

Country/entity	Sri Lanka
Region	Asia and Pacific
Agreement name	Human Rights issues relating to the peace process
Date	8 Feb 2003
Agreement status	Multiparty signed/agreed
Interim arrangement	Yes
Agreement/conflict level	Intrastate/intrastate conflict

Sri Lankan Civil War (1983 - 2009)

The roots of the Sri Lanka conflict lay in British colonial policy which controlled the island from 1802 until 1948. During the early 1800s, the British brought Tamils from mainland India to work on the various plantations for tea, coffee and rubber, changing Sri Lanka's the demographic make-up. Upon independence, Sinhalese nationalism dominated the political sphere and introduced discriminatory policies against the Tamil minority straining relations and sparking protests. Armed Tamil resistance first came in the form of assassinations of moderate Tamils and opposition politicians in the mid-1970s. However, it was the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) attack on checkpoint Four Four Bravo, which marked the turning point, sparking pogroms against Tamils in Sinhalese majority areas. This incident, known as Black July, is widely considered to the beginning of the civil war.

The first round of peace talks were backed by India, which had deployed the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in 1987, and led to the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. The Accord was successful in persuading the majority of insurgency groups to lay down arms. However, the strongest Tamil insurgency group, the LTTE, was not party to the talks and refused to disarm, sparking direct conflict between the IPKF and the LTTE until IPKF withdrawal 1990. Following the withdrawal, the LTTE consolidated their power in the North and East sparking another intense and bloody war with the central government that lasted until 2002 when another peace process was launched under the auspices of Norwegian negotiators. The second round of peace talks, however, only continued until April 2003 and in March 2004, a large faction of LTTE cadres split from the main organization damaging LTTE unity. The LTTE were defeated militarily by a large-scale government assault in 2009, however, the conditions for peace remain uncertain.

Close
Sri Lankan Civil War (1983 - 2009)

Stage	Pre-negotiation/process
Conflict nature	Government/territory
Peace process	Sri Lanka LTTE 2002 onward process

Parties	Government of Sri Lanka; Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
Third parties	Norway
Description	Agreement outlines how human rights issues will be touched on and incorporated into the peace process including provisions for IDPs; Prisoners; Women; Children, and missing/disappeared individuals. It goes on to outline the role of Human rights training among warring parties, how to maintain human rights commitments, how commitments will be monitored including by a national human rights institution as well as an international Nordic monitoring commission, and treaty incorporation.

Agreement document	LK_030208_Human Rights issues relating to the peace process.pdf (opens in new tab) Download PDF
---------------------------	---

Women, girls and gender

Participation	No specific mention.
----------------------	----------------------

Equality	No specific mention.
-----------------	----------------------

Particular groups of women	<p>Particular groups of women→Refugee/displaced women</p> <p>Page 1-2, I. Stabilization stage:</p> <p>4. The parties have already discussed within the peace talks a number of issues with major human rights dimensions:</p> <p>4a. Internally displaced persons</p> <p>...</p> <p>In discussions with UNHCR regarding refugee return they have noted that conditions conducive to return require physical, legal and material security, and addressing the specific protection and assistance needs of women, children and other vulnerable groups.</p>
-----------------------------------	---

International law	<p>International law→General IHRL, IHL and IL</p> <p>Page 4, Human rights commitments and monitoring</p> <p>8. A preliminary agreement might address core rights which would enable basic human rights and humanitarian law standards to be monitored in practice, together with rights of particular relevance to the peace process. Core rights might include:</p> <p>Rights of particular relevance might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women's rights <p>International law→International human rights standards</p> <p>Page 2, 4c. Women</p> <p>Having acknowledged the need to ensure that the priorities and needs of women are taken into account in all aspects of the peace process, the parties have established the Sub-Committee on Gender Issues. The SGI at its first meeting proposed to formulate Gender Guidelines for the Sub-Committees and other mechanisms associated with the peace process. Sri Lanka is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, and the rights of women should be fully reflected in the development of human rights commitments and activities.</p> <p>Page 1-2, I. Stabilization stage: 4. The parties have already discussed within the peace talks a number of issues with major human rights dimensions: 4a. Internally displaced persons ... In discussions with UNHCR regarding refugee return they have noted that conditions conducive to return require physical, legal and material security, and addressing the specific protection and assistance needs of women, children and other vulnerable groups.</p>
New institutions	<p>New institutions→Institutions for women</p> <p>Page 2, 4c. Women</p> <p>Having acknowledged the need to ensure that the priorities and needs of women are taken into account in all aspects of the peace process, the parties have established the Sub-Committee on Gender Issues. The SGI at its first meeting proposed to formulate Gender Guidelines for the Sub-Committees and other mechanisms associated with the peace process. Sri Lanka is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, and the rights of women should be fully reflected in the development of human rights commitments and activities.</p>
Violence against women	No specific mention.
Transitional justice	No specific mention.
Institutional reform	No specific mention.
Development	No specific mention.

Implementation No specific mention.

Other No specific mention.
