



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

# **2026-2027 Update on OHCHR Sri Lanka accountability project**

April 2026

## Mandate

**“Collect, consolidate, analyse and preserve information and evidence, to develop possible strategies for future accountability processes for gross violations of human rights or serious violations of international humanitarian law, to advocate for victims and survivors, and to support relevant judicial and other proceedings, including in Member States with competent jurisdiction”**

In October 2025, through resolution [A/HRC/RES/60/1](#), the Human Rights Council renewed for a **two-year period** the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner and all work requested of it under resolutions [46/1](#), [51/1](#) and [57/1](#), including activities carried out through the **OHCHR Sri Lanka Accountability Project (OSLap)**.

The Council reaffirmed the importance of sustained efforts to advance reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka, and requested OHCHR to present a written update at its **63rd session (2026)** and a comprehensive report at its **66th session (2027)**.

Under this mandate, the Human Rights Council requested OHCHR to:

- continue to strengthen its capacity to **collect, consolidate, analyse and preserve information and evidence** relating to violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes in Sri Lanka;
- to **develop possible avenues for future accountability processes** for gross violations of human rights or serious violations of international humanitarian law;
- to **advocate for victims and survivors**; and
- to **support relevant judicial and other proceedings**, including in Member States with competent jurisdiction.

# Mandate

This document is intended to inform partners and stakeholders of OHCHR's implementation of the mandate over the 2026-2027 period.

It builds on the [update on OHCHR Sri Lanka accountability project](#) published in 2025, and was created following consultations with partners and civil society including victims and their representatives under the guidance and leadership of the High Commissioner, and reflects lessons learned from the first phases of implementation of the mandate.

In implementing its mandate, OS Lap will continue to apply a **survivor-centred, trauma-informed approach** that integrates **gender, age and intersectional considerations** throughout its work.

Engagement with survivors, witnesses and stakeholders will continue to uphold **safety, dignity and informed consent**.

All analysis, reporting and advocacy will use a gender- and age-sensitive lens to identify patterns of abuse, structural inequalities and barriers to justice, ensuring accountability efforts remain **inclusive, equitable and responsive** to differentiated experiences, including conflict-related sexual violence.

Against this background, and within the parameters of the renewed mandate, OS Lap's engagement in support of accountability and transitional justice will be informed by [OHCHR's Management Plan 2024-27](#) and the [Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Transitional Justice as a Strategic Tool](#), and will be pursued in accordance with the following approach and priorities.

Pillar 1

# Collecting, consolidating, analysing, and preserving information and evidence

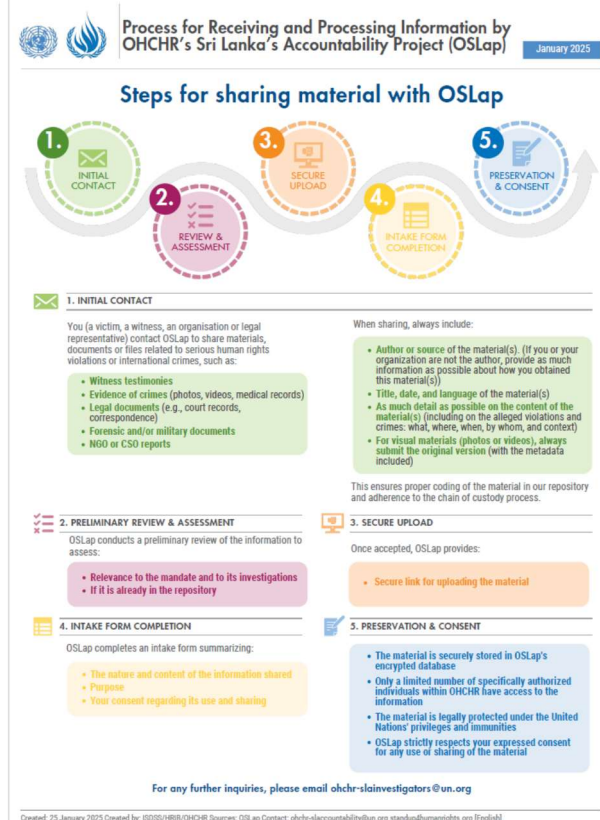
## ➔ Main Achievements (2025)

OSLap continued to expand its collection of information and evidence through sustained engagement with local and international partners. To facilitate transparent, secure and consistent cooperation with civil society organisations (CSOs), OSLap published in 2025, a **paper outlining how CSOs can share information and evidence** in English, Tamil and Sinhala, including the applicable rules, regulations and safeguards.

