



Concerns over the continued use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)

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The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) is deeply concerned with the continued use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) by the Sri Lankan state. According to [media reports](#), a youth was recently arrested under the PTA for allegedly pasting stickers that criticised the actions of Israel in Gaza. It is also concerning that the Government has over the past five months utilised the PTA on several occasions including for alleged conduct that has seemingly no known link to terrorism. Furthermore, the arrest of an individual on the basis of voicing an opinion is alarming with wide implications on the right to free speech and dissent.

This is against the backdrop of President Dissanayake and the Government promising in their [campaign manifesto](#) to abolish 'all oppressive acts including the PTA and ensuring civil rights of people in all parts of the country'. CPA also notes that the President and others in the Government have in the past demanded for the repeal of the PTA, acknowledging then of the abuse caused by the PTA. Despite repeated promises to repeal the PTA, it is regrettable that the Government has backtracked on their own statements, and continues to use the PTA.

CPA and several others have, over the decades, [continuously called](#) for the repeal of the PTA. This law, initially introduced as a temporary provision, and later extended as a permanent law, has been used to terrorise generations of Sri Lankans, largely targeting those from ethnic and religious minorities, activists, dissidents, and journalists and normalised torture, with it entrenching a culture of impunity. Such practices should remain in Sri Lanka's past, with the Government needing to make a clear break that sees an immediate moratorium of the PTA and its repeal.