



Parliamentary Election 2024 Report on Cooling-Off Period 13th November 2024

Before the Polling Day

The “Cooling-Off” period commenced from midnight on 11th November 2024 and will remain in effect until Election Day on 14th November and the Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL) has announced that all the candidates running for the Parliamentary Election 2024 should stop their campaign activities by midnight on 11th November, 48 hours before the polls. The ECSL, notified only telecast video footage and information of final political campaigns on 11th November on main news broadcasting on each television and radio channel on 12th November. As they mentioned, this time should be equal for all candidates to publicize the information of final campaign meetings.

Voter Instructions

Guidelines for voting and marking preferences have been published by the ECSL. There are 02 types of ballot papers. For Polonnaruwa, Monaragala, and Kegalle constituencies are printed in a single column:

Political Party										*	*	
Political Party										*	*	
Political Party										*	*	
Political Party										*	*	
Political Party										*	*	
Independent Group 1										*	*	
Independent Group 2										*	*	
Independent Group 3										*	*	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			

Figure 1 Sample Ballot Paper

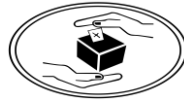
Ballot papers for other constituencies are printed in 2 columns:

Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
Political Party					*	*		Independent Group					*	*	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		

* The symbol of each party or group.

Figure 2 Sample Ballot Paper

In the Parliamentary Election 2024, each voter is entitled to one vote only, by marking an "X" in the box alongside the name and symbol of a Political Party chosen or the number and symbol of an Independent



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Group. The voter is allowed to choose up to three of his preferred candidates from the party or group by placing "X" next to their serial numbers at the end of the ballot paper.

A vote shall be invalid and shall not be counted, if the voter has voted for more than one recognized political party or more than one independent group, a combination of parties and groups, or if they make any identifying marks on the ballot paper.

The polling card and a valid National Identity Card (NIC) or a valid driver's license or a valid passport or an elderly identity card issued by the Divisional Secretariat, a pensioner's identity card issued by the Department of Pensions, the identity card issued to the clergy, identity card issued for the People with Disabilities can be used to cast votes. Voting is also authorized using the temporary ID that the commission issues through the Grama Niladhari officers for individuals who do not have any of these.

The Distribution of official ballot notices for the parliamentary Election to households by post was completed on 07th November 2024. Voter who have not received these notices can visit the post office according to their registered address during office hours until 14th November 2024, to collect the notice for their household by verifying their identity. ECSL has provided facilities to voters who have not received the same voter notice to obtain a copy of the official voter notice by visiting the election e-service website. (<https://eservices.elections.gov.lk/pages/home.aspx>).

ECSL permitted the following personals to enter the polling stations:

1. Electors registered at the polling station
2. Polling staff of the polling station
3. Police Officers deployed in election duties at the polling station
4. Contesting candidates
5. Duly appointed Polling Agents of each candidate
6. Representatives of Local/Foreign Election Monitoring Organizations approved by the Election Commission
7. Officers authorized by the respective Returning Officers.

The following misconduct at Polling and Counting Centers is illegal and imperative to avoid:

- Using mobile phones
- Taking photographs
- Recording videos
- Possessing firearms
- Smoking, drinking alcohol, or using other intoxicants
- Entering the centers under the influence of alcohol or intoxicants.

The Election Commission has announced several facilities to support disabled voters in the upcoming Parliamentary Election 2024 by the Election Commission. These include legal provisions allowing voters with disabilities to bring an assistant, use personal transport to polling stations, and receive assistance if polling locations are challenging to access. Additionally, three-wheeler transport is available if the polling station is far or in hilly areas. Blind or partially blind voters can use tactile stencils Frame, and temporary identity cards are accepted Issued by the Election Commission. Notices in sign language will be displayed, with live result broadcasts also interpreted in sign language. Election staff are instructed to help voters with disabilities cast their votes without obstacles.



Election Observations

155 Long Term Observers (LTOs) deployed in 25 districts across the country have observed the election process during the Cooling-Off period. As reported by most of the LTOs, a number of complaints were reported regarding the non-removal of political cutouts and posters in the monitored area during the Cooling-Off period. Complaints regarding vote buying via WhatsApp or social media to voters during the Cooling-Off period have been reported related several parties such as Samagi Jana Balawegaya (45), National People’s Power (16), Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (3), New Democratic Front (2), and Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (1). During the Cooling-Off period, very few political parties and independent groups implemented their campaigns with false claims and misleading comments to the voter. There are few incidents involving the use of religion to promote political parties and independent groups. Police have frequently acted impartially in the electoral period. According to some LTOs, election campaign posters persisted into the Cooling-Off period in certain electoral districts. Additionally, some observers noted that social media campaigns for elections continued throughout this time. However, there was a calm Cooling-Off time before the polls.

Election complaint in the Cooling-Off period

PAFFREL has received 164 complaints (156 confirmed and 08 unconfirmed) during the Cooling-Off period.

