



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

FACULTY OF LAW

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS (CSHR)

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS (CSHR)

CSHR

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- <https://www.facebook.com/centreforthestudyofhumanrights>
- <https://www.instagram.com/centreforthestudyofhumanrights/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/centre-for-the-study-of-human-rights-university-of-colombo-986121280>
- <https://twitter.com/CSHRUOC>
- <https://www.youtube.com/@cshrcentreforthestudyofhum7052>

VISION

To be a center of excellence for creating a nation with a rights consciousness in which the dignity and rights of all people are respected.

MISSION

To foster human rights education, research, capacity building, and knowledge services using a multidisciplinary approach.

MANDATE

As a non-profit educational institution attached to the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, CSHR's mandate is to conduct and facilitate human rights education and research programmes for the university and the community at large.

Message by the Director



It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR), University of Colombo, for the year 2024–2025. This report reflects another productive year in which the Centre remained committed to its mandate of promoting human rights through education, research, capacity building, knowledge services, and institutional development.

Throughout the year, CSHR continued to strengthen its academic portfolio by reviewing and revising programme by-laws, curricula, and academic guidelines in accordance with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF).

These quality enhancement initiatives, together with the introduction of new academic programmes, demonstrate our commitment to maintaining high academic standards while responding to emerging national and global developments in the field of human rights.

Beyond academic excellence, the Centre expanded its contribution to professional capacity building by conducting specialized training programmes for public sector institutions, particularly the Department of Probation and Child Care Services. These initiatives aimed to promote a rights-based approach to public service while strengthening institutional capacities and professional competencies.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our academic and administrative staff, programme coordinators, researchers, students, alumni, and partner institutions. I sincerely thank the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, the Board of Management, our development partners, and all stakeholders for their invaluable guidance and continued support.

As we move forward, CSHR remains committed to fostering excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement while advancing the values of human dignity, equality, justice, and the rule of law. Together, we will continue to strengthen our contribution towards building a more inclusive and rights-conscious society.

Senior Professor (Chair) Wasantha Seneviratne

Professor of Public and International Law

Director, Centre for the Study of Human Rights

Department of Public and International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo

Message by the Deputy Director



It is a privilege to present this message for the Annual Report of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR), University of Colombo, for the year 2024–2025. The achievements highlighted in this report demonstrate the Centre's continued commitment to promoting human rights education, research, and public engagement while responding to the evolving needs of society.

During the year, considerable emphasis was placed on strengthening the quality and relevance of our academic programmes. Comprehensive revisions of programme by-laws, curricula, and academic guidelines were undertaken in line with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), ensuring that our programmes continue to meet nationally recognized quality standards. The introduction of new academic programmes further reflects our commitment to addressing contemporary human rights challenges across diverse professional disciplines.

CSHR also continued its engagement with government institutions and civil society through a range of capacity-building initiatives designed to enhance knowledge, professional skills, and rights-based practices. These programmes have strengthened collaboration with key stakeholders while contributing to the promotion and protection of human rights within public institutions and communities.

The accomplishments presented in this report are the result of collective effort, dedication, and teamwork. I extend my sincere appreciation to the Director, the Vice Chancellor, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, the Board of Management, our academic and administrative staff, development partners, collaborating institutions, and students for their invaluable support throughout the year.

As we look ahead, CSHR will continue to pursue innovation, academic excellence, and meaningful community engagement while upholding its mission of advancing human rights, equality, justice, and democratic values for the benefit of Sri Lankan society.

