commission looking at alleged political victimisation²². In addition, charges were dropped against several suspects just before the presidential elections in November 2019.

Members who are Military

Significant is that military members of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's inner circle²³ have held multiple positions, in two or even three²⁴ of the Task Forces, as well as holding other powerful government positions.

- Retired Major General Kamal Gunaratne is chair of two of the new Presidential Task Forces²⁵. He is also secretary of defence and when President Gotabaya Rajapaksa came to power he was assigned 31 key state institutions to his control.
- Retired Major General Sumedha Perera is a member of two of the current Task Forces²⁶. He served under Gotabaya Rajapaksa in the Gajaba Regiment in 1989 when the President was District Military Coordinator in Matale at a time when 700 Sinhalese were allegedly reported disappeared in state custody in the District²⁷.
- Lt. General Shavendra Silva, who also served in Matale under Gotabaya Rajapaksa, sits on two of the Task Forces as well as holding the two most senior military posts in the country. As 58 Division Commander he was a key officer in the 2009 war when Gotabaya Rajapaksa was the powerful secretary of defence. He is designated for alleged gross violations of human rights by the United States Government²⁸.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's key trusted lieutenants are public servants who hold critical positions in the State – with control of the military²⁹, the ministry of defence³⁰, intelligence³¹, key police

Most of the payments were from a subaccount controlled by China Harbor, named "HPDP Phase 2," shorthand for Hambantota Port Development Project." <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/25/world/asia/china-sri-lanka-port.html>

²² <http://www.dailynews.lk/2020/01/11/local/208087/president-appoints-high-powered-commission-probe-previous-govt>

²³ Inner Circle infographic : https://itjpsl.com/assets/ITJP_appointments_A3_v4.7.pdf

²⁴ Three is if you include the (1) Task Force for Poverty Eradication and Livelihood Development and (2) the Presidential Task Force to direct, coordinate and monitor the delivery of continuous services for the sustenance of overall community life which were later replaced by the Presidential Task Force for Economic Revival and Poverty Eradication.

²⁵ Gazette Notification No. 2153/12 - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2019 on the subjects and functions and Departments, Public Corporations & Statutory Institutions in the charge of various Ministers.

Kamal Gunaratne was in the Presidential Task Force to direct, coordinate and monitor the delivery of continuous services for the sustenance of overall community life (2), and now chairs the Presidential Task force for Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province (7) and the *Presidential Task Force to build a Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and Lawful Society (6)*.

²⁶ Task Force for Poverty Eradication and Livelihood Development (lapsed)

Presidential Task Force to direct, coordinate and monitor the delivery of continuous services for the sustenance of overall community life (lapsed)

Presidential Task Force in charge of Economic Revival and Poverty Eradication

Presidential Task Force to ensure the health safety within camps of the tri-forces

²⁷ Numbers extracted from cases reported to the Zonal and All Island Commissions of Inquiry in Sri Lanka.

²⁸ <https://www.state.gov/public-designation-due-to-gross-violations-of-human-rights-of-shavendra-silva-of-sri-lanka-under-section-7031c-of-the-department-of-state-foreign-operations-and-related-programs-appropriations-a/>

²⁹ Shavendra Silva.

³⁰ Kamal Gunaratne.

³¹ Maj Gen Jagath Alwis, T. Suresh Sallay.

departments³², customs³³, ports³⁴, prison vocational training³⁵. This new structure outside of parliament allows them to exercise power and control over the economy, security, media and all key aspects of life.

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Family

In addition, three of the President's brothers are directly involved in running the country:

- Mahinda Rajapaksa is Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economy and Policy Development, Minister of Buddhasasana, Cultural and Religious Affairs, Minister of Urban Development, Water Supply & Housing Facilities and Minister of Community Empowerment and Estate Infrastructure Development.
- Chamal Rajapaksa is state minister of defence, Minister of Mahaweli, Agriculture, Irrigation and Rural Development and Minister of Internal Trade, Food Security and Consumer Welfare.
- Basil Rajapaksa chairs the Economy Task Force. He too was investigated in five cases for alleged corruption under the last government³⁶. He is a dual US Sri Lankan citizen, and is not elected but acts as the President's Special Envoy.

