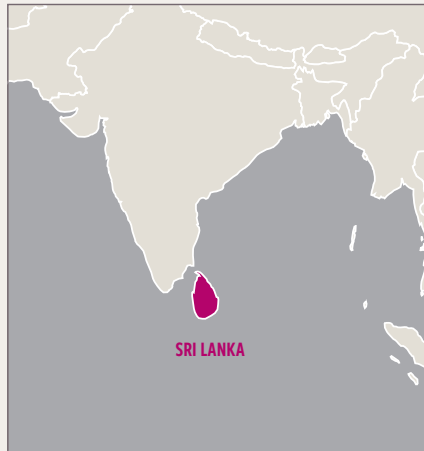


# SRI LANKA



Following years of civil war and religious tension, Sri Lanka's democratic opening may narrow following divisive security policies that threaten civil society reform and decentralization efforts. The November 2019 election of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa only compounds these concerns.

## Country Context

Since the defeat of the separatist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 2009 that brought an end to Sri Lanka's 25-year civil war, little progress has been made in transitional justice. Further compounding the country's intertwined societal and political issues, in April 2019, terrorist attacks killed more than 250 people, further crippling citizen confidence in the government's ability to keep them safe. In November 2019, running on a platform of national security, Gotabaya Rajapaksa won the presidential elections and soon after selected his brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa, as his prime minister.

## How is the U.S. Involved?

The U.S. has provided significant development and humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka since 1956 through agriculture, natural resources, health, education, trade, and democracy and governance programming.

## On-the-Ground Perspective

- A new civil society initiative—the National People's Movement—recently put forth a comprehensive package of recommended reforms.
- Various laws, such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, are being used to restrict the free expression, assembly, and association of civil society in Sri Lanka, particularly for minority groups.
- Through \$11 billion in investment, China is increasing its influence and gaining widespread support in the country with mega-projects like ports and highways.

## Responses and Actions

- NGOs and various U.S. government agencies are partnering to build the capacity of Sri Lankan civil society actors, providing technical assistance on law reform, NGO registration, counter-terrorism legislation, and self-regulation efforts. USAID works with the government of Sri Lanka to advance its reform agenda.
- In 2016, World Vision supported economic development in Sri Lanka by empowering citizens through career and business training—assets needed to start new livelihoods and improve existing ones—and assisted families with the creation of sustainable development plans. In total, World Vision assisted 16,286 individual beneficiaries through these types of programs.

References available at [interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport](https://www.interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport).

## Key Figures



**4%**

of Sri Lankans (0.8 million) live below the national poverty line



**Over 100,000**

civilians and 50,000 fighters were killed in the civil war from 1983 to 2004



**\$816 million**

in total official development assistance received in 2017



**Over \$2 billion**

in assistance given by the U.S. since its independence in 1948