Dr. M. A. M. Hakeem

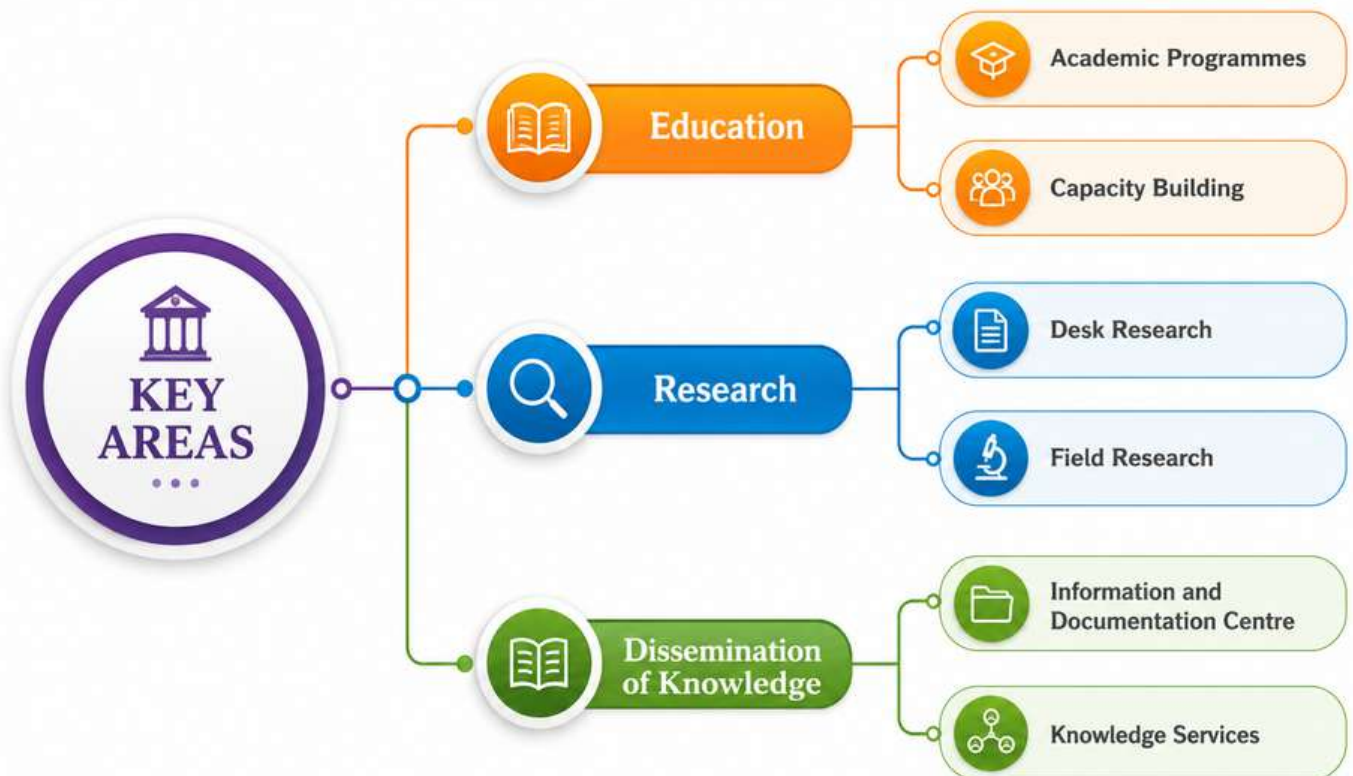
Deputy Director, Centre for the Study of Human Rights,

Senior Lecturer, Department of Public and International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo

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KEY AREAS OF CSHR



OUR PROFILE

The Centre for the Study on Human Rights (CSHR) founded in 1991 has been in the field of Human Rights for more than three decades engaged in research, education and capacity building from grassroot level to international level. The CSHR is a non-profit organization attached to the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo which operates as a bridging institution to the public domain. The mandate of CSHR is to conduct and facilitate human rights education and research programmes for the university and the community at large. Being the first institution of its kind within the university system, CSHR gained recognition and acceptance as a leading human rights educational institute, which aims to disseminate human rights education to a wide cross-section of the population.

CSHR's activities are conducted under five key pillars. These are Education, Research, Capacity Building, Knowledge Services, and Institutional Development. Through these activities CSHR has reached out to officials of the armed forces, police, prison officers and inmates, officers attached to the administrative arms of the State apparatus at all levels, lawyers, academics and other professionals at all levels, the university community, education sector, school children, community leaders, physically and socially marginalized groups and the public.

In terms of Education, CSHR conducts Human Rights programmes from postgraduate to certificate level, catering to the needs of diverse groups of students and empowering them with the knowledge of their Constitutionally guaranteed rights.

In the area of Research, the CSHR carries out practically applicable research. Over the years CSHR has conducted research in relation to remand prisoners, legal aid in prisons, rehabilitation programmes in prisons, IDP's, children in remand homes, command responsibility, status of rights in the Eastern province and education level of Veddas, Exploring the concept of violence within post war Sri Lankan society, language rights and gender, among others.

In relation to Capacity Building, the CSHR works with various partners in educating about their rights and responsibilities with the objective of protecting their rights as well as the rights of their stakeholders. Mainly the groups involved in capacity building are secondary and tertiary school students, preservice and in-service teachers, academics and non-academics, media personnel, differently-abled persons, Law Enforcement Officers, Armed Forces, Inmates, Quazis, Rural and plantation communities and the public among others.

In the area of Knowledge Services, the CSHR continues knowledge sharing through its Resource Centre to students, academics, researchers, and the general public. The Resource Centre also enables access of electronic media in the form of the E resources accessible throughout the year.

In terms of Institutional Development, CSHR focuses on delivering high quality programmes in all aspects under its mandate. CSHR also provide opportunities to its Staff to improve their knowledge and skills, which will contribute to effective delivery of programmes and to the creation of a culture of human rights in the country. Being the pioneer on human rights education and research, the CSHR is marching forward with the new trends of dissemination and empowerment of human rights.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION



Human rights have evolved into a distinct academic discipline with theoretical and practical importance, drawing inspiration from several fields of study such as philosophy, law, public administration, law enforcement, national security, public policy formulation and implementation etc. Learning human rights also has become important for those involved in careers in law, public administration, the military, development work and members of civil society.