OSLap also published a **snapshot of its repository** providing an overview of the nature, scope and volume of information it holds.

As planned in its priorities for 2025, OSLap made significant progress in the **tagging, structuring and case-mapping** of information and evidence, thereby enhancing the analytical value, coherence and usability of its repository.

In parallel, OSLap conducted targeted **reviews and analysis** of information and evidence contained in its repository, complemented by relevant open-source material, to strengthen **analytical profiles** relating to alleged perpetrators and to support internal screening processes.



Pillar 1

# Collecting, consolidating, analysing, and preserving information and evidence

## Priorities until September 2027

OSLap will continue to prioritise **targeted investigative and analytical work** strengthening evidence relevant to **individual responsibility**, chains of command and where applicable, crime-based patterns, and strengthened cooperation with relevant stakeholders to monitor publicly available information concerning alleged perpetrators, in line with applicable safeguards.

OSLap will prioritise the preparation of **consolidated, prosecution-oriented analytical files**, including **legal qualification of alleged conduct** under international criminal law, where the applicable thresholds are met.

In parallel, OSLap will continue to enhance the **transparency and long-term preservation and access framework for its repository by updating its public snapshot information**. OSLap will also explore, in cooperation with interested academic partners and other stakeholders, the possibility of establishing an **open-source library** containing public information from its repository.

OSLap will also explore, in full respect of consent, protection and confidentiality requirements, and in coordination with relevant stakeholders, including victims and their representatives, the possibility of publishing **anonymized and disaggregated data from its repository on patterns related to enforced disappearances**, to support families of the disappeared in their quest for truth.

Pillar 2

## Supporting relevant judicial and other proceedings, including in Member States, with competent jurisdiction

### Main Achievements (2025)

In the absence of effective domestic accountability, OSLap prioritised **support to formal Requests for Assistance (RFAs)** from jurisdictions pursuing cases **under universal jurisdiction** by streamlining its internal procedures, re-contacting witnesses as necessary to confirm informed consent, and providing relevant contextual information and evidence in accordance with United Nations frameworks and international due process standards.

It also **strengthened engagement with judges, prosecutors and investigative authorities**, responded to **exploratory requests**, and, where appropriate, **facilitated direct contacts** between authorities and witnesses willing to provide testimony.



Pillar 2

## Supporting relevant judicial and other proceedings, including in Member States, with competent jurisdiction

### Priorities until September 2027

OSLap will continue to **assist competent authorities**, upon request, by providing **timely and relevant information, analysis** and evidence to support investigations and prosecutions.

It will also **engage proactively with jurisdictions** to raise awareness of available support and information.

Where appropriate, it will **continue to facilitate contacts between authorities and sources** willing to provide information, subject to consent, protection and confidentiality requirements.

Pillar 3

## Advocating for the agency and support of victims and survivors

### Main Achievements (2025)

During the past year, OSLap further **strengthened its intersectional, victim-centred and gender responsive approach** through **sustained engagement with victims, survivors and civil society**, in a context where those seeking accountability continue to face marginalisation and intimidation.

OSLap worked with **more than 230 civil society organisations**, legal actors and victims' associations, and **consulted with over 40 human rights defenders** including child rights experts and women human rights defenders and organisations from across Sri Lanka, the diaspora and international civil society.

These consultations informed OSLap's analysis, reporting and advocacy, while ensuring the application of protection, consent and referral protocols.

These consultations also informed **OSLap's paper "We Lost Everything – Even Hope for Justice"**, which highlights the enduring harm of conflict-related sexual violence, on men, women, and children, the persistence of impunity and intimidation, and violations of Sri Lanka's international obligations, including reports of sexual and gender-based violence after the conflict.

Pillar 3

# Advocating for the agency and support of victims and survivors



## Priorities until September 2027

Building on its intersectional, victim-centred, gender- and child-sensitive approach, OSLap will continue to conduct structured consultations with victims, survivors, family members and civil society actors across affected communities to inform its strategic direction, thematic outputs, advocacy priorities and long-term preservation and access framework.

