

OFFICE FOR REPARATIONS – SRI LANKA
ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Office for Reparations - Sri Lanka
No. 40, Buthgamuwa Road,
Rajagiriya.

01. INTRODUCTION

In its fifth year, the Office for Reparations (OR) has been able to expand its activities more confidently to meet the needs of the aggrieved community in compliance with the objectives articulated in the Office for Reparations Act No. 34 of 2018 (“the Act”) and the policies formulated thereunder. The objective of the OR as set out in the Act are-

1. To formulate and recommend to the Cabinet of Ministers, Policies on Reparations to grant individual and collective reparations to aggrieved persons.
2. To facilitate and implement such Policies on reparations as approved by the Cabinet of Ministers by the Office for Reparations, including specialized policies on public education, memorialization and on children, youths, women and victims of sexual violence and persons with disabilities.
3. To establish links to ensure the compatibility of the Office for Reparations with other mechanisms aimed at reconciliation.
4. To monitor and evaluate the progress of delivery of reparations to eligible aggrieved persons.

02. MEMBERS OF THE OFFICE FOR REPARATIONS

The members of the OR who functioned during the year under review is as follows,

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| 1. Mrs. Dhara Wijayatilake | - Chairperson, (re- appointed June 12, 2022) |
| 2. Major General (Retd.) Palitha Fernando | - Member (May 24, 2021) |
| 3. Dr. Azeez Mubarak | - Member (July 6, 2022) |
| 4. Mr. Rasika Dissanayake | - Member (July 6, 2022) |
| 5. Ms. Priya Sivagananathan | - Member (August 5, 2022) |

03. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT UNDER THE KEY POLICY THEMATIC AREAS AND GUIDELINES

The Policies and Guidelines for the grant of reparations which were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers was tabled in Parliament in February 2022 and published in Gazette Extraordinary No. 2269/54 dated March 3, 2022. The Policy identified eight (08) thematic areas to provide relief to aggrieved persons (victims) and 10 Guidelines to clarify the approach to interventions.

- Thematic Areas identified for the provision of relief
 1. Livelihood Support
 2. Compensation and Financial Support
 3. Restitution of Land Rights
 4. Provisions of Housing
 5. Development of Community Infrastructure
 6. Administrative Relief
 7. Psychosocial Support
 8. Measures to advance Unity, Reconciliation, and Non-recurrence of Violence

- The Guidelines that are adopted in determining reparations
 1. Victim Centrality – All decisions will be based on what’s best for the aggrieved persons.
 2. Criteria for eligibility for aggrieved persons to obtain reparations.
 3. The form, and where appropriate, the quantum of reparations that will be provided to eligible aggrieved persons.
 4. The criteria of eligibility of aggrieved persons to financial compensation.
 5. The criteria of eligibility of aggrieved persons to urgent reparations.
 6. Entities which may assist in the provision or delivery of different forms of reparations to aggrieved persons.
 7. The criteria on which verified applications for reparations shall be prioritized.
 8. Criteria for verification of authenticity.
 9. Criteria for remembrance of the dead and memorials.
 10. Addressing the special needs of specific groups of aggrieved persons.

04. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW:

Due to serious staff shortages (see below under “The Secretariat”), this Office has had to prioritize its areas of work and focus on the most urgent interventions that are meaningful to support aggrieved persons.

4.1. LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

In order to empower persons of the aggrieved community to engage in revenue generating activities, the OR developed livelihood support projects enabling new startups and entrepreneurs. These programmes focused on the use of locally available resources to explore new startup opportunities.

The following startups focusing the aggrieved communities were initiated during the year 2023:

	Date	Venue	Target Group	No. of Participants	Field of Technology Transferred
01	2023.11.28	Safamaruwa A, Karamba, Palaviya	Aggrieved females	10	Fiber based Thawashi brush production
02	2023.12.04	Divisional Secretariat, Kopay	Female Headed Families	25	<i>Light for Life</i> - Candle making and financial literacy
03	2023.12.22	Divisional Secretariat, Mannar	Female Headed Families	05	<i>Coloring Hands</i> - Palmyra Leaf Hand Crafts production
04	2023.12.22	Divisional Secretariat, Mannar	Aggrieved males	03	<i>Coloring Hands</i> - Ekel Brooms manufacturing

01. Economic empowerment of Internally Displaced Aggrieved Women through Livelihood support by Public – Private Partnership

Prioritizing the objective of creating a sustainable income generation and reducing poverty among the aggrieved women in Puttalam this livelihood development project was carried out on 28th November 2023 at Safamaruwa A, Karamba, Palaviya targeting 10 aggrieved women as the pilot project. The stakeholders of the project were Muslim Women's Development Trust (MWDT), Alliance Five Private Limited (AFPL) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The beneficiaries were trained by the trainers from AFPL for the production of fibre based brushes for a week and they have started the brush production. The OR, together with the MWDT is monitoring the project.