Human Rights Education is one of the thematic areas under the CSHR's mandate. The education programmes were launched back in 1996 with the intention of providing the basic knowledge on Human Rights to the public to suit the country's need at the period. In par with its vision CSHR makes use of formal educational programmes that cater to different educational levels with the aim of enhancing the understanding of the multidimensional nature of human rights. Target groups of these programmes consist of state actors, undergraduates, graduates, private sector entities, officers of law enforcement agencies, security forces and the public. The duration of these programmes varies from a minimum of three months to one year. CSHR adopts diverse, innovative and student-oriented instructing modes in disseminating knowledge and student evaluation. The following educational programmes were carried out during the year.

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1) MASTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATISATION – APMA PROGRAMME

The Asia Pacific Master of Human Rights and Democratisation (APMA) is a one-year interdisciplinary program that highlights the inseparable links between human rights, democracy, peace, and development in the Asia Pacific region. It provides in depth understanding of local, regional and global human rights and democratisation issues. The course is open for human rights and democracy practitioners and activists, for those engaged in related fields, or for highly motivated graduates and academics who have just completed their first degrees.

APMA was commenced in 2010, as a result of the European Commission's initiative to establish the Global Campus for Human Rights in 2010. The Global Campus for Human Rights in the Asia Pacific was established initially in the University of Sydney, Australia and later transferred to the University of Mahidol in 2015, and now being implemented by Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies of Mahidol University (Thailand). Currently, four (4) universities jointly offer the program as partner universities; Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines), Kathmandu School of Law (Nepal), University of Colombo (Sri Lanka), and University of Gadjah Madah (Indonesia). The Inauguration ceremony of the APMA Programme 2024/2025 was held on 13th February 2025 at the Board Room, faculty of Law, University of Colombo and the Orientation was held on 14th of February 2025 at the Board Room, faculty of Law, University of Colombo. Five students from the Asia Pacific region joined for their second semester in University of Colombo. During the second semester at the University of Colombo, APMA students participated in a series of academic and cultural field visits. Academic visits to institutions such as the Parliament of Sri Lanka, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, and prisons provided practical insights into governance, human rights, and the justice system. Cultural visits to Kandy and Galle enabled students to gain a deeper appreciation of Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage, diversity, and socio-political context.

APMA programme is funded by the European Commission through the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand.



2) MASTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIZATION (LOCAL) PROGRAMME

The Master of Human Rights and Democratisation (Local) Programme (MHRD) is designed for mid-career professionals and highly motivated graduates. The degree offers students a unique opportunity to engage first-hand with regional and international human rights and democratisation issues and to interact with internationally acclaimed academics, practitioners and experts.

The local program started in 2015, to link with the Asia Pacific MHRD program. Initially, the syllabus was developed with the contribution of the experts in human rights and democracy, in the Asia Pacific region by the University of Sydney, Australia. The program was linked to the Sydney program and later transferred to Mahidol University, Thailand. Therefore, the local students will have the opportunity to interact with a group of international students from the Asia Pacific Region coming from Mahidol University, during the Second Semester.

MHRD is a unique and multi-disciplinary post-graduate degree in Sri Lanka. One of the objectives is to explore the nexus between democratic governance and the realisation of human rights. With respect to the curriculum, the content of the course lectures is substantially updated and delivered under the excellent supervision and guidance of the staff of the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo along with several other local and international experts in the field.

The inauguration and orientation of the MHRD 2024/2025 batch were held on the 27th of September 2024 where 20 students registered for the programme. Lectures commenced on the 28th of September 2024. The Semester I examinations were held on 25th & 26th January 2025, while the Semester II examinations were conducted on 27th April 2025. 15 students will be awarded a Masters Degree at the Convocation in March 2026.



3) THE MASTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER JUSTICE

The Master of Human Rights in Human Development and Gender Justice (MHR-HDGJ) is a newly introduced one-year postgraduate degree programme offered in the English medium. The programme is conducted under the new By-laws developed in accordance with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), which were approved by the University Council at its 621st Council Meeting held on 12 June 2024.

A total of 88 applications were received, of which 55 students were registered. The inauguration ceremony was successfully held on 27th September 2024. As part of the academic programme, the Outbound Training Programme, comprising presentations and a workshop on the Guided Independent Study Report, was successfully conducted on 24th May 2025 at Sofia Colombo City Hotel, Colombo 03. The Semester I examinations were held on 15th and 16th March 2025, while the Semester II examinations were conducted on 26th July 2025. A total of 38 students completed the programme, and the convocation will be held in March 2026.



4) POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CHILD PROTECTION AND RIGHTS

The One-year Postgraduate Diploma programme is for Academics, Law enforcement officers, human rights activists, journalists, teachers, and other interested persons and professionals engaged in protecting and promoting child rights and protection. Basic understanding of concepts of child rights, evolution of child rights, related international and domestic legal framework, and practical application of child rights are discussed through the curriculum of the programme. The programme is conducted in Sinhala, Tamil and English medium.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Child Protection and Rights (2023/2024 Batch) commenced on 7th July 2023 with 63 registered students. The Semester I examinations were successfully conducted on 27th and 28th July 2024, while the Semester II examinations were held on 25th and 26th January 2025.

As part of the programme's experiential learning component, a field visit was successfully conducted on 27th October 2024 at the Moratuwa Divisional Secretariat Division, enabling students to gain practical exposure to child protection mechanisms at the community level. The students who successfully completed the programme will graduate at the Convocation will be held in March 2026. 44 students successfully completed the programme, with 25 students obtaining Merit Passes and 19 students obtaining Ordinary Passes, reflecting a commendable level of academic achievement.



5) HIGHER DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS BASED HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This year CSHR introduced a new course to the educational programmes in Human Rights. It is the first higher diploma level study programme initiated by the CSHR.

This study program aims to provide significant subject knowledge which is essential for all individuals who are part of or are interested in the business environment and human rights. This course will enhance their knowledge on diverse aspects of human rights, human resource management, business and labour relations and make them familiar with law, regulations and procedures involved in enforcing the same as all business enterprises and individuals are expected to respect human rights to create a conducive environment for both the employer and employees.

The course was developed for those who are interested in studying the interface between human rights and human resource management and are from diverse backgrounds such as from public sector, corporate sector, lawyers, employees in NGO's and INGO's, human rights activists, members from civil society organizations and any other individual having a passion to follow the programme.

6) DIPLOMA IN MEDIA AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Diploma in Media and Human Rights is introduced by CSHR targeted at the Media Sector, Professionals engaged in Journalism and those who are interested in the relevant academia. This programme is intended to provide and develop the necessary knowledge, enhance the skills and inculcate attitudes in the area of Media and Journalism.

7) DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Diploma in Human Rights-based Law Enforcement is a Police Diploma programme for Law Enforcement personnel to enhance human rights-related knowledge in Sri Lanka. The course aims to address the implementation of human rights in relation to the knowledge, skills and attitudes of Law Enforcement officers.

The programme was designed according to the Sri Lanka Quality Framework (SLQF) standards 2015.

8) DISTANCE LEARNING DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY – DLDHRD

The objective of this programme is to provide academic understanding of the core principles of Human Rights and Democracy with unique consideration to the current trend. Distance mode of education will enable participants who are working at the grass root level to enhance the necessary skills to further their profession, towards making a positive impact on the protection and promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in the wider society.

The awarding ceremony will be held on the 15th of May 2026.

The Final Examination of the 2024/25 batch was held on the 01st of November 2025.

The orientation and the first lecture of the batch 2024/25 were held on 13th November 2024.

The course modules and the by-laws were revised according to the Sri Lanka Quality Framework (SLQF) standards 2022.

9) DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2023, the E-diploma in Human Rights programme was renamed the Diploma in Human Rights. Following this change, the programme by-law and concept paper were revised and subsequently approved by the relevant authorities of the University of Colombo to reflect the new programme title and updated curriculum.

Orientation of the Diploma in Human Rights 2024/25 batch was held on 07th of September 2024. The Orientation was conducted by the IT Officer, and the first lecture on Introduction to Human Rights, referencing, and assignment writing was conducted by the Academic Coordinator, Mr. Isuru Liyanage. The final examination was held on 23rd of August 2025, where 31 students sat for the examination. The awarding ceremony will be held on 15th May 2026.

The course modules and the by-laws were revised according to the Sri Lanka Quality Framework (SLQF) standards 2015.

10) DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS BASED POLICING

This Diploma was designed based on the findings of the project on Enhancing Human Rights Protection (EHRP) implemented by the CSHR and the Kathmandu School of Law, Nepal, in collaboration with the University of Sydney, Australia. This programme intends to formulate the tested strategy into a formal training programme designed especially for Police personnel in Sri Lanka. The programme is offered in both Sinhala and Tamil mediums with funding from the Department of Police. .

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMMES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

11) ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

This course is an introduction to Human Rights (HR) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL). It focuses on the very basics of the relevant areas, particularly emphasizing the most important aspects, namely, the history and background of HR and IHL, domestic law, fundamental rights, international treaties, norms, and principles related to HR and IHL and mechanisms of implementing these regimes.

The awarding ceremony will be held on 15th May 2026.

The course modules and guidelines were revised according to the Sri Lanka Quality Framework (SLQF) standards 2015.

12) ADVANCED CERTIFICATE AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME IN CHILD CARE AND RIGHTS

The Advanced Certificate on Child Care and Rights is a practice-oriented programme targeted at the child protection sector, child rights and human rights activism, professionals engaged in protecting and promoting child rights and preventing child abuse in society. Childcare and child rights have drawn the attention of academics, administrators, policymakers, NGOs, INGOs, donor communities and interested members of civil society over the past years.

