

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 2024

First Interim Report (Pre-Election Period)
30th October 2024



PAFFREL

PEOPLE'S ACTION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

No 16, Byrde Place, Off Pamankada Road, Colombo 06

+94 11 255 8570/71

paffrel@sltnet.lk

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1. Background

Sri Lanka received the Universal Franchise in 1931 as the first South Asian Country that received it and the first State Council Election took place as a General Election in the same year. The 2nd State Council Election was conducted in 1937 before the country's first Parliamentary Election in 1947. Sri Lanka had General Elections in 1952, 1956, 1960, 1965, 1970, and 1977 with the Simple Majority electoral system, commonly described as the First-past-the-post (FPP) system which was based on constituencies with individual candidates nominated by recognized political parties or independent candidates. In 1978, the new Constitution of Sri Lanka introduced the Proportional System. A number of changes were made to this system between 1978 and 1988. Every Parliamentary Election (1989, 1994, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2010, 2015, and 2020) that took place in Sri Lanka after 1988 was based on this method. This system appears to be more democratic than the FPP, which was in place before it, because the number of seats that a political party returned was essentially proportional to the number of votes it received, with a few notable outliers. However, this system has created advantages for the small and mid-size parties that have support around the country.

In the Parliamentary Election of 2020, The Sri Lanka People's Freedom Alliance (SLPFA) secured a sizable majority. The But COVID-19 pandemic, the economic crisis, mass protests, and the political crisis in Sri Lanka in 2022 were among the multiple issues that the government led by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa had to deal with during their time in office.

On November 14, 2024, Sri Lanka will hold Parliamentary Elections to choose 225 representatives for the new parliament. In accordance with the terms of Section 10 of the Parliamentary Elections Act, No. 1 of 1981, and with the authority granted to him by Article 70 of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the President issued an Extraordinary Gazette (No. 2403/13), dissolving Parliament effective from midnight on September 24, 2024 and summoning the new Parliament to meet on the 21st November 2024. This is also fixed 14th November 2024 as the date for election of the Members of Parliament. However, the current Parliament's term is set to end in August next year.

In the Sri Lankan Presidential Election of 2024, Mr. Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Leader of Jathika Jana Balawegaya (National People's Power (NPP)), was elected as the Ninth Executive President of Sri Lanka with 42.31% of the vote. He secured a victory garnering over 5.6 million votes. During Dissanayake's election campaign, he stated that the Parliament would be dissolved and called for a Parliamentary Election. Anura Kumara Dissanayake was sworn in as President on 23rd September, followed by his appointment of academic and former Member of Parliament (from the National List), Harini Amarasuriya as the new prime minister on 24th September. Amarasuriya becomes the third woman to hold this position. Dissanayake also formed a three-member Cabinet, which includes himself, Amarasuriya, and Vijitha Herath from the NPP, to serve as an interim government until the next Parliamentary Elections.

The upcoming Parliamentary Election in Sri Lanka is particularly significant because it marks a pivotal moment for political change and reforms. Following Anura Kumara Dissanayake's victory in the 2024 Presidential Election and his intention to dissolve the Parliament, this election

provides an opportunity for the National People’s Power (NPP) to increase their influence and potentially reshape the country’s political landscape. The election is crucial for the people, as it comes at a time when Sri Lanka is recovering from a severe economic crisis. Many view this as a chance to elect representatives who can address the ongoing economic challenges, resolve the debt crisis, and restore public confidence in governance. Ultimately, this election offers a unique opportunity for the people of Sri Lanka to vote for the changes they wish to see in their country’s political and economic future.

17,140,354 voters are eligible for the Parliamentary Election 2024. The Gampaha District has the highest number of eligible voters, totaling 1,881,129, while the Vanni District has the lowest, with 306,081 voters. The 225 members of the Parliament are chosen to serve 05 year terms. Voter can cast his vote for party or independent group. Then up to three candidates of that party or independent group can be marked. If necessary, there is also the possibility to mark the vote only for the party or independent group without marking preferences. 196 members are chosen from 22 multi-seat constituencies using an open list proportional representation system with a 5% electoral threshold. The remaining 29 seats are chosen from a national list. ECSL issued a media release dated 25/09/2024 to notify the number of candidates to be nominated by Political Parties or Independent Groups for each Electoral District. Gampaha District will elect the highest number (19) of members while Trincomalee has the smallest number (04) of members.

