



CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRATIC AND WORKERS' RIGHTS (CDWR)

National Secretariat:

49 Charity Road Abule-Egba Lagos.

P.O. Box 2225, Agege, Lagos.

Tel: 08034726127, 07033775517

E-mail: campaignworkers@yahoo.co.uk

www.nigeriasolidarity.org

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Sri Lanka: Stop Repression and Attacks on Democratic Rights Solidarity from Nigeria

The Campaign for Democratic and Workers' Rights (CDWR) sends solidarity to workers, youth and students of Sri Lanka. The CDWR is a campaign platform of the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM) – CWI Nigeria.

We stand in solidarity with Sri Lankan working masses and youth in their struggle against the cost of living crisis, and brutal repression by the President Ranil Wickremasinghe-led dictatorship. We urge them not to relent until victory. We also stand in solidarity with the United Socialist Party (CWI Sri Lanka).

We share the conclusions of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) which outlines the situation in Sri Lanka as follows:

“Conditions in Sri Lanka continue to deteriorate for millions of people. Neoliberal austerity measures are proposed as solutions by the government. In order to carry through those measures, the government also increased its repression against all opposition. Every single peaceful protest organized by students and activists is brutally attacked by state forces. Many activists are arrested for just taking part in the protests. The convenor of Inter University Students Federation (IUSF) is one of the activists still being held under the draconian legislation, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). The government is making further plans to curtail freedom of expression and freedom to assemble. There is an urgent need to defend fundamental democratic rights in Sri Lanka”.

Here in Nigeria, the mass protest movement (Aragalaya) of the Sri Lankan masses since early this year has been an enormous inspiration. Being neo-colonial countries ruled by a corrupt and gangster capitalist elite and dominated by imperialism, both our countries share similarities. Here in Nigeria, there is an unfolding cost of living crisis that has seen a majority of the people thrown into new levels of poverty even as unemployment continues to rise.

Therefore, just as the masses rose in Sri Lanka leading to the former President Gotabaya Rajapakse fleeing his official residence and the country, the immediate task facing workers and youth in Nigeria is the road of mass struggle. However, for this struggle to win on a permanent basis, the mass movement has to be linked with the building of a mass workers party with Socialist programme to end capitalism and enthrone a Socialist alternative.

We hereby support the campaign against the repression of activists and will popularise it within the labour movement in Nigeria, and join others to demand that the Government of Sri Lanka must:

- * **Release IUSF student leaders, Wasantha Mudalige and Siridhamma Himi, detained under the PTA, for over 65 days**
- * **Stop the attack on all protesters**
- * **Drop all charges on protesters**
- * **Repeal PTA –and all other oppressive laws.**
- * **Allow freedom of assembly, free speech, and freedom to dissent**

Signed

Rufus Olusesan
National Chair, CDWR