These consultations will inform a series of targeted advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives, including on **violations affecting humanitarian assistance, attacks on journalists, and violations against children.**

OSLap will also undertake **research on reparations and redress** grounded in victims' perspectives, including consideration of mental health and psychosocial support needs, support survivor-led memorialisation and acknowledgment initiatives, and convene civil society organisations and victims' associations to **co-design a post-OSLap accountability roadmap**, ensuring continuity of advocacy and access to information beyond the mandate.

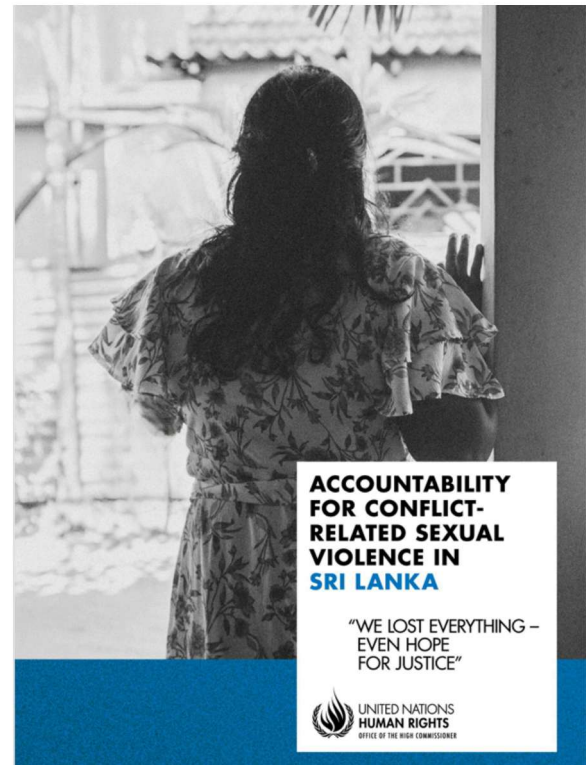
Pillar 4

## Developing possible strategies for future accountability processes

### Main Achievements (2025)

As described in the High Commissioner's report to the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, progress in domestic and international accountability for crimes committed in Sri Lanka remained limited, with no inter-State proceedings and no acceptance of the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction by Sri Lanka. While some Member States adopted targeted sanctions against individuals allegedly responsible for serious violations, these measures remain insufficient to substitute for criminal accountability.

In this context, and while continuing to **encourage the Government of Sri Lanka to demonstrate concrete commitment to accountability** at the national level, OSLap strengthened its engagement with Member States, prosecutors, accountability actors, civil society and victims' groups. Through **expert consultations and bilateral exchanges**, it promoted the use of available national and international legal avenues, coordinated strategies, and contributed to sustaining international attention on Sri Lanka's persistent accountability gap. These efforts were further supported by thematic advocacy, including consultations and recommendations issued in the context of **OSLap's work on conflict-related sexual violence**, aimed at advancing accountability and redress for survivors.



Pillar 4

## Developing possible strategies for future accountability processes



### Priorities until September 2027

Building on concerns raised during **consultations**, OSLap will ensure that previously published reports – including on enforced disappearances and conflict-related sexual violence – are actively deployed as advocacy tools through structured follow-up engagement with Member States, diplomatic actors and civil society.

Through **targeted dissemination and sustained engagement**, OSLap will promote implementation of their recommendations, elevate survivors' voices, maintain international attention and encourage concrete steps towards accountability and redress.

OSLap will continue to **strengthen partnerships and direct engagement with accountability actors** to advance concrete avenues for justice, including opportunities arising from the exercise of universal jurisdiction under national law.

It will produce **concise, publicly accessible briefs on available accountability mechanisms**, including mapping potential jurisdictions, relevant prosecutorial units and practical entry points for proceedings, alongside an assessment of legal and procedural constraints.

OSLap will continue to develop analytical products and **perpetrator profiles** to support accountability initiatives.

Analytical work will also examine **structural and systemic patterns of violations**, including, where relevant, potential dimensions of **State responsibility**, in order to inform appropriate national and international accountability avenues.

It will also document a selected number of emblematic cases, setting out the publicly known facts and concrete procedural steps taken towards accountability.

Pillar 5

## Supporting victims and transitional justice process in Sri Lanka

### Main achievements (2025)

OSLap has supported victims in Sri Lanka while **promoting accountability and transitional justice** at the national level.