02. Light for Life - Candle making and financial literacy

With the objective of transferring knowledge and technology on candle processing for 25 women headed households in Kopay, Jaffna this project was initiated on 04th December 2023 at the Kopay Divisional Secretariat. Five identified heads of female headed families were given hands on experience on candle processing, raw materials and candle molds to start their livelihoods. Vidatha Resource Center, Nallur has provided the resource persons. Beneficiaries are selling their candles to the societies of Churches, shops and restaurants and paraffin wax of the used candles in the Churches are being given to the beneficiaries to produce Candles by recycling.



03. Coloring Hands - Palmyra Leaf Hand Crafts production

To improve the livelihoods of five heads of women headed families in Mannar District by providing equipment and coloring materials to produce more and quality Palmyrah products was done through this project. They were given an awareness on sound financial management, packaging of products and marketing for long term sustainability of their income generating activities. This project was conducted on 22nd December 2023 at the Mannar Divisional Secretariat.



04. Coloring Hands - Ekel Brooms manufacturing

Providing automatic Broom stick finishing machine from the Industrial Development Board to three (03) internally displaced families who are engaging in small business of making ekel brooms in order to improve their business was done through this project. They were given an awareness on sound financial management, packaging of products and marketing for long term sustainability of their income generating activities. This project was conducted on 22nd December 2023 at the Mannar Divisional Secretariat.



4.2. COMPENSATION & FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The OR continued to provide monetary relief to aggrieved persons adopting a transparent process and in compliance with its Policy and Guidelines. In addition to applications pending from past events ending with the political violence and civil disturbances that took place during 2022, this Office had also to determine schemes to provide relief to victims of the Easter Sunday Attack through establishing a Victim Fund. New scheme was formulated based on needs to determine eligibility for urgent reparations through the Fund. It may be noted that monetary relief is granted by the Office for Reparations to support victims and is not considered a grant that fully compensates the loss of victims.

MONETARY RELIEF GRANTED IN 2023		
Item		Quantum
01	Total Budget allocation for “Recurrent Expenditure”	Rs. 1,555 million
02	Total sum internally allocated out of the “Recurrent Expenditure” budget, for providing monetary relief	Rs. 1,472 million
03	Internal allocation as a percentage of the total Recurrent Budget	94.67%
04	Claims applications pending at the Office for Reparations as at January 1 st , 2023	8,430
05	Number of claims applications that were approved for payment and awaiting settlement as at January 1 st , 2023	3,959
06	Number of Claims Applications processed and approved for payment during 2023	2630
07	Total number of Claims settled	3508*
08	Total sum paid to the 3508 Applicants	Rs. 1,334.5 million
09	The number of Claims approved for payment and awaiting settlement as at December 31, 2023	1716
10	Sum required as at year end, to settle claims approved for payment	342.5 million

* 2203 partial payments were made, which were included in the previous records.

4.3. ADMINISTRATIVE RELIEF

The OR continues to support the aggrieved persons to obtain their lost documents, especially the victims of the North and East Conflict through special mobile services for stakeholders at district level. Two mobile services were held on 16th and 17th December 2023 at Nuwaraeliya and Mathale Districts.

4.4. PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

The Psychosocial Support Unit (PSS unit) of the Office for Reparations was officially established during 2022. The establishment of a dedicated Unit was identified on an evaluation of the feedback from the initial Pilot phase of the Psycho-social support Case Manager programme of the OR. The Psychosocial Unit carried out the following programs for 2023.

- Case Manager Approach – Pilot Phase (Follow-up)
- Case Manager Approach – Phase I
- Community Support Initiative

Case Manager Approach - Pilot Phase (Follow-up)

A follow-up to the pilot initiative was carried out, in which the beneficiaries of the pilot phase who have new needs are appropriately directed to the necessary services. The psychosocial unit of the OR is also engaged in creating a referral database which will aid the case managers to address the needs of the beneficiaries.

Case Manager Approach – Phase I

The first phase of the case manager program (following the pilot phase) commenced in April 2023, and is currently on-going. Twenty-six managers representing 23 districts in Sri Lanka are assigned approximately 05 cases of aggrieved individuals and families whose needs will be addressed through a comprehensive referral mechanism.

Community Support Initiative

IOM provided technical assistance to capacitate identified government officers (National Integration Officers, Development Officers) to form small groups comprised of 15-20 individuals who may be affected by conflict/violence related trauma (i.e. women heading households etc.) in Welikanda, Puttalam, Kurunegala, Poonakary and Kilinochchi. The officers were responsible for empowering and building capacities of the small-groups and guiding them to conduct a project that benefits themselves and their communities. The officers were supervised by the OR's officers attached to the PSS unit. The programme commenced as a pilot from May to December 2023 in the aforementioned selected districts in Sri Lanka.

