

# SRI LANKA

The Open Society Foundations, established by George Soros, are one of the world's largest philanthropies supporting justice, democratic governance, and human rights—with annual expenditures of \$1.7 billion in 2023.

Open Society Foundations have a long history of supporting civil society organizations in Asia. While we began nominally investing in Sri Lanka in 2005, most of our work in the country began in 2015, six-years after Sri Lanka ended a 25-year civil war.

Open Society has provided funding for a range of human rights and justice issues in Sri Lanka, including support for civil rights and education, women and youth participation in civic spaces, access to justice, and transparency and accountability in government.

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## SRI LANKA: 2023 EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures for  
Sri Lanka in 2023:

**\$4.5M**

Total Expenditures in Asia Pacific in 2023:

**\$80.9M**

Total Global Expenditures in 2023:

**\$1.7B**

# **NINE FACTS ABOUT SRI LANKA**

## **AND THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS**

- 1** Collaborative initiatives to strengthen election monitoring, increase voter turnout, and deter fraud have played a vital role in promoting free, fair, and violence-free elections in Sri Lanka. Voter education driven by Open Society funded groups led to a 20 percent voter turnout increase from 2011 to 2024.
- 2** In 2016, Open Society co-hosted the Sri Lanka Economic Forum in Colombo as part of a broader effort to help Sri Lankans develop a sustainable and inclusive economic advancement program.
- 3** Advocacy efforts, funded by Open Society in 2016, led to the passage of the Right to Information Act. This has enabled Sri Lankans to more effectively participate in government and increased civic engagement.
- 4** In 2022, in response to the severe economic crisis in Sri Lanka, we supported innovative economic and financial approaches on debt restructuring (e.g. governance bonds). We also funded efforts to increase economic opportunities for Sri Lankan youth empowering them to be more self-reliant.
- 5** Grassroots efforts, funded by Open Society, to increase the representation of women and youth in local and provincial government led to legislation mandating a 25 percent quota for women in government positions. As of 2024, the Sri Lankan parliament has a record 21 female Members of Parliament, the highest number since independence.
- 6** In 2018, Open Society helped fund the fourth biennial Asian Electoral Stakeholder Forum in Colombo, co-hosted by the Election Commission of Sri Lanka and the Asian Network for Free Elections. The forum, which was held in Sri Lanka for the first time, provided a platform for participants from 27 countries primarily in Asia to address election-based challenges and best practices.
- 7** In 2018, Open Society supported an initiative connecting second and third generation expatriate Sri Lankans with local Sri Lankan community-based groups serving vulnerable populations. The organization placed dozens of young professionals on the ground, including urban planners, educators, and social workers.
- 8** As part of a joint initiative with the European Union, Open Society helped local groups launch Human Rights First Aid Centers in 11 districts to address human rights violations and challenges in the country.
- 9** As part of our COVID-19 response, we funded local initiatives to increase food security assistance, mental health counseling, health education, childcare services, and access to education.