Through sustained engagement with victims and survivors, their representatives and civil society actors, OSLap has ensured that their perspectives inform its analysis and reporting, in full respect of protection and informed consent safeguards.

Its work has also contributed to broader OHCHR advocacy efforts in Sri Lanka, including in the context of the High Commissioner's visit in June 2025, which included extensive outreach to victims and a visit to the site of a mass grave and memorial site at Chemmani.



Visit of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, to the Chemmani mass graves, 25 June 2025. © Anthony Headley / OHCHR

Pillar 5

## Supporting victims and transitional justice process in Sri Lanka

### Priorities until September 2027

OHCHR renews its call for the Government to **engage constructively with OSLap** on accountability-related efforts.

OSLap will continue to provide **gender-responsive and specialized analysis and evidentiary expertise** to inform OHCHR engagement at the international, national and local levels, and to **strengthen advocacy on emblematic cases and structural patterns of violations**. OSLap will also continue to support victims' participation and protection, while preserving trust and maintaining complementarity with international accountability avenues.

OSLap will contribute to OHCHR's engagement with the Government of Sri Lanka for the establishment of **credible domestic accountability mechanisms** consistent with international standards.

With regard to the **Chemmani mass graves**, OSLap will support OHCHR engagement with national partners by providing age- and gender-responsive analysis, technical input aimed at advancing truth, accountability and the rights of victims' families.

On the accountability track, OSLap will assist in identifying **patterns of enforced disappearances**, strengthening linkage evidence and developing analytical profiles of individuals potentially responsible, including along chains of command, with a view to assessing accountability avenues. In parallel, OSLap will identify **minimum investigative benchmarks** consistent with international standards – including legal characterisation of alleged crimes and assessment of responsibility – to support independent, transparent and credible investigations, informed by existing public findings, prior judicial proceedings and available forensic information.

OSLap will continue to support victims and their representatives in relation to **emblematic cases** by consolidating available information, monitoring procedural developments and identifying age and gender-responsive analytical findings and possible accountability avenues. Cases will be selected on the basis of **transparent criteria**, including, *inter alia*, gravity, representativeness, evidentiary feasibility and relevance to accountability pathways. This focus will serve to illustrate broader structural patterns of violations and impunity. OSLap's analysis will also support OHCHR's dialogue and advocacy aimed at encouraging credible progress at the national level in line with international standards.

## How to support?

In his report to the Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner underscored that **Sri Lanka** has a historic opportunity to advance truth, accountability and reform as foundations for sustainable peace and national unity, and that commitments on emblematic cases and the rule of law must translate into credible, time-bound measures, including accountability for serious crimes.

While acknowledging the Government's continued rejection of the mandate under resolution 51/1 and subsequent resolutions, OHCHR continues to seek practical cooperation that can support credible accountability efforts in line with international human rights standards.

**Other UN Member States** can also play an essential role in supporting OHCHR's mandate. They can encourage constructive engagement by the Government of Sri Lanka and help foster an environment conducive to accountability. Member States can also enhance the impact of OSLap's work by sharing relevant information and evidence, submitting requests for assistance, and pursuing accountability through available national, regional or international mechanisms.

Member States may further contribute by facilitating safe access for victims and witnesses, including through appropriate visa and asylum measures, supporting psychosocial, medical and legal assistance to victims and survivors, and strengthening documentation and investigative capacities through targeted support to civil society organisations.

**Civil society organisations (CSOs)** remain key partners in supporting OSLap's work, particularly through the collection and secure sharing of relevant information in line with established protocols and best practices. CSOs are encouraged to submit reports, testimonies and other materials using OHCHR's secure digital tools, together with concise summaries to facilitate timely assessment and ensure appropriate handling and protection of sensitive information. Many CSOs also play a central role in supporting victims and survivors, including through peer networks, psychosocial support, and guidance on accessing justice mechanisms. They can facilitate contacts between affected communities, legal experts and OSLap, helping to ensure that diverse perspectives inform accountability efforts. Regular communication with OSLap enables victims' groups and other CSOs to provide feedback and insights, reinforcing a victim-centred and responsive approach.

CSOs' advocacy and awareness-raising efforts are equally essential in maintaining international attention on accountability in Sri Lanka. By engaging with international human rights mechanisms and partners, they contribute to sustaining support for OHCHR's mandate and to advancing justice and redress for victims.