No.	Name & Number of Electoral District	Number of Members to be elected
01	Colombo	18
02	Gampaha	19
03	Kalutara	11
04	Kandy	12
05	Matale	05
06	Nuwara Eliya	08
07	Galle	09
08	Matara	07
09	Hambantota	07
10	Jaffna	06
11	Vanni	06
12	Batticaloa	05
13	Digamadulla	07
14	Trincomalee	04
15	Kurunegala	15
16	Puttalam	08
17	Anuradhapura	09
18	Polonnaruwa	05
19	Badulla	09
20	Monaragala	06
21	Ratnapura	11
22	Kegalle	09
	Total	196

Table 1 Electoral Districts and the number of members to be elected in Parliamentary Election 2024

Adapted from Election Commission of Sri Lanka, 2024

The Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL) published a Circular (PE/2024/03) dated 25th September 2024 to draw the attention of ministerial secretaries, heads of departments and all the officers who are holding the administration of state properties in preventing state properties to the promotion of political parties/groups/candidates and prejudice of political parties/groups/candidates and limiting appointments, promotions transfers of all government officers/servants from the nomination notice date to the time finishing the publishing of election results).

1.1. Nominations

As the Extraordinary Gazette (No. 2403/13), the nomination period for Sri Lanka's Parliamentary Elections was from October 4, 2024, until 12 noon on October 11, 2024. Importantly, ECSL emphasised that adequate representation of all ethnic groups according to the national population census ratio should be ensured as much as possible and adequate women representation should be considered when nominating candidates for national lists. It is announced that declarations of assets and liabilities of the candidates of national list should be submitted with national lists to ECSL as per the Anti-Corruption Act, No 9 of 2023.

According to the amended report (dated 24/10/2024) of the nominations received for the Parliamentary Election 2024, a total of 8888 candidates will contest the election, with 5,531 representing registered political parties and 3357 independent groups. 780 nomination papers were received and 788 were accepted, while 69 were rejected. Accordingly, 719 nominations have been accepted.

Electoral District	Recognized Political Parties			Independent Groups			Total No. of Nominations			Total No. of Candidates		
	Nominations			Nominations								
	Received	Accepted	Rejected	Received	Accepted	Rejected	Received	Accepted	Rejected	Political Parties	Independent Groups	Total
Colombo	28	27	1	22	19	3	50	46	4	567	399	966
Gampaha	24	24	0	18	17	1	42	41	1	528	374	902
Kalutara	20	17	3	14	11	3	34	28	6	238	154	392
Kandy	22	22	0	12	12	0	34	34	0	330	180	510
Matale	17	16	1	7	7	0	24	23	1	128	56	184
Nuwara Eliya	20	17	3	15	11	4	35	28	7	187	121	308
Galle	17	17	0	6	5	1	23	22	1	204	60	264
Matara	16	15	1	7	7	0	23	22	1	150	70	220
Hambantota	17	16	1	9	9	0	26	25	1	160	90	250
Jaffna	23	23	0	22	21	1	45	44	1	207	189	396
Vanni	24	23	1	27	25	2	51	48	3	207	225	423
Batticaloa	23	22	1	31	27	4	54	49	5	176	216	392
Digamadulla	22	21	1	50	43	7	72	64	8	210	430	640
Trincomalee	20	17	3	17	14	3	37	31	6	119	98	217
Kurunegala	22	18	4	9	9	0	31	27	4	324	162	486
Puttalam	26	24	2	18	15	3	44	39	5	264	165	429
Anuradhapura	18	17	1	9	9	0	27	26	1	204	108	312
Polonnaruwa	14	13	1	2	2	0	16	15	1	104	16	120
Badulla	19	15	4	6	5	1	25	20	5	180	60	240
Monaragala	13	12	1	3	3	0	16	15	1	108	27	135
Ratnapura	19	18	1	7	7	0	26	25	1	252	98	350
Kegalle	19	14	5	5	4	1	24	18	6	168	48	216
Total	443	408	35	316	282	34	759	690	69	5015	3346	8361
National List	27	27	0	2	2	0	29	29	0	516	11	527
Total	470	435	35	318	284	34	788	719	69	5531	3357	8888

Table 2 Information of receiving nominations from recognized political parties and Independent Groups

The highest number of candidates (966) report from Colombo District, while Polonnaruwa District has only 120 candidates. Nominations for the Digamadulla electoral district totalled 72 and 64 of them were accepted, while 08 nomination papers were rejected. 07 nomination papers were also rejected in Nuwara Eliya District.

The ECSL emphasised that all candidates contesting the Parliamentary Elections, scheduled for November 14, were required to submit their assets and liabilities statements along with their nomination papers to the district returning officer. This requirement applied to candidates from both recognized political parties and independent groups, in accordance with the Anti-Corruption Act No. 9 of 2023. Additionally, under Article 99 A, National List MP Candidates were also required to submit their asset and liability statements to the Election Commission along with their nomination papers. Election Commissioner General Saman Sri Ratnayake warned that failing to provide these statements with the nomination form was considered a punishable offence.