This programme is intended to provide and develop the necessary knowledge, enhance the skills and inculcate attitudes in the area of childcare and child rights.

The awarding ceremony will be held on 15th May 2026.

13) CERTIFICATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Human Rights and Fundamental Rights is a three-month certificate program offered by CSHR. It focuses on the very basics of the relevant areas, particularly emphasizing the most important aspects, namely history and background of HR and FR, domestic law, fundamental rights, international treaties, norms, and principles related to HR and FR and mechanisms of implementing these regimes. The course is offered in both Tamil and Sinhala medium.

The Inauguration of the 2024/25 batch was held on the 23rd of November 2024, and 13 students enrolled for the programme. The awarding ceremony will be held on 15th May 2026.

14) THE CERTIFICATE COURSE IN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND BUDDHISM

The Certificate Course in International Humanitarian Law and Buddhism explores the intersection between International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Buddhist principles. The programme aims to disseminate knowledge on the interface between IHL and Buddhism and to encourage professionals in law, military, postgraduate students and others to engage themselves in dialogue and research in relation to the interface between IHL and Buddhism.

Recognizing the importance of this intersection, the University of Colombo, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has worked alongside academic experts in both International Humanitarian Law and Buddhism to develop this specialized course. The programme explores the commonalities between IHL and Buddhist teachings, promoting a deeper understanding of humanitarian principles from both legal and ethical perspectives.

The Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) officially launched the inaugural programme on 25th March 2025 via the Zoom platform. A total of 28 students, including 5 international students, registered in the first batch, and 23 local students were awarded full scholarships by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The lectures commenced on 30th March 2025. The awarding ceremony will be held on 15th May 2026.

15) CERTIFICATE IN MEDIATION

The Certificate in Mediation was developed in accordance with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) Level 1 and approved by the University of Colombo as a three-month certificate programme comprising five course units and 10 credits. The programme was offered in Sinhala, Tamil, and English, targeting mediators, public officers, legal practitioners, business professionals, university students, and other interested individuals.

The programme was developed under the project "Strengthening Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Sri Lanka," implemented by the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) in collaboration with The Asia Foundation and supported through the Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE), led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the European Union.

The course curriculum, module outlines, and programme guidelines were developed in accordance with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) 2015 to ensure compliance with national quality standards.

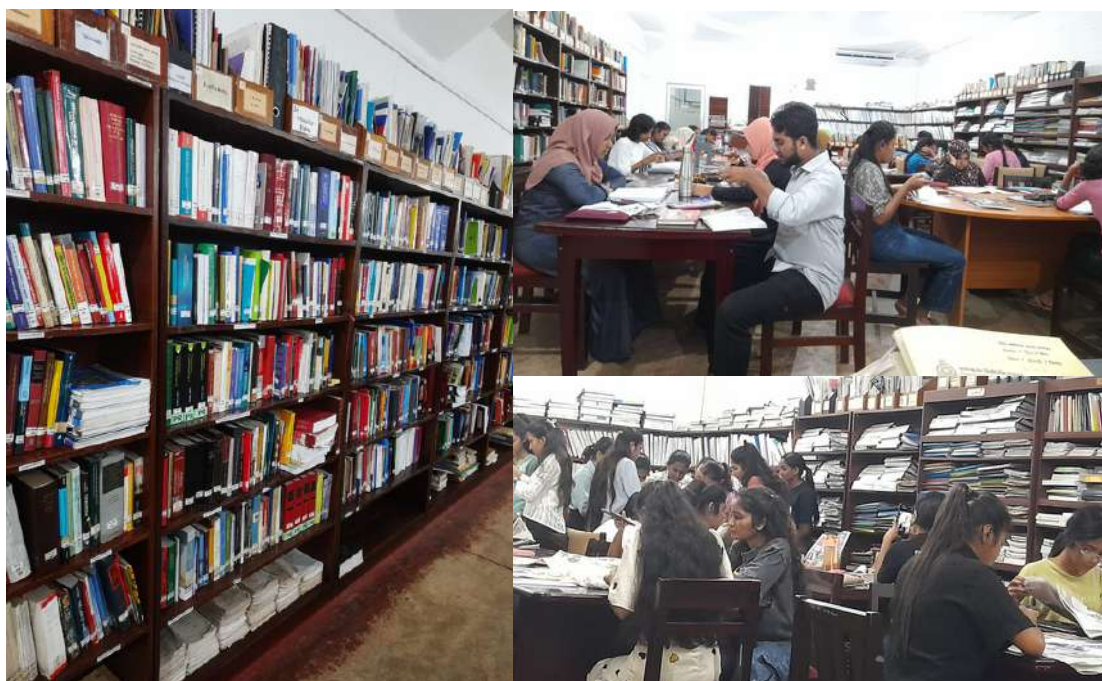
With scholarship support from The Asia Foundation, 35 participants were awarded half-scholarships, while two participants with disabilities received full scholarships to pursue the programme.

