



Presidential Election 2024 2nd Interim Report (From 2024 September, 12-18)

Towards the “Cooling Off”

There are only 03 more days for the Presidential Election 2024. The political landscape is more crowded and competitive than ever. Even though there has always been a competition between two main candidates for president in the history, the Presidential Election 2024 looks to be one of the most unpredictable and open ones yet.

Postal voting for the Presidential Election 2024 was concluded by the 12th September 2024 with fewer violations of election laws. A total of 736,589 applications for postal voting had been submitted, of which 712,318 had been accepted, while 24,268 applications had been rejected. There haven't been any instances or situations during postal voting that have had a major impact on the overall outcome of the postal voting. The Election Commission of Sri Lanka has announced that all the presidential candidates should stopped finish their campaign activities by midnight on September 18, 2024, 48 hours before the polls.

Violations of election laws

From 11th September to 23:59 hour, 18th September, the violations of election laws have slightly increased to the date. The violations of election laws increased from 526 to 872 (confirmed). There has been a slight increase in complaints on abuse of state power, resources & employees, from 75 to 88 (confirmed). Additionally, there was a rise in reported violent crimes from 49 to 68 (confirmed).

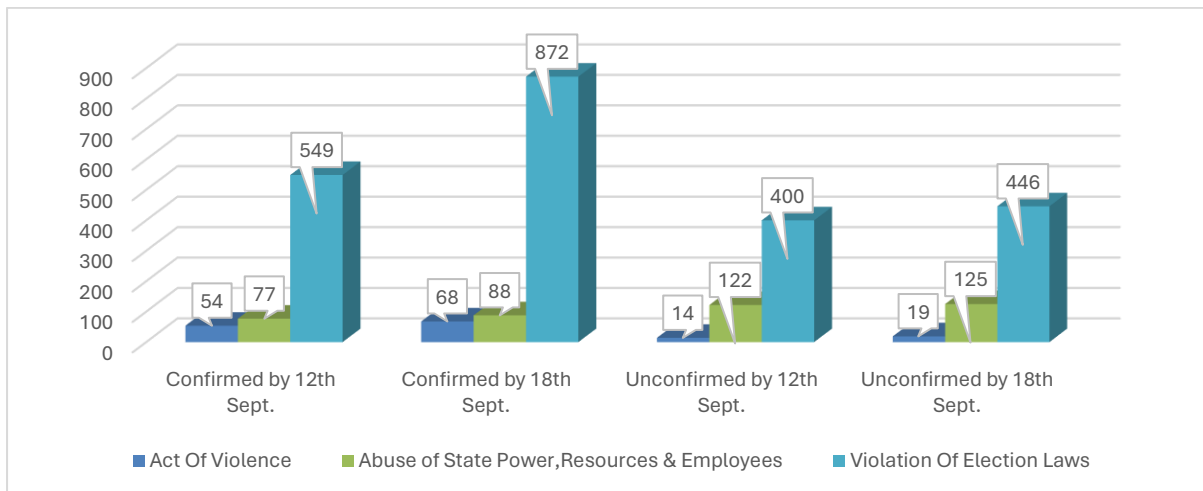


Figure 1 Election Complaints from 12th to 18th September

However, compared to the Presidential Election 2019, acts of violence has been decreased in Presidential Election 2024. Further, abuse of state power, resources & employees is lower in 2024 compared to 2015. In 2024, violation of election laws is higher than 2015 and 2019.