1.2. Controversies

Interestingly, 59 Members of Parliament including Ranil Wickramasinghe (former president), Vasudeva Nanayakkare, Chamal Rajapaksa, Maithripala Sirisena (A former president), Wijeydasa Rajapakshe (Candidate of the last Presidential Election), C.V. Vigneswaran (Tamil People's National Alliance), Wimal Weerawansa (Jathika Nidahas Peramuna), Champika Ranawaka (Samagi Jana Balawegaya), Mahinda Rajapaksa (Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna), Basil Rajapaksa (Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna), Wimalaweera Dissanayake (Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna), Sarath Fonseka (A former Presidential Election candidate) are not standing for re-election.

Some of the nomination papers were rejected. Famous Social Media Personal, Ashen Senarathne has submitted his nomination for the elections representing an independent group based in Colombo. His nomination was rejected by the ECSL and mentioned that it was submitted by an unauthorised individual, which led to disqualification. He expressed his frustration publicly claiming that he would take legal actions. However, ECSL has explicitly stated that any parties or individuals can take legal action if they have experienced unfairness due to the rejection of nomination papers.

On the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) ticket, actress Damitha Abeyratne was anticipated to run in the general elections from the Ratnapura electoral district. Her name, however, was not on the list of applicants that the SJB sent to the District Secretariat.

Former MP Ajith Mannapperuma resigned from Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) and withdrew from the parliamentary elections one day after putting in his nomination for the Gampaha electoral district. He highlighted his dismissal as the Gampaha electorate's chief SJB organiser.

The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka has received a number of Fundamental Rights (FR) petitions pertaining to the Parliamentary Election. However, Four out of Five FR petitions contesting the district returning officers' decisions to reject election-related nominations were dismissed by the Supreme Court.

ECSL was directed by the Bench, which included Justices Preethi Padman Surasena, Achala Wengappuli, and Priyantha Fernando, to accept the Democratic National Alliance's nominations for the Vanni District, which had previously been turned down by the district returning officer. The Supreme Court, however, rejected petitions from the Democratic National Voice regarding the denial of its nominations for the Kegalle District, the Sinhala Deepa Jathika Peramuna regarding the denial of its nominations for the Puttalam and Badulla Districts, and YouTuber Ashen Senarathna regarding the denial of nominations for the Colombo District submitted by his independent group. The candidacy of former MP Ranjan Ramanayake, who is running for office under the United Democratic Voice party from the Gampaha District, was also contested in a case submitted to the Supreme Court. K.M. Mahinda Senanayake, an independent candidate running in the Gampaha District election, submitted the petition.

Additionally, the Supreme Court has received a petition submitted by Priyantha Herath, a civil society activist and organizer of the "Api Sri Lanka" Organization contesting the decision to hold the general election on 14th November 14 and asking for a ruling stating that the decision is unconstitutional and respondents to the petition included the Attorney General, the Secretary to the President, the Chairman of the Election Commission, and its members.

According to the petition, nominations were accepted from October 4–11 in accordance with Section 10 of the Parliamentary Elections Act. It also makes the case that the Act requires that polling be held at least five weeks and no later than seven weeks following the nominations deadline.

The petition notes that the five-week term will finish on November 15 and the seven-week period would end on November 29 because the nomination process closed on October 11. Thus, the petitioner argues that it is illegal to schedule the general election for November 14 since it is outside of the legally required time range.

On 04th November, the Court will review the petition asking it to declare the decision to hold the parliamentary election on 14th November unlawful. The Court instructed the respondents to submit any objections they may have had to the petition by 28th October when it was brought before SC Justice Arjuna Obeyesekere.

2. Election observation process

PAFFREL successfully completed its election observation process in the last Presidential Election 2024 and went through a review process and discussed the lessons learnt from it. Also, a review for the Long Term Observers and District Coordinators were conducted in order to keep the observers who performed and reported well in the observation activities in the Presidential Election.

Following the announcement of the Parliamentary Election 2024, PAFFREL launched a comprehensive election observation mission that will be implemented in three phases; 1) Pre-Election, 2) Election-Day, and 3) Post-Election. The exercise of election observing has the following objectives:

- To observe and report the violence and violation of election laws and to help carry out preventive and corrective actions.
- To observe and report on the conduct of the election stakeholders to ensure the elections are legitimate and accepted by the voters.
- To promote greater involvement of the public to be proactive beyond election, and be involved in democratic and governing processes.