The Certificate in Mediation (2024/2025) was inaugurated on 21st February 2025. The final assessment, comprising participant presentations, was conducted on 28th June 2025, with 61 participants sitting for the examination. All participants who completed the programme will be awarded certificates at the CSHR Awards Ceremony held on 15th May 2026.

DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION UNIT - 2024

Through knowledge sharing CSHR aims to provide multicultural and multidisciplinary knowledge services to keep pace with knowledge on human rights by creating awareness among diverse groups of persons at different levels. During the year, CSHR provided knowledge to students, academics, researchers and other persons through its Resource Unit, located within its premises.



The number of books in the Resource Unit increased over the year with 175 new books being added to the collection. The number of books available for referencing added up to 4701. 33 books were removed from the main accession register and the database through the weeding policy.

Donations

Over the year CSHR Resource Centre received many publications from donors. A Generous donation of 126 publications of Late Dr. Lakshman Marasinghe's collection was received from his wife Former Supreme Court Judge Hon. Justice Rohini Marasinghe.

Resource Centre Users

The following memberships were given to all Resource Unit users during the year, for a scheduled period, with the exception of undergraduates having to make a payment. A total number of 405 new undergraduate members joined the Resource Unit as detailed below.

Faculty of Law	312
Faculty of Arts	88
Faculty of Education	03
Faculty of Management	02
Total	405

The CSHR offers the memberships for the community at a reasonable membership fee.

The number of users who attended the Resource Unit for the year 2024 was 4,456 (users have been requested to sign in only once for the day). The Resource Unit was operational even during the non-academic staff strike.

Book Borrowing Facility

Books are permitted to be borrowed only by staff of the Faculty of Law, Staff of CSHR and MHRD Students.

Current Awareness Service (CAS)

New publications received by the library are disseminated online for the benefit of members of the Faculty of Law. This information is made available quarterly throughout the year.

The Resource Unit also attributed to the need through the Open Access Library Database (OPAC) and the E- Resources module available at the CSHR Learning Management System.

The database is available at <http://opac.cshr.cmb.ac.lk:8080/jspui/>

The E-Resources Module is available at <https://lms.cshr.cmb.ac.lk/course/view.php?id=44>

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION UNIT - 2025

CSHR aims to provide multicultural and multidisciplinary knowledge services to keep pace with knowledge on human rights by creating awareness among diverse groups of people at different levels through knowledge sharing. During the year, CSHR provided knowledge to students, academics, researchers and other people through its Resource Unit, located within its premises.

The number of books available for reference added up to 4779 over the year. 20 books were removed from the main accession register and the database through the weeding policy.



The updated newspaper clippings service in Sinhala and English fulfilled the requirement of the latest information needed on a wide range of topics. In addition to the undergraduates, other visitors to the Resource Unit, both local and foreign, found the resources available useful.

Donations

The CSHR Resource Unit received numerous publications from various donors, including

- The Asia Foundation
- USAID
- UNDP
- The Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL)
- The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL)
- Law & Society Trust (LST), and individual contributors.

Resource Centre Users

The Resource Unit offers membership to users for a fixed period. Undergraduate students are offered membership until their final exams and are exempt from paying fees. A total of 380 new undergraduate members joined the Resource Unit during the year 2025.

Faculty of Law	250
Faculty of Arts	106
Faculty of Education	22
Faculty of Management	02
Total	380

The CSHR offers memberships for the community at a reasonable membership fee.

The number of users who attended the Resource Centre for the year 2025 was 4,286 (users have been requested to sign in only once for the day).

Book Borrowing Facility

Books are permitted to be borrowed only by staff of the Faculty of Law, Staff of the CSHR and MHRD Students.

Current Awareness Service (CAS)

New publications received by the Resource Unit are disseminated online for the benefit of members of the Faculty of Law & the CSHR Board members. This information is made available quarterly throughout the year.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE)/UNDP: Enhancing Legal Awareness of Public and Justice Stakeholders:

With the support of the Justice Sector Project (JURE), CSHR, significantly expanded access to justice, legal education, and community legal awareness across Sri Lanka.

By the end of the reporting period, 5,247 individuals (2,494 women and 2,753 men) had directly benefited from free legal advice provided through district-based consultations and legal aid camps. The initiative also strengthened legal education by engaging 619 law students in clinical legal education programmes, where they gained practical experience through client intake, legal research, case preparation, and observation of legal consultations. These activities were supported on a pro bono basis by 147 lawyers and 20 justice sector officers.

In addition, 115 law students participated in community legal education initiatives, conducting 16 school legal awareness programmes that reached 2,434 secondary school students. These sessions covered key topics such as child rights, cyber safety, bullying, and gender equality, promoting legal literacy and respect for the rule of law among young people.

