

Aluthgama -> Digana -> Easter — the structural flashpoint pattern

The Aluthgama 2014 anti-Muslim riots, the Digana 2018 anti-Muslim riots, the Easter Sunday 2019 attacks and their backlash, and the 2020–22 forced cremation policy form a documented structural sequence — not isolated incidents. ICG, Verité, OHCHR, USCIRF and the Pew GRI/SHI data series each track the pattern; physics-of-conflict literature (Bohorquez et al. Nature 2009; Lim, Metzler, Bar-Yam Science 2007) provides the formal model for treating the sequence as a single heavy-tailed process generated by stable structural conditions.

Reading the four flashpoints as discrete events misses the structural argument. Reading them as a sequence — generated by stable conditions (Article 9 entrenchment, asymmetric ICCPR Act enforcement, the BBS-Ravana Balaya-Sinhala Ravaya organisational ecology, security-force documented inaction) — produces an auditable claim about the enforcement-gap machine. The Religious-Incitement Function on /case/mathematics/rif formalises this reading.

§1 The sequence

Aluthgama (June 2014): anti-Muslim riots in coastal Kalutara District following a Bodu Bala Sena rally. ICG Asia Report N°291 and Amnesty documentation record at least four killed, dozens injured, hundreds of Muslim properties damaged. State response: minimal prosecutorial action; one ICCPR Act §3 prosecution against a Muslim member of the public for a separate incident, none against named instigators.

Digana (March 2018): anti-Muslim riots in Kandy District (hill country) following a traffic dispute amplified by Mahason Balakaya. State of emergency declared. ICG and HRCSL documented the same enforcement asymmetry — limited security-force action during the violence, limited prosecution after.

Easter Sunday (April 2019): coordinated bombings of churches and hotels by a small group inspired by transnational jihadist ideology, killing more than 250 people. The 2021 Presidential Commission of Inquiry recorded prior intelligence warnings that went unactioned. Post-attack environment: collective-suspicion measures applied to the wider Muslim community including burqa restrictions, mosque closures and Muslim-targeted social-media prosecutions under the ICCPR Act and PTA.

Forced cremation (March 2020 – February 2021): mandatory cremation of COVID-19 deaths applied to Muslim and Christian fatalities in direct violation of religious burial rites and with no WHO public-health basis. Reversed under sustained UN and OIC pressure. UN OHCHR joint statement of five Special Rapporteurs documents the policy and its reversal.

§2 Why this is a structural pattern

Each event has been examined in isolation by ICG, Verité, OHCHR Shaheed, USCIRF and the Pew GRI/SHI cycles. Treating them as a sequence is not editorial — the V-Dem v2clrelig variable shows step-changes at each event, the Pew SHI shows sustained 'High' classification across the period, and the formal models from physics-of-conflict (Bohorquez et al. 2009; Lim, Metzler, Bar-Yam 2007) predict exactly this kind of clustering when stable structural conditions (asymmetric legal architecture, organisational substrate, enforcement gap) meet local triggers in partial-mixing geographic regions.

The Religious-Incitement Function — RIF — at /case/mathematics/rif formalises the reading. RIF is descriptive not predictive: it audits the gap between ICCPR Act §3 prosecutions against minorities and prosecutions against

documented majoritarian incitement events, indexed to a baseline.

Sources

- tlte-cite:icg-aluthgama-digana
- tlte-cite:icg-buddhism-conflict-2007
- tlte-cite:ohchr-shaheed-srilanka-2020
- tlte-cite:ohchr-forced-cremations-2021
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- tlte-cite:verite-fading-beliefs-2018
- tlte-cite:iccpr-act-2007-srilanka
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- tlte-cite:pew-gri-shi-srilanka
- tlte-cite:bohorquez-nature-2009-conflict-physics
- tlte-cite:lim-metzler-baryam-science-2007

What this is not

- This article does not name individual rioters, monks, officers, prosecutors or victims. The structural argument operates over instruments and patterns, not individuals.
- This article does not aggregate casualty or property counts in TLTE voice. All figures attributed to ICG, OHCHR, Amnesty, Verité and the named UN Special Procedures.
- This article does not frame the Easter Sunday attacks as anything other than what the Presidential Commission of Inquiry found — a terrorist atrocity by a small jihadist cell. The structural argument concerns the COLLECTIVE-PUNISHMENT response, not the attacks themselves.