PAFFREL launches its election observation mission throughout the country, planning to deploying 160 Long Term Observers (LTOs), 3000 Stationary Observers (STOs), 1320 Mobile Team Observers (MTOs) through 330 Mobile Teams, 24 Special Mobile Observers through 06 Special Mobile Units, 1000 Postal Voting Observers (PVOs), 200 Counting/Tabulation Centre Observers, 32 Campaign Finance Monitoring Observers, and 25 Election Dispute Center (EDR) Observers. Additionally, PAFFREL plans to mobilise 30 District Coordinators, 30 District Finance Officers, and 26 Field Coordinators. Due to the presence of over 8,000 candidates running in the election, there are more election observers than there were during the Presidential Election of 2024.

2.1. Pre-election

Long Term Observers have finished their training to observe and report any malpractice, including the misuse of resources, violation of election laws and regulations, election preparations by the Election Commission, campaign trail of candidates, special reference to derogatory actions/ speech/ propaganda against minority/marginalised sectors. 160 of LTOs will be mobilised and deployed during the pre-election period in every electoral district. Pre-election observation will be conducted with several district-level Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

2.1.1. Postal Voting

As per Section 26 of the Parliamentary Elections Act No. 01 of 1981, voters entitled to request the facility of Postal vote for the parliamentary election on 14.11.2024, should be allowed to do so. This applies to voters who are not able to vote in person at their designated polling station because they are engaged in polling duties or other essential services that must continue. On September 29, 2024, ECSL declared that it will begin taking applications for postal voting on 01/10/2024, and terminate on 08/10/2024. Once more, ECSL extended this period till midnight on 10/10/2024.

According to the Election Commission, 21,160 postal voting applications were rejected from the total number of applications (759,210) received and 738,050 have been accepted. This is a 25,731 increase in postal ballots over the most recent presidential election.

Accordingly, postal voting for the parliamentary election will take place on 30/10/2024, 01/11/2024, and 04/11/2024 at all District Secretariats and election offices. For those unable to cast their postal votes on these dates, alternative dates have been set for 07/11/2024 and 08/11/2024, according to ECSL. The certification of postal voter lists appeared on 16/10/2024, with the issuance and delivery of these lists to the post taking place on 23/10/2024. Additionally, the delivery of official ballot papers to post offices is scheduled for 26/10/2024. Special days for

distributing official polling cards have been set for 27/10/2024, 31/10/2024, and 03/11/2024. The final date for distributing official ballot papers is 07/11/2024, as confirmed by the ECSL.

During the postal voting days, 1000 Postal Voting Observers will be deployed for all politically sensitive centres such as district secretariats, bus depots, educational offices, military camps and in police stations which contain a large density of potential government officials who would be deployed on the election date.

2.1.2. Observing District Election Dispute Resolution Centres

ECSL established Election Dispute Resolution (EDR) Unit (Previously known as All Party Operation Units) in 2001, initiated by PAFFREL, with the aim of resolving and mitigating election disputes by involving all relevant stakeholders, including the Election Commission, political parties, and election monitoring bodies. ECSL made a media release on 16/10/2024 about district level EDR Units and published all the addresses and contact details. For the Parliamentary Election 2024, from 24/10/2024, until one week after the election results are declared, District Secretariat offices will serve as district EDR Units.

The District Election Dispute Resolution Centre promptly addresses complaints from various parties regarding violations of election laws or disruptions to election activities. Its main purposes is to effectively manage these complaints, prevent obstacles to conducting a free and fair election, and ensure they do not recur, provide relief to those affected by election-related incidents, and ensure equal opportunities for all competing parties.

PAFFREL will deploy 25 EDR Unit observers in all 25 districts to cover the EDR processes and daily report back to the Head Office at Colombo.

2.2. Election-day monitoring

In order to establish the conditions for a free and fair elections on the polling day, PAFFREL has scheduled the deployment of almost 5862 observers, including 3000 stationed observers, 330 mobile observer units, and 175 long term observers. Furthermore, PAFFREL intends to send out 6 Special Mobile Units to predetermined vulnerable areas. Also, 200 Counting/Tabulation Observers, 30 District Coordinators and 26 Field Coordinators will be in the field on Election Day.

2.3. Post-election monitoring

Post-election monitoring activities will be carried out after the official results of the election were declared, and will continue till a peaceful and smooth transition of power, which is another salient sign of healthy democracy. The observation in this period will be mainly conducted by the Long Term Observers.

2.4. Monitoring social media

PAFFREL continued to monitor social media through a long standing trustworthy partnership with Hashtag Generation and Election Commission, observation mechanism through social media which commenced from 2015. In this context, PAFFREL partnered with Hashtag Generation to implement a multi-pronged strategy aimed at identifying violations of election law,

disinformation, and hate speech on Facebook in the lead up to, during and in the immediate aftermath of the Parliamentary Election as a targeted intervention.

A team has been deployed to monitor hate speeches, wrong information, inappropriate explanations which can mislead the public and create chaos, and they will be reported to the Election Commission’s attention for necessary actions. After the Election Commission’s attention, they will be directed to Sri Lanka Facebook Representatives for necessary actions.

PAFFREL has commenced pre-election monitoring through social media for the Parliamentary Election 2024. PAFFREL reports on social media activities and submits to the election commission on a daily basis. From 12th to 30th October 2024, the team monitored 46 cases on Facebook, 08 on TikTok, and 02 on YouTube. Also these cases undergo in below categories:

No.	Category of Complaint	# of Cases
01	Hate Speech	05
02	Bullying and Harassments	01
03	Disinformation	01
04	Hate Speech, Bullying and Harassment	08
05	Use of Minors	12
06	Hate Speech, Voter Suppression	01
07	Public Pressure	01
08	Use of National Anthem, National Flag, Religious Symbols and Religious Places	11
09	Violating the Guidelines Related to Public Officials	01
10	Violence and Incitement	14
11	Vote Buying	01

Table 3 Categories and number of cases of Social Media Monitoring from 12th to 30th October

PAFFREL continues the social media monitoring throughout the election period.

2.5. Campaign finance monitoring

ECSL has announced that all political parties, independent groups, and candidates contesting the 2024 parliamentary elections, in accordance with Section 03 of the Election Expenditure Regulation Act No. 03 of 2023, have agreed on the following expenditure limits for election campaign activities.

No	Electoral District	Number of Registered Electors	Maximum Limit of Expenditure per elector (Rs)	Total Authorised amount (Rs.)	Amount to be incurred by a candidate (Rs.)	Amount to be incurred by a political party/ independent group (Rs.)	Amount to be incurred by a National List candidate (Rs.)
1	Colombo	1765351	114	201,250,014	5,750,000	79,493,756	34,698
2	Gampaha	1881129	110	206,924,190	5,643,387	81,735,055	35,677
3	Kalutara	1024244	108	110,618,352	4,740,787	43,694,249	19,072
4	Kandy	1191399	108	128,671,092	5,146,844	50,825,081	22,185
5	Matale	429991	107	46,009,037	3,450,678	18,173,570	7,933
6	Nuwara Eliya	605292	110	66,582,120	3,631,752	26,299,937	11,480
7	Galle	903163	109	98,444,767	4,922,238	38,885,683	16,973
8	Matara	686175	109	74,793,075	4,487,585	29,543,265	12,895
9	Hambantota	520940	111	57,424,340	3,469,460	22,840,614	9,970
10	Jaffna	293187	100	59,318,700	3,954,580	23,430,887	10,227
11	Vanni	306081	82	25,098,642	1,673,243	9,913,964	4,327
12	Batticaloa	449686	110	59,465,460	3,709,910	19,538,857	8,529
13	Digamadulla	555432	113	62,763,816	3,765,829	24,791,707	10,821
14	Trincomalee	315925	115	36,331,375	3,114,118	14,350,893	6,264
15	Kurunegala	1417226	107	151,643,182	5,054,773	59,899,057	26,145
16	Puttalam	663673	109	72,340,357	3,945,838	28,574,441	12,472
17	Anuradhapura	741862	110	81,604,820	4,080,241	32,233,904	14,070
18	Polonnaruwa	351302	109	38,291,918	2,871,894	15,125,308	6,602
19	Badulla	705772	109	76,929,148	3,846,457	30,387,013	13,264
20	Monaragala	399166	110	43,908,260	2,927,217	17,343,763	7,570
21	Rathnapura	923736	110	101,610,960	4,354,755	40,136,329	17,519
22	Kegalle	709622	108	76,639,176	3,831,959	30,272,475	13,214

Table 4 Expenditure limits for election campaign activities in Parliamentary Election 2024

Candidates must submit an expenditure report, including all election campaign expenses, within twenty-one days (21) of the announcement of election results. Additionally, any donations or contributions received on behalf of the candidate, including their estimated value if received in kind, must be reported. This includes specifying whether the contributions were given as gifts, loans, advances, or deposits.

A collaborative effort by multiple election observation groups including several organisations, namely, Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV), Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL), Hashtag Generation, Campaign for Free and Fair Elections (CaFFE), Institute for Democratic Reforms & Electoral Studies (IRES), and PAFFREL is underway to track whether the parliamentary election contenders are spending their campaign funds within the allotted limitations.

Thus, “Chanda Salli Metare” has been designed and introduced from the Presidential Election 2024 with the aim of monitoring, estimating and analysing the campaign expenditures of candidates and political parties. Through this specialised website, the joint coalition of election monitoring bodies supports citizen engagement in campaign finance observation by raising public knowledge of the role of money in election campaigns and its impact on voter decisions. PAFFREL has trained 32 observers to track the expenditure of candidates in 32 specific electoral divisions in Matale, Polonnaruwa, Galle, Matara, and Ratnapura districts and provide detailed data on several categories such as mainstream media, social media, public campaigns, public events, press conferences and launch ceremonies, and campaign offices.