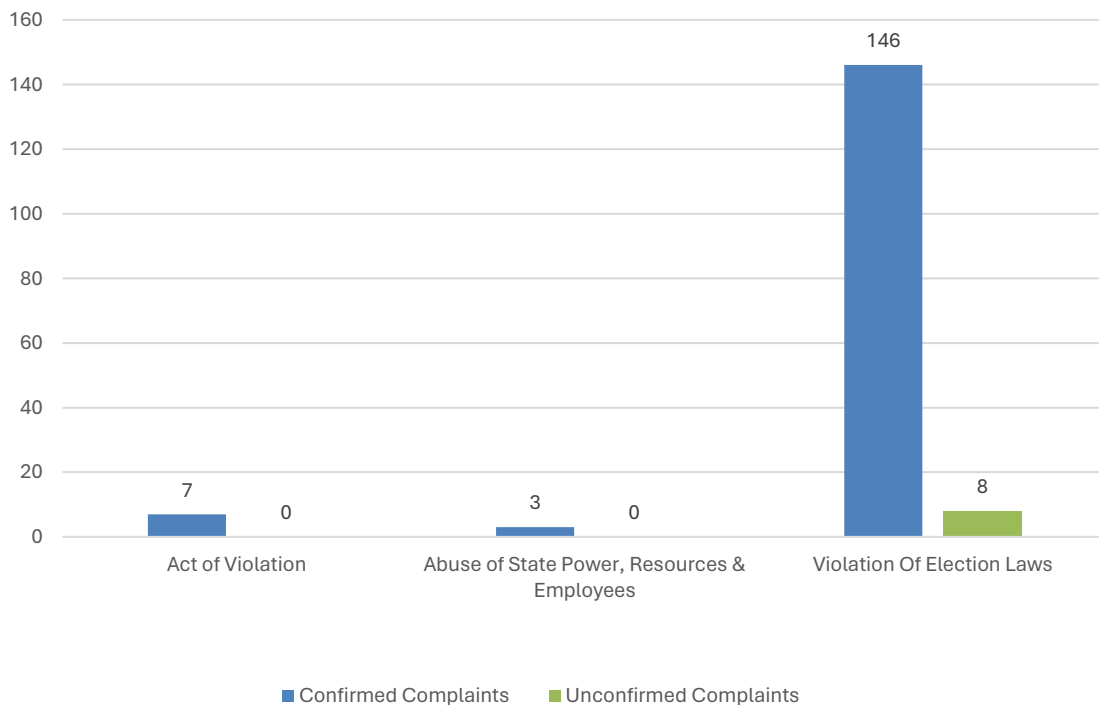
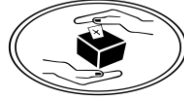


Figure 3 Election Complaints received during the Cooling-Off period

Among these reported complaints, there are some cases reported about violation of election laws.

On 12/11/2024, Mr. Anuradha Jayaratne, former State Minister’s supporters have involved in an assault. Mr. Ananda Jayampathy, a former member of the Upadhyaya Pradeshiya Sabha attacked with a stick when he went to inspect the information that Mr. Anuradha Jayaratne was distributing school books. It was reported that Mr. Jayampathy is being treated at Hospital, Peradeniya.



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On 13/11/2024, a violent gang came to the house of Independent Candidate Mr. Bhuvanewaran Vasantharaj who is contesting from Jaffna district in the election attacked the candidate's father with an iron rod and damaged windows and a car parked at the house. Jaffna Police has started further investigations in this regard.

Two complaints received related to granting leave to employees to cast their votes. One complaint was received on 12/11/2024, and reported the management of Commercial Bank, Vavuniya and Sampath Bank, Mannar and Jaffna were not ready to grant leave to their employees. Another complaint was received on 13/11/2024, and reported that the administration of the Pussella Meat Shop, Mount Lavinia Outlet was not ready to grant leave to their employees.

Social media monitoring

Hashtag Generation has been handed over cases through the social media monitoring during the Cooling-Off period to the ECSL. They have shared 639 cases of the social media posts on election campaigns and 581 cases on Meta Advertisements.

Appeal to voters

PAFFREL asks citizens to cast their vote considering the economic policies and governance principles of the candidates running for the Parliamentary Election 2024. In order to ensure a peaceful election until the results are announced and during the post-election period, PAFFREL appeals to voters to be peaceful and vigilant.

PAFFREL's election observation through 40 District Coordinators, 25 Field Coordinators, 3000 Stationary Observers, 1320 Mobile Team Observers (MTOs) through 330 Mobile Teams, 155 Long Term Observers, 32 Campaign Finance Observers, 25 Election Dispute Resolution Center Observers, 200 Counting/Tabulation Centre Observers and 24 Special Mobile Observers through 06 Special Mobile Units is continues to ensure a free and fair election.

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