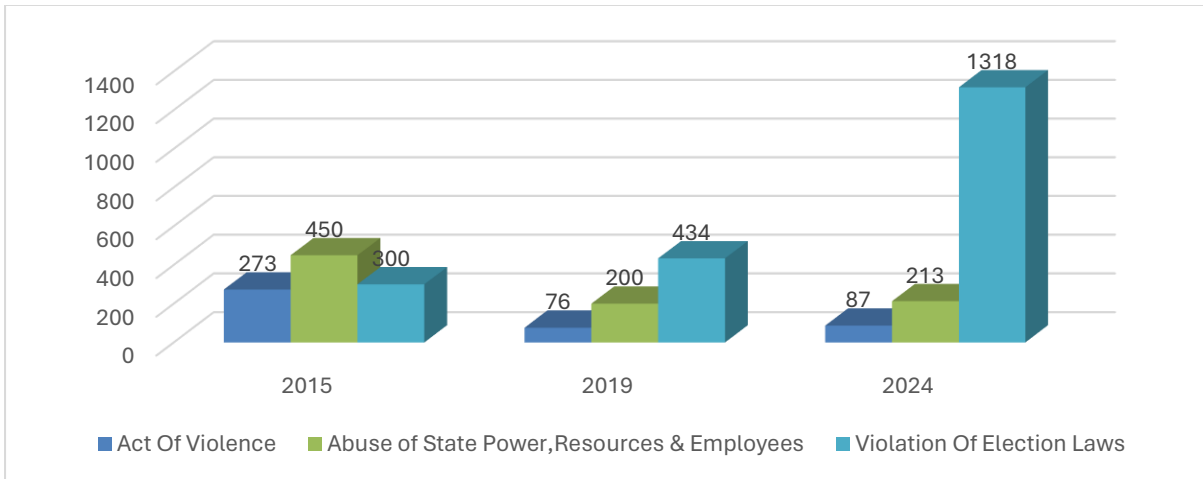


Figure 2 Election Complaints in Presidential Elections of 2015, 2019, and 2024

The Complaint Receiving and Mitigation Unit is continuing its operations and made more follow-ups with the complaints received. PAFFREL corresponded with the Election Commission, Sri Lanka Police, the Election Commission, the Bribery and Corruption Unit, and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, 171 follow-up letters (113 to Head Office, Election Commission, Colombo, 37 to District Offices, Election Commission, 18 to Sri Lanka Police, and 03 to Human Rights Commission) have been sent to responsible entities.

Social media monitoring

PAFFREL continued to monitor social media through a long standing trustworthy partnership with Hashtag Generation and Election Commission, observation mechanism through social media. From 17th August to 17th September 2024, observed social media and found 366 on Facebook, 84 on TikTok, 27 on YouTube, and 07 on Twitter. From 13th to 17th September, the social media monitoring has identified below types of violence:

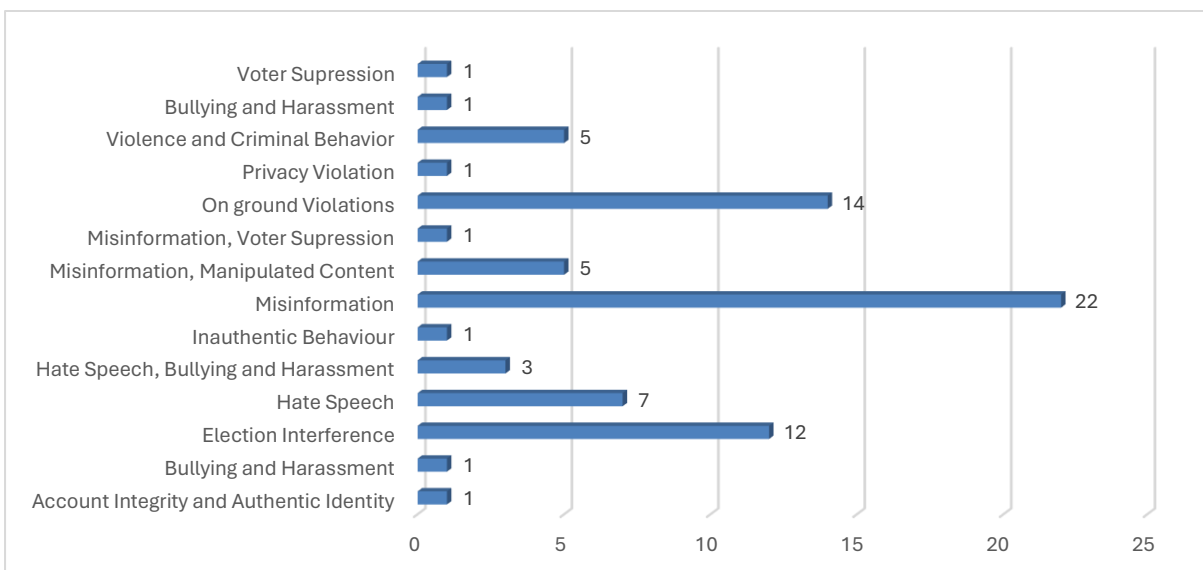


Figure 3 Social media monitoring from 13th to 17th September 2024



The three types of violence that are most frequently reported are dissemination of misinformation, on ground violations and election interference.

