

Pray for Sri Lanka



13-19 June 2021

‘As a Muslim in this country, I’m more afraid of being cremated after death (due to corona) than the actual dying itself.’ - Yamin Ahmed, a Sri Lankan Muslim. The government has made it mandatory that those who have died from COVID-19 be cremated, despite advice by a panel of medical experts appointed by the Ministry of Health that the option for burial should also be made available to people. The World Health Organization has reported that cremation of victims of COVID-19 is unnecessary. Cremation is prohibited in Islam because it is considered a violation of the dignity of the human body.

Sri Lanka’s religious minorities continue to be disenfranchised, even though the constitution affords some protections. The past Rajapaksa government’s track record on human rights, and its strong nationalist Sinhalese-Buddhist support base, continue to be of grave concern for religious minorities and civil society organisations, which have come under greater state surveillance since Gotabaya Rajapaksa became the president of Sri Lanka.

Find out more at csw.org.uk/srilanka

Sunday 13 June

Pray that the government will reconsider its policy of mandating the cremation of all those who have died because of COVID-19, a policy which violates Muslims’ freedom of religion.

Monday 14 June

On Easter Sunday 2019 an Islamist group bombed churches and Christian gatherings across Sri Lanka in an attack which claimed over 250 lives. Ask God to comfort those who still mourn the loved ones they lost that day.

Tuesday 15 June

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, there were reports of Christians attacking the Muslim community, including their shops and mosques. Pray for the Spirit of peace to heal tensions between the communities.

Wednesday 16 June

One of the main drivers of religious intolerance is the belief among nationalist Sinhalese Buddhist groups that they are the protectors of the land, deeming Muslim and Christian minorities a threat. Pray for tolerance and recognition of the positive contributions of those of all faiths to Sri Lanka.

Thursday 17 June

‘We don’t completely blame Facebook...The germs are ours, but Facebook is the wind.’ Presidential advisor Harindra Dissanayake acknowledged that although social media makes it easy for hate speech and false information to spread quickly, it is not in itself the cause of inter-religious tensions. Pray that any misinformation would not take hold, and that the truth would be known.

Friday 18 June

The president and prime minister, the Rajapaksa brothers, have made inflammatory comments that have played into ethno-religious tensions and stoked fears of terrorism and extremism. Pray for an end to this kind of rhetoric from the country’s leaders.

Saturday 19 June

Lord of all, we long for peace across Sri Lanka, but above and before that we pray for true justice. For Muslims whose loved ones are being cremated, violating their beliefs; for Christians who are attacked and harassed; for Buddhists who feel that their national identity is under threat. May they know true freedom of religion or belief. In your holy name, Amen.

CSW everyone
free to believe

CSW is a human rights organisation advocating for freedom of religion or belief, and as Christians we stand with everyone facing injustice because of their religion or belief.