Before the Task Forces were appointed, local news reports said the Rajapaksa brothers were reportedly in control of 145 state institutions – 88 alone in the hands of Mahinda Rajapaksa³⁷. This is despite Gotabaya Rajapaksa's manifesto promise that, *"All appointments as heads of State institutions, corporations and statutory boards, and appointments to Boards of Directors will be based on merit and leadership abilities"*³⁸.

Nepotism. patronage and militarisation are the characteristics of the new government in Sri Lanka with power consolidated following the elections.

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³² Prasanna de Alwis.

³³ Major General Vijitha Ravipriya.

³⁴ Major General Daya Ratnayake.

³⁵ Nissanka Senadhipathi, <https://www.dailynews.lk/2020/02/08/local/210827/avant-garde-rs1-bn-project-train-vocational-skills-employ-5000-prison>

³⁶ <http://caffesrilanka.org/posters/160315070324ACF%20%20Report%20%23%2015%20--%20%20Files%20with%20the%20AGs%20department.pdf>

1. The Ministry of Economic Development initiated a program called "Yali Pubudamu" or Rise Again in which it was alleged that there were financial irregularities.
2. Financial irregularities allegedly in the "Isurumath Nivahanak" project conducted by the Divineguma Department under the Ministry of Economic Development involving SLR 2990 Million.
3. Financial fraud during a national meeting of the Divineguma Department in 2014 for obtaining and using SLR 63.7 Million without Treasury approval.
4. Illegally diverting and utilizing SLR 19.4 Million (US\$ 15,000) of fund suspected to be from the Sri Lankan Ports Authority to the Pushpa Rajapaksa Foundation at the Main Branch of the Peoples Bank of Sri Lanka.
5. Case Number 8674/15 in Pugoda M.C. regarding Economic Development Projects

This article alleges some of the cases stalled at the Attorney General's department: <https://newsfirst-staging.3cs.support/2017/05/long-pause-police-fcid-investigations-conclude/>

³⁷ The Unravelling, 16 Dec 2019, FT Lanka, <http://www.ft.lk/columns/The-Unravelling/4-691664>

³⁸ Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour, P7.

LIST OF PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCES

1. Task Force for Poverty Eradication and Livelihood Development.
2. Presidential Task Force to direct, coordinate and monitor the delivery of continuous services for the sustenance of overall community life.
3. **1 and 2 replaced by:** Presidential Task Force for Economic Revival and Poverty Eradication³⁹.
4. Presidential Task Force to study and provide instructions on measures to be taken by all Armed Forces to prevent Coronavirus infection among members of the Tri-Forces⁴⁰ .
5. Task Force on Sri Lanka's Education Affairs⁴¹.
6. The Presidential Task Force to build a Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and Lawful Society
7. The Presidential Task Force for Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province
8. Multipurpose Development Task Force (not a Presidential Task Force but created by the President)⁴².

³⁹ <https://news.lk/news/political-current-affairs/item/30031-president-appoints-presidential-task-force-for-economic-revival-and-poverty-elevation>

⁴⁰ <https://news.lk/news/political-current-affairs/item/30048-special-task-force-established-to-ensure-safety-of-military-camps>

⁴¹ http://documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2020/4/2173-07_E.pdf <https://www.dailynews.lk/2020/04/29/local/217554/task-force-education-appointed>
Reported earlier <http://www.ft.lk/news/President-appoints-Education-Task-Force-to-deal-with-interruptions-due-to-COVID-19/56-698494>
<https://ceylontoday.lk/news-more/13468>

⁴² <http://www.pmdnews.lk/%E0%AE%93%E0%AE%AF%E0%AF%8D%E0%AE%B5%E0%AF%81%E0%AE%AA%E0%AF%86%E0%AE%B1%E0%AF%8D%E0%AE%B1-%E0%AE%AE%E0%AF%87%E0%AE%9C%E0%AE%B0%E0%AF%8D-%E0%AE%9C%E0%AF%86%E0%AE%A9%E0%AE%B0%E0%AE%B2%E0%AF%8D/>

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