



LAND GRABBING

Land is a factor that directly affects the enjoyment of many human rights. Land ownership is also considered as a means of livelihood of individuals and the basis of economic rights. It also plays the role of expressing the identity of a community. The United Nations states that land is linked to socio-cultural rights.

Land Development Ordinance No. 19 of 1935 defines land as "things attached to the earth or anything fixed to the earth and any title to land or any interest in crops grown or intended to be grown."

Land law and policies directly affect the right to food, culture, housing, water, physical and mental health, employment and adequate living standards. Loss and dispossession of land directly contribute to loss of livelihoods, social security, environmental justice and identity.

The Sri Lankan community is unable to enjoy their land rights due to various reasons such as militarisation, land acquisition laws, land acquisition by government agencies such as the security forces, wildlife and archeology departments, and informal development projects.

Many people's lands occupied by the security forces in the North-Eastern provinces have not yet been released. Even though 15 years have passed since the end of the civil war, the owners are not allowed to go to their ancestral lands. People in various parts of Sri Lanka including Keppapilavu, Vattuvakkal, Ampara, and Panama, are engaged even now in continuous struggles for their land rights.