For the Parliamentary Election 2024, PAFFREL will be observed the campaign finance activities of the selected political parties, namely, Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), National People’s Power (NPP), Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), New Democratic Front (NDF), Sarvajana Balaya, and United Democratic Voice based on following criteria:

- Political parties that obtain seats at the previous parliament
- High number of votes obtained at the presidential election
- High levels expenditure incurred by political parties captured under the Chanda Salli Meetare website

Particularly, these criteria have been validated through the information provided by the Long Term Observers deployed by PAFFREL.

ECSL has issued guidelines outlining the measures to be followed during parliamentary elections and campaigns. These include restrictions on campaigning at designated election offices, as well as rules on campaign methods and meetings. Additionally, the Commission has released an announcement detailing the requirements for establishing and operating election campaign offices, in accordance with subsections 73(1) and 73(2) of the Parliamentary Elections Act No. 1 of 1981.

3. Complaint Reporting and Mitigation Unit

A dedicated Election Complaint Unit has been set up to monitor, receive, and handle any complaints with the utmost promptness. The unit has been established prior to the nomination call for the election and the unit functions until the end of the post-election period.

All complaints that this unit receives from individual citizens, assigned independent observers, and political parties, media channels (mass and social) will be verified, confirmed and directed to the appropriate authorities and institutions for the necessary follow-up and resolution.

PAFFREL refers their complaints, depending on their applicability, to the Department of Police, the Election Commission, the Bribery and Corruption Unit, and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. PAFFREL will assist these organisations in conducting their investigations, and will follow-up on the complaints and take necessary mitigation and preventive actions including legal actions if necessary.

3.1. Election Complaints

PAFFREL has received 972 complaints from the 11th October 2024 to 30th October 2024 (Annex I). These complaints ranged from violation of election laws, abuse of state power, resources and employees to acts of violence. 946 complaints were confirmed while 26 were unconfirmed.

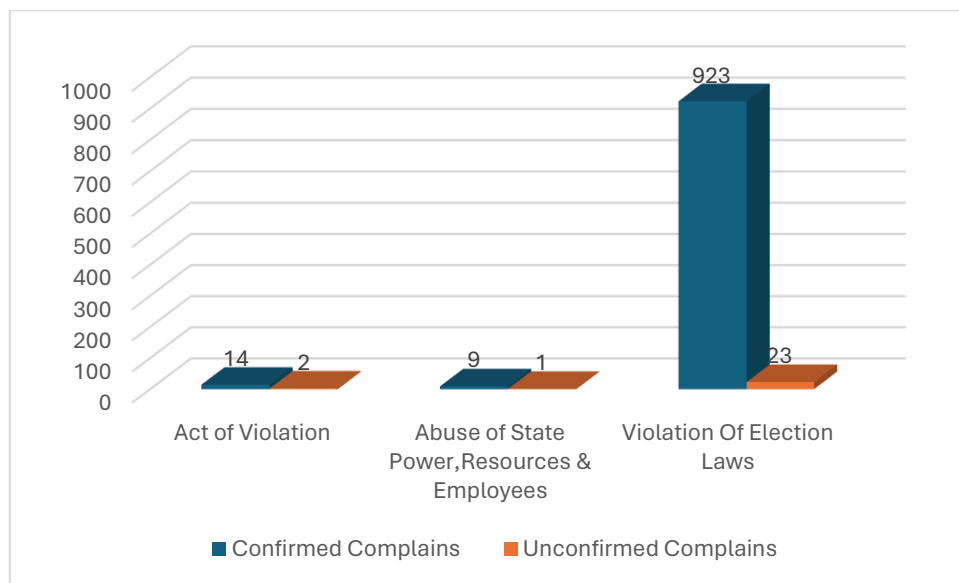


Figure 1 Type of Election Complaints received by Complaints Reporting and Mitigation Unit from 11th to 30th October 2024

3.2. Violation of election Laws

During this period, 946 complaints (923 confirmed and 23 unconfirmed) were received regarding violations of election laws including 805 complaints (most reported complaints) received on carrying out illegal election propoganda, 64 on maintaining illegal party offices, 51 on giving incentives with political objectives, 07 on carrying out election campaign activities harassing and inconveniencing the general public, 06 on state officers acting in favour of political parties and in breach of official duties, 03 on carrying out unlawful meetings and processions, 02 on giving incentives to voters, 01 on influencing voters, and 03 other incidents.

