

Our Broken Nation Lies Before Us

From the Galle Face *Aragalaya Bhoomiya*

Our broken nation lies before us, caught up in an unprecedented social and economic tragedy of incomparable historic proportions.

Young and old spend hours and days queuing for petrol, gas, medicine. Some have even died in these queues.

The cost of food skyrockets before our eyes, and our beloved farmers, unable to tend their fields, part with their precious harvest at humiliating prices. Some of them then turn to suicide.

Our youth – waiting to move forward with their futures – are forced to waste the best years of their lives.

Working class citizens, surviving on minimal pay, are being strangled by unimaginable economic challenges.

This crisis, created by political leaders who have no vision or plan for this country, has turned an entire population into human fodder.

Because the politicians of this country have so consistently failed to provide any kind of solution, a People's Uprising emerged organically from amongst desperate and angry citizens. This *Aragalaya* (struggle) is held together by the demand for the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the entire government.

However, leaders, directly responsible for these problems, continue to allow the problems to escalate into crises.

The events of 9 May at Galle Face marked an iconic and decisive moment of the people's *Aragalaya*.

The Galle Face uprising, united by the rallying call of – Go Home Gota – is 50 days today.

Just one month into the *Aragalaya*, the former Prime Minister resigned and went into hiding.

At this point, when defeat of the President was within reach, Ranil Wickremesinghe, through a secret, high-level conspiracy, is appointed Prime Minister.

This cannot possibly solve the problems of the general public. How can one man, already rejected by the people, and another man, under tremendous pressure to step down, bring about a solution acceptable to the people of this country?

And so...

The rallying call of this *Aragalaya* – begun on 9 April – now 50 days stronger – the call of GO HOME GOTA – is as loud today as it was at the beginning.

The public demand of GO HOME GOTA continues to be echoed by tens of thousands of people who flock to

Galle Face, and the hundreds of thousands who protest all over the country.

This *Aragalaya* has already won many victories for the people. Most importantly, the people of this country have learnt how to agitate for change without resorting to ethnic or religious divisions.

While already some lives have been lost in the *Aragalaya*, there are still more lives which we know have been marked by this repressive government.

However, until the binding demand of this *Aragalaya* is MET we will NOT STEP DOWN.

For 50 days the call of the Galle Face protestors has been that all protests be done peacefully.

The government responded by inciting violence on peaceful protestors.

Today, the security forces are pursuing and harassing witnesses to these attacks with more determination than the instigators and attackers themselves.

Amidst this, the Gota-Ranil government continues to boast, continues to plot in secret, continues to ignore the sufferings of the people.

We who have been engaged in an unending uprising for the past 50 days, reiterate the following people's demands:

- The Gota-Ranil conspiracy government MUST GO!
- The instigators and attackers of the May 9 attack – including Mahinda Rajapaksa and Deshabandu Tennakoon – MUST BE ARRESTED IMMEDIATELY!
- The protestors who were arrested arbitrarily MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY!
- A government that cannot listen to the demands of the people MUST GO!

To our inhuman leaders,

Do not underestimate this *Aragalaya*.

This is the people's *Aragalaya*. Bear in mind that it is the people of this country we are accountable to.

If you choose to act in a way that ignores this people's command, we will join forces with all the people of this country, and spread this non-violent protest unconditionally across the entire land.

This *Aragalaya* will end in the victory of the people. This is an oath we take in the name of truth, justice, and equality.

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