SN	District	Activity	Budget Amount	No. of beneficiaries
01	Welikanda	Refurbishment of a health clinic and a livelihood centre	LKR 2,353,922.00	50 families
02	Puttalam	Provision of desks and tables to a school in Puttalam	LKR 727,000.00	55
03	Kurunegala	Refurbishment of a community centre (This project was not conducted due to time constraints)	LKR 2,601,250.00	-
04	Poonakary	Improving established businesses through training and provision of equipment to up to 15 women	LKR 1,615,000.00	15
05	Kilinochchi (MOWCA)	Project on behalf of the Ministry of Women and Child's Affairs - Renovation of the dining area of a vocational training institute	LKR 5,240,000.00	50 individuals with disabilities

IMPROVING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

5.1. Information Management System (IMS)

In 2023, the IMS underwent a comprehensive update, addressing critical aspects that needed attention. The identified need for further system upgrades and necessary fixes was effectively communicated to our service providers, iTerminals, setting the stage for the upcoming Phase Two.

Notably, data migration from the old database to the IMS became a reality through the expertise of Dr. Chathuranga – IOM Consultant. The diligent efforts extended to data sanitization, eliminating commas and spaces from the old system, a task overseen by Dr. Chathuranga and executed by the OR staff's collaboratively with iTerminals. The conceptualization of a new psychosocial database by Mr. Shiyamalan Viyakesh – IOM Data Administration Consultant, documented by Dr. Chathuranga with amendments by Mr. Arun, received approval from the DG, OR officers, and IOM team after the demonstration. While budget constraints defer the implementation of the new psychosocial database to 2024, currently, iTerminals has committed to addressing the outlined points, ensuring a smooth and efficient transition for the IMS.

5.2. Staff Capacity Building

Funded by the International Organization for Migration, the OR Staff Officers underwent a five day capacity building programme covering the following areas –

- Effective Communication and Gender (17th – 18th November 2023)

- Project cycle management (01st December 2023)
- Effective Organizational Skills and Leadership (08th – 09th December 2023)

05. AUDIT AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

The Audit and Management Committee was chaired Mr. Azeez M. Mubarak, Member. The Committee held quarterly meetings.

06. GENERAL AUDIT

The General Audit was carried out by the Auditor Generals department (AG). The Audit Report for 2021 confirmed a clean Report. The Report in respect of 2022 is awaited.

07. THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat is headed by the Director General and CEO. During the period under review the following functioned in this position –

Mr. M. Hazeem – until 02nd October, 2023

Mrs. R.P.S.S. Samankumari (Actg.) – from 03rd October, 2023

The OR acknowledge the service rendered by Mr. M. Hazeem as the Director General and CEO of this office from 03rd October 2022 until the end of the term in 02nd October, 2023.

The cadre position in the Secretariat was as follows-

Cadre Position	Approved Cadre	Vacancies
Director General	01	-
Director	01	-
Deputy Director/ Assistant Dir.	04	02
Administrative Officer	01	-
Internal Auditor	01	-
Reparations Officer	22	09
Translator	01	01
Audit Assistant	01	01
Management Assistant	30	10
Driver	07	02
Office Aid	07	-
Security	01	-
Total	77	25

There is a significant number of vacancies in the positions of the Reparations Officers and Management Assistants and this is an obvious impediment to the efficient discharge of the functions

and responsibilities of this Office. But in December 2023 the Department of Management Services has granted approval to fill the vacancies of Assistant Director – 01, Reparations Officers – 03 and Management Assistants – 03. The services of three (03) full time Consultants were made available to the OR by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for the following areas of work.

- Consultant – Social Cohesion and Reconciliation
- Consultant – Psychosocial Support
- Consultant – Data Administration and Outreach

08. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL PROGRESS

The OR received a sum of Rs.1405.737.00 as the budget allocation for the year 2023.

Item	Allocation (Rs. Mn)	Imprest received (Rs. Mn)	Expenditure (Rs. Mn)	Expenditure as a % of imprest received
Salaries and personal emoluments	49	40.82	49.055	120.17%
Other recurrent	34	29.417	34.118	118.7%
Payment of compensation	1461	1334.50	1334.50	100.7%
Policy implementation	11	0	9.9014	
Easter Attack Victim Fund	01	01	01	100%
Subtotal	1556	1405.737	1428.5744	101.63%
Capital	1.5	-	4.0445	
Grand Total	1557.5	1405.737	1432.6189	101.91%

09. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The OR wishes to place on record its appreciation to the United Nations system that facilitated the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support many of the key programmes of the Office for Reparations.