3.3. Abuse of state power, resources and employees

10 complaints have been reported on abuse of state power, resources and employees. Significantly, there were less complaints about misuse of state resources, staff, and power during the pre-election period of the 2024 Parliamentary Election than before the 2024 Presidential Election.

3.4. Act of Violence

16 complaints have been received about acts of violence from 11/10/2024 to 30/10/2024. Critical incidents can be noted as follows:

- An assault of a journalist by an organiser of the youth wing of the National People's Power in Badabadda in Hakmana. The assault occurred during an inquiry about an article published in a newspaper. It took place at the end of a meeting held by the National People's Power Party, and the victim of the assault is a Long Term Observer of PAFFREL. The victim has been admitted to Government Hospital, Gangodagama and transferred to Tangalle Hospital.
- An assault has been reported from the Kaththankudi Police Area of Batticaloa. A stone was allegedly thrown at the vehicle which was going near Music College road, of a candidate from Eros Democratic Front, shattering the front windshield. A police complaint has been filed regarding the incident. However, no life-threatening injuries were reported.
- An incident reported on 24th October from Bogwantlawwa Siripura area on a meeting was held in a private reception hall to confirm the victory of the candidates run for the Parliamentary Election from the National People's Power from Nuwara Eliya District from. After the meeting, two supporters of the Tamil Progressive Alliance have threaten that they would kill candidates of National People's Power if they come to the estates and ask for votes. This has been complained to the Sri Lanka Police, Bogawantalawa.

4. Know Your Candidates

On October 11, 2024, the 'Know Your Candidates' platform was launched through a partnership between PAFFREL, March 12 Movement, and the Bhasha Lanka Private Limited (which implements Helakuru Digital Platform) aiming at informing the public about candidates contesting for the upcoming elections. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the parties to launch 'Know Your Candidates', which aims to provide people with direct access to information on parliamentary nominees, such as their qualifications, solutions to current issues, and respective parties.

By providing voters with easy access to detailed information on parliamentary candidates, the platform empowers citizens to evaluate nominees based on their qualifications, political agendas, and solutions to pressing issues. This initiative not only helps voters make informed decisions but also encourages accountability among political candidates.

Additionally, for the first time in Sri Lanka, candidate information for the upcoming election will be widely accessible. The Helakuru Digital Platform, widely used by Sri Lankans, presents an invaluable opportunity for candidates to share their preference numbers and personal details, enhancing their public engagement. It also serves as an essential online tool for voters to learn about the candidates.

The platform acts as a vital link between voters and candidates, fostering greater transparency and encouraging political parties to nominate individuals who uphold higher standards of integrity and competence. This initiative can be marked as a digital solution to anything and everything in Sri Lanka.

5. Ensuring all-inclusive election

PAFFREL continues its election observation mission to ensure a free and fair election. Providing election identity cards to People with Disabilities (PWDs) attempted to include all the citizens that enable the right to vote in elections. ECSL also paid attention to providing accessible pathways for PWDs, ease of voting for those with visual impairments, and the LGBTIQ community.

ECSL has revealed that the legal provisions have been granted in sub-section 40 (2) of the Main Statute of the Parliamentary Elections Act No. 1 of 1981 for the persons who are totally or partially visually handicapped or physically disabled to be accompanied by another person to assist in marking the ballot paper at the upcoming elections. Also, ECSL stated that a certificate of eligibility prescribed in the Fifth Schedule to the Parliamentary Elections Act should be handed over to the officers at the polling station. ECSL also made a media release on 18/10/2024 on the application for special transportation facilities by physically disabled persons. This facility can be obtained through an application which is available at District Offices, Divisional Secretariats, Grama Niladhari Offices or www.elections.gov.lk website.

6. Voter Education

The PAFFREL conducts Voter Education awareness programs throughout the country aimed at educating civil society towards the advancement of political culture. This has been an ongoing process for many years. These programs are conducted targeting first-time voters, university students, pupils, general public, government officers, and so on. Here, target groups are provided with a comprehensive understanding of voter's responsibilities, voting procedures, and the polling station process on Election Day.

PAFFREL is in the progress of conducting voter education programs aiming for the Parliamentary Election 2024. The programs covered districts, namely, Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Kegalle, Rathnapura, Badulla, Polonnaruwa, Jaffna, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Puttalam, Kandy, Ampara, and Vavuniya with around 1500 of participation. PAFFREL could obtain the resource contribution from the experts in voter education and the active members of the March 12 Movement.

PAFFREL also ensures that these awareness sessions cover the importance of free and fair elections, encouraging citizens to actively participate in the democratic process. They emphasise the significance of each vote, the legal framework surrounding elections, and the importance of preventing electoral fraud. Through these efforts, the organisation aims to foster a more informed electorate that can contribute to a healthier democratic environment.