The project further supported the work of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka by facilitating the management of 15,294 cases, with the majority relating to Article 12 (equality and non-discrimination) of the Constitution, followed by Articles 13, 11, and 14. Across the project period, CSHR delivered 226 legal awareness sessions nationwide, reaching 8,049 individuals, while 106 district-level public administrative officers received specialized legal awareness training.

To enhance outreach to vulnerable and marginalized communities, CSHR partnered with 11 civil society organizations, engaging groups such as the Malayaga Tamil community, fishing communities, and garment sector workers. During the reporting period, CSHR conducted multiple legal aid camps and school awareness programmes across several districts, providing free legal assistance and strengthening access to justice.

Following additional funding approved under an amended agreement between UNDP and the University of Colombo, CSHR expanded its legal aid outreach to selected districts in three provinces. Between October 2025 and January 2026, three legal aid camps conducted in Weliveriya, Nuraichchola, and Thumulla provided free legal advice to 89 beneficiaries (46 men and 43 women), including women and children affected by domestic violence, low-income families, migrant worker households, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and fishing and farming communities.

These initiatives continued to strengthen access to justice while supporting the practical training and employability of future legal professionals. Additionally, CSHR worked with UNDP under JURE project for the following activities:

1. Supported Human Rights Commission with paid interns for case management support

- Exploring to engage the support of law students to support bail applications of detainees in the Department of Prisons
- Exploring to engage law students as interns to Legal Aid Commission

2. The CSHR facilitated to Faculty of Law to expand multidisciplinary educational opportunities

- Diploma in Gender, Development, and Human Rights (scholarships available)
- Master of Human Rights Related to Business
- Higher Diploma in Human Rights and Treatment of Prisoners

3. Technical support to justice sector institutions

- Supporting the Department of Prisons to develop a Code of Ethics to its staff, including planning to entrench the ethics through systematic trainings to the staff

4. Supporting UOC online legal reference collection:

- USD 13,685 were allocated to renew subscriptions of online law journal databases: Oxford (law collection), LexisNexis and LawLanka; on the pipeline HeinOnline
- Expanded the reference collection of the CSHR library with recent publications in emerging areas of law and human rights

5. Legal and interdisciplinary research

- Sri Lanka Journal of Human Rights: Volume 5 Issue 1 and 2 finalized and called for papers for Volume 6
- Engaging recent law graduates in writing Fundamental Rights (FR) case summaries and commentaries
- Developing an online database of FR case summaries and commentaries

Memories



2. Save the Children: Development and implementation of an advanced certificate course for caregiver staff in State Childcare Institutions on managing and caring for child victims

The Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR), Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, with the support of Save the Children in Sri Lanka and in collaboration with the Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS), conducted a gap analysis to assess the knowledge and capacity of caregiver staff in state and non-state childcare institutions in caring for and managing Child Victims of Trafficking (CVoT). This initiative was implemented under the Strengthening Government and CSO Capacity to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Create Greater Impact (IMPACT) Project (2022–2024).

The findings revealed significant gaps in caregivers' understanding of trafficking-related issues, victim identification, protection mechanisms, and case management. In response, CSHR developed the Advanced Certificate in Human Rights-Based Approach to Case Management and Care of Child Victims of Trafficking, with technical guidance from experts in law, sociology, psychology, and psychosocial support, as well as institutional support from the DPCCS and the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA).

Designed in accordance with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) Level 2, the six-month programme enables participants to earn 15 credits through eight taught units. The curriculum covers key areas including child rights, legal frameworks, child protection, care planning, stress management, trafficking victim identification, case management, and record keeping.

To date, nearly 130 caregiver staff from state and non-state childcare institutions have successfully completed the programme free of charge, contributing to improved quality and accessibility of services for child victims of trafficking.

3. The Asia Foundation: Develop and Implement postgraduate courses (Certificate, Diploma, Postgraduate and Master's courses) on Alternative Dispute Resolution with a focus on Mediation and to raise public awareness on Mediation

CSHR initiated the development of postgraduate academic programmes in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), with a particular focus on mediation and commercial mediation, under the project “Strengthening Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Sri Lanka.” The project is implemented in collaboration with The Asia Foundation and supported through the Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE), led by United Nations Development Programme and funded by the European Union.

The initiative aims to strengthen Sri Lanka's ADR framework by professionalizing mediation education and establishing a clear academic and professional pathway for mediation practitioners. As part of this effort, CSHR developed four structured academic programmes: Certificate in Mediation, Diploma in Mediation, Postgraduate Diploma in Mediation, and Master's Degree in Mediation. The curricula incorporate gender-responsive and inclusive approaches, while the student selection process was designed to ensure accessibility and equitable participation, particularly for persons with disabilities.