PAFFREL continues the social media monitoring and share reports to the Election Commission. After the Election Commission's attention, they will be directed to Sri Lanka Facebook Representatives for necessary actions.

The Election Commission has announced that all the campaigns through social media run by political parties/candidates, supporters of parties/candidates and users of social media should be stopped since all the campaigns pertaining to the on Presidential Election 2024 conclude after 12 AM on 18th September 2024. In the event that a social media campaign is reported to the Election Commission, those will be directed to related social media institutions to remove the contents of campaigns.

Driving forces for a free and fair election

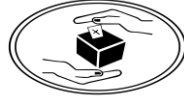
The Election Commission and Sri Lanka Police perform their duties to the best of their abilities except on misuse of state power, resources, and employees. The Election Commission and Sri Lanka Police, which are indicative of an advanced political culture, have best practices to prevent acts of violence and limit the use of illegal election propaganda, particularly cutouts and posters. The credit should go to the Election Commission, Sri Lanka Police and all the election monitoring organizations and bodies. Several international election monitoring organizations including The European Union, Commonwealth, and Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) have arrived to observe the Presidential Election 2024 to ensure the elections are conducted in accordance with internationally agreed norms and standards.

Regulating campaign finance

To ensure a transparent and accountable election campaign process, a collaborative effort by multiple election observation groups including several organizations, 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 underway to track whether the presidential contenders are spending their campaign funds within the allotted limitations through assigned 40 Campaign Finance Observers assigned to 40 electoral divisions and they are reporting against predetermined expenditure amounts to get the total island wide campaign expenditure of each candidate. This is a pilot initiative along with the Election Commission to monitor the election campaign expenditure of candidates through several categories such as mainstream media, social media, public campaigns, public events, and press conferences and launch ceremonies, and campaign offices.

Active citizenry and appeal to voters

PAFFREL tries to nurture a democratic nation with a politically literate and empowered citizenry that cherishes democratic values and promotes accountability and transparency in governance. Election is one of the important processes that people can use and enjoy their power to choose the right representatives for a certain time. As first time voters, the youth voters especially have an important opportunity to use their vote responsibly. In this Presidential Election, the vote share of ethnic minorities is a significant factor in choosing the next president. PAFFREL intervened in several voter education initiatives to educate the youth and other citizens to enhance the political literacy of voters by empowering them to exercise their democratic right to vote responsibly and conscientiously.



PAFFREL

Despite the expectation of free and peaceful election, the acts of violence and violation of election laws can be increased even in the cooling-off period. PAFFREL encourages active citizens to be involved to promote collective community initiatives to prevent violence and malpractices before, during and after elections. PAFFREL is also aware of citizens through its social media channels. PAFFREL appeals to voters to exercise their right to vote in the Presidential Election 2024.

The election observation through 40 District Coordinators, 25 Field Coordinators, 3000 Stationary Observers, 680 Mobile Team Observers (Team 179X4), 160 Long Term Observers, 40 Campaign Finance Observers, and 25 Election Dispute Resolution Center Observers is continues to ensure a free and fair election.

Any citizen can contact the Head Office, PAFFREL and Complaint Receiving and Intervention Centers (Provincial Level) through below contacts:

No.	Province	Contact No.	email
01	North-Western	0701084013	paffrelnw@gmail.com
02	Southern	0701083949	paffrelsp@gmail.com
03	Eastern	0701083911	paffrelep@gmail.com
04	Uva	0701084034	paffrelup@gmail.com
05	Sabaragamuwa	0701083934	paffrelsg@gmail.com
06	North-Central	0701083998	paffrelnc@gmail.com
07	Northern	0701083929	paffrelnp@gmail.com
08	Western	0701084006	paffrelwp@gmail.com
09	Central	0701083974	paffrelcp@gmail.com

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>