7. People’s responsibility for a free and fair election

PAFFREL encourages the people to take action against electoral malpractice and violence before, during, and after the election. Furthermore, PAFFREL strives for and anticipates a free and fair election. With this main goal, PAFFREL expects to achieve the objectives such as to mobilise a people-led uninterrupted election observation to ensure flawless electoral processes from local government to provincial council and parliament to presidential elections, to record and document incidents relating to all forms of violence during elections and violations of election laws, and to promote collective community initiatives to prevent violence and malpractices before, during and after elections. PAFFREL expects everyone to use their right to vote responsibly.

Contact Details of Complaints Receiving and Intervention Centre (District Level) at the Head Office, PAFFREL

No.	District/s	Contact No.	Email
01	Colombo	0757427942	paffrelcomplaintunit@gmail.com
02	Gampaha and Kalutara	0701084006	
03	Kandy and Matale	0701083974	
04	Nuwara Eliya, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, and Digamadulla	0701083911	
05	Galle and Matara	0701083949	
06	Hambantota	0751227989	
07	Jaffna and Vanni	0701083929	
08	Kurunegala and Puttalam	0701084013	
09	Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa	0701083998	
10	Badulla and Monaragala	0701084034	
11	Rathnapura and Kegalle	0701083929	

General Contact Details

People’s Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL)

No.16, Byrde Place, Off Pamankada Road, Colombo 06, Sri Lanka

Telephone: +94 11 255 8570

Whatsapp: <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Va9bCyOLI8YbWO7aaZ0r>

Email: paffrel@sltnet.lk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Paffrel.Organization>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQtjspli-nTqqTC9fq6DcQQ>

Website: <https://www.paffrel.com/paffrel/about-paffrel>

TikTok: <https://www.paffrel.com/paffrel/about-paffrel>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/paffrel/>

Twitter: <https://x.com/PAFFREL>

Threads: <https://www.threads.net/@paffrel>

Annex I - Complaints received by Complaints Reporting and Mitigation Unit, Parliamentary Election 2024 (From 11/10/2024 to 30/10/2024)



Parliamentary Election 2024 - Pre-election period

Violations of law under each category - Islandwide

From 2024-10-11 10:00:00 To 2024-10-30 16:00:00 - [By Recording Date]

Label	Type of Violation	Confirmed	Unconfirmed	Sub Total
1	Murders	0	0	0
2	Grievous Assaults	2	1	3
3	Assaults	4	0	4
4	Abductions	0	0	0
5	Attacks with Explosives	0	0	0
6	Shootings	0	0	0
7	Threats & Intimidation using Firearms	0	0	0
8	Damage to Immovable Property	1	0	1
9	Damage to Movable Property	1	0	1
10	Intimidation & Threats	6	1	7
11	Attacks on Political Party/ Candidate Offices	0	0	0
	Acts of Violence	14	2	16
12	Misuse of state property	2	0	2
13	Use of State Vehicles for Election Campaign Purposes	0	0	0
14	Attempts/ influencing State Officials	2	0	2
15	Appointments, Transfers & Promotions for State Officials targeting the Election	2	0	2
16	Use of State Officials & Security Sources for Election Campaign Purposes	2	1	3
16-1	Provide government aid in political gain	1	0	1
	Abuse of State Power, Resources & Employees	9	1	10
17	Destruction & sabotage decorations, posters & cutouts of political parties	0	0	0
18	Disrupting Campaign Activities of Opponents	3	0	3
19	Carrying out Illegal Election Propaganda	784	21	805
20	Threatening & Disrupting Work of Election Monitors	0	0	0
21	State Officers acting in Favor of Political Parties & in Breach of Official Duties	6	0	6
22	Carrying out Unlawful Meetings & Processions	3	0	3
23	Maintaining Illegal Party Offices	62	2	64
24	Giving Incentives with Political Objectives	51	0	51
25	Using Vehicles without Number Plates	0	0	0
26	Favouritism & Misuse of State & other Media	0	0	0
27	Attempts to Influence/ Influencing by Security Sources & State Officials	0	0	0
28	Spreading of fake news	1	0	1
29	Carrying out Election Campaign Activities Harassing & Inconveniencing the General Public	7	0	7
30	Influencing Voters	1	0	1
31	Irregularities relating to Ballot Papers	0	0	0
32	Transportation of voters	0	0	0
33	Giving incentives to voters	2	0	2
34	Obstructing election officials and activities	0	0	0
35	Assaulting voters/ using force to turn voters away from polling station	0	0	0
36	Casting votes illegally/ attempts to impersonate	0	0	0
37	Other Incidents	3	0	3
	Violation of Election Laws	923	23	946
	TOTAL	946	26	972

* During the above period, we have received 955 complaints/incidents in relation to 972 Electoral law / general law violations.