The Certificate in Mediation, developed in accordance with Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) Level 1, was approved by the University of Colombo and offered as a three-month programme consisting of five units and 10 credits. Delivered in Sinhala, Tamil, and English, the course targeted mediators, public officers, legal practitioners, business leaders, university students, and other interested individuals.

With scholarship support from The Asia Foundation, a transparent and inclusive selection process was established based on merit, leadership potential, communication skills, motivation, and mediation-related experience. Special consideration was given to applicants from underrepresented groups, including women, persons with disabilities, low-income backgrounds, and those from the Northern, Eastern, and Uva Provinces. Under this scheme, 35 students received half-scholarships, while two students with disabilities received full scholarships. A total of 61 students successfully completed the Certificate in Mediation programme.

The Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma, and Master's Degree in Mediation have been developed and submitted for further approval through the University's legislative process, with implementation expected upon approval by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Memories



4. Junior Command and Staff Training Programme on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law

Since 2008, The CSHR has been conducting three 3 Day programmes annually for the Junior Command and Staff Course of the Air Force. This programme is collaboratively conducted by the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) and Sri Lanka Air Force. The programme conducts three times a year as per the request made by Sri Lanka Air Force. The aim of this programme is to provide considerable theoretical and practical knowledge on International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law for both Sri Lankan and foreign middle ranked armed forces officials who are nominated by the relevant authorities.

The sessions were conducted by a dynamic range of resource persons from Faculty of Law, Attorney General's Department, ICRC, and private practitioners to ensure the practical and theoretical aspects covered.

75th Junior Command and Staff Training Programme 2024

- The three-day Training Programme was held on 29th to 31st of January 2024. 29 Air Force officers participated in the training. (01 foreign officer is from India)

76th Junior Command and Staff Training Programme 2024

- The three-day Training Programme was held from 12th to the 14th of June 2024. 27 Air Force officers participated in the training. (01 foreign officer is from India)

77th Junior Command and Staff Training Programme 2024

- The three-day Training Programme was held from 22nd to the 24th of October 2024. 31 Air Force officers participated in the training. (01 foreign officer is from Nigeria)

78th Junior Command and Staff Training Programme 2025

- The three-day Training Programme was held from 15th to the 17th of January 2025. 28 Air Force officers participated in the training.

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

International Collaborations

- University of Mahidol, Thailand
- Save the Children, International
- Asia Foundation
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- United Nations Development Programmes

Collaborations with Government Organisations

- Human Rights Commission Sri Lanka
- Department of Probation and Child Care Services
- National Child Protection Authority
- Department of Prisons
- Department of Police

ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES

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Vice Chancellor
University of Colombo

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Deputy Director - CSHR

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Mr. M. Thirunavukkarasu, Senior Attorney at Law and Development Consultant

ACADEMIC COORDINATORS

	Programmes	Name of the Academic Coordinators
01	Certificate in Human Rights and Fundamental Rights	Ms Buddhika Munasinghe
02	Certificate in International Humanitarian Law and Buddhism	Mr Kusal Amarasinghe
03	Certificate in Mediation	Mr.Roshel Perera
04	Certificate in Child Care and Rights	Ms. Thushanthiga Kumarasoorier
05	Advanced Certificate in Child Care and Rights	
06	Advanced Certificate in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law	Ms. GIDI Udani

	Programme	Name of the Academic Coordinators
07	Advanced Certificate in Human Rights Based Approach to Case Management and Care of Child Victims of Trafficking	Dr. Danushika Abeyrathna
08	Diploma in Human Rights	Mr. G.I.M Liyanage
09	Distance Learning Diploma in Human Rights and Democracy	Dr. U.A.T. Udayanganie
10	Diploma in Media and Human Rights	Ms. Thilini Galappaththige
11	Diploma in Human Rights Based Policing	Mr. Kusal Amarasinghe
12	Higher Diploma in Human Rights based Human Resource Management	Mr. Manawa Nanayakkara

	Programme	Name of the Academic Coordinators
13	Postgraduate Diploma in Child Protection and Rights	Dr. Udapadie Liyanage
14	Master of Human Rights and Democratisation & Asia Pacific Master of Human Rights and Democratisation	Ms G I D I Udani
15	Master of Human Rights in Human Development and Gender Justice	Professor (Chair) Dr. Rose Wijeyesekera

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Assistant Information & Documentation Manager

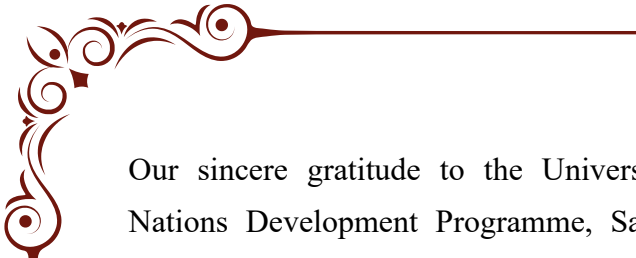
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



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