

Situation Report: Description of Emergency Situation and Context

Trincomalee, Sri Lanka
June 2022



Sri Lanka recently fell into its worst financial crisis since the country gained independence from Britain in 1948. Causes include a decrease in tourism due to COVID-19, the failure of the government's tax cut policy, and the repayment of debts to China and other countries which has put a strain on national finances. Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves have fallen sharply, and payments for imported goods such as fuel, pharmaceuticals, and food have been delayed, resulting in shortages.



Food shortage in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka

In addition, Sri Lanka has been experiencing a drought which has resulted in a decrease in the hydroelectric power supply. There is also a shortage of thermal power as a result of the economic downturn, so citizens have been dealing with blackouts lasting anywhere from six to 13 hours every day since the beginning of March.

Protests in Sri Lanka have been ongoing with citizens calling for the current government's president to resign in response to the economic crisis. On April 1, the government issued a state of emergency and implemented curfews and social media bans in response to the expanding protests. However, the restrictions had little effect, and many arrests have been made.

Main Humanitarian Needs

The impact of the crisis on Sri Lanka's everyday people has been dramatic. The shortage of essentials including food is severe, causing inflation to rise, and according to a recent report from Al Jazeera, food shortages are only expected to get worse. Sri Lanka's agriculture minister has even called on the country's farmers to grow more rice in response to the problem.

The prices of other goods such as gasoline and medications have also skyrocketed, and citizens say that without fuel, they can't do anything. The price for a liter of gasoline has risen from about the equivalent of \$8 in April to about \$14 now. People wait in line for hours, and some have even died of heatstroke while waiting.

Summary of Peace Winds' Activities in Sri Lanka

Peace Winds has been active in Sri Lanka since 2009 when the country's 26-year-long civil war ended. The Peace Winds office is located in Trincomalee, a port city in the northeast part of the country, where two expatriates and 13 local staff members are currently employed. Since 2009, Peace Winds has provided food and housing assistance to internally displaced people as well as agricultural training to help local farmers increase the output and value of their products.



Early morning gas line in Trincomalee

In response to the current crisis, while Peace Winds cannot provide fuel, we can provide other necessities such as food packages for families in need that include items such as rice, flour, sugar, tea, biscuits, instant noodles, and canned fish. When the situation allows, we also hope to be able to begin providing medications. However, because the situation in Sri Lanka is so unstable, Peace Winds expects to have to adapt our response and may change what items we provide to the neediest families. Our teams will continue to work with local communities and nonprofits to determine how best to meet the greatest needs.

How You Can Help

Donate to Peace Winds' fundraiser for Sri Lanka by going to GlobalGiving.org and searching for "Peace Winds America." Any amount helps, and your donation will go toward Peace Winds' efforts to provide emergency food support to families in need.

You can also stay up-to-date on relief efforts in Sri Lanka and around the world by following Peace Winds on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn or by subscribing to our newsletter at peacewindsamerica.org. Thank you for supporting Peace Winds and the people of Sri Lanka in this difficult time.