

PAFFREL

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PEOPLE'S ACTION FOR FREE & FAIR ELECTIONS

Dr. A.H.M. Chandana Abayaratne,
Hon. Minister,
Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government,
Independence Square,
Colombo 07.

2026.01.22

Dear Minister,

Calling for views and suggestions to establish a mechanism to grant voting rights to Sri Lankan citizens residing overseas

The PAFFREL takes this opportunity to express its appreciation for appointing a committee to obtain views and suggestions to secure the voting rights of nearly 3 million Sri Lankan citizens working overseas, who earn foreign exchange for the country. This has been a subject of discussion in society for a long time and has been referred to the legal draftsman department after receiving cabinet approval during the last 3 governments, but has not become a reality.

It should also be mentioned that we are very optimistic on the appointment of Additional Election Commissioner Mr. Chinthaka Kularatne as the Chairman of this committee, who is a senior officer and lawyer with extensive experience in the Election Commission.

We, as an election monitoring organization committed to making the voting rights of Sri Lankan citizens working overseas a reality for over two decades, would like to focus your attention to the following suggestions.

1. Develop a program to secure the voting rights of nearly 1 million voters who are currently living in Sri Lanka but are unable to go to the polls on the day of elections due to various reasons while formulating a methodology to grant voting rights to overseas workers.

We believe that by initiating this process, especially with people who are currently living in Sri Lanka but are unable to go to the polls during elections, it will be possible to identify and find solutions to the problems that might arise in the Process, which could be utilized for creating a more fair and efficient system in granting voting rights to overseas workers.

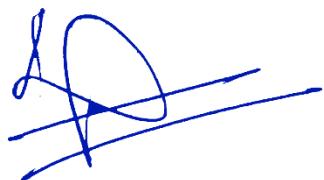
2. The relevant press release states that interested persons can provide their views and suggestions to the relevant committee on or before February 15, 2026. However, we wish to propose that interested persons or organizations should be given an opportunity to come before the committee and provide their views and suggestions.

3. We strongly believe that if a system is developed to secure the voting rights of this group within the year 2026, it would be possible to implement it in an upcoming election.

As an election monitoring organization that has consistently stood up for the rights of both local and overseas voters who are unable to go to the polls on election/poll days, we would like to express our utmost support to make this effort a success, and we firmly believe that the voting rights of hundreds of thousands of voters who are unable to go to the polls during elections/polls will be secured, at least during the tenure of the current government

Thank you

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rohana Hettiarachchi'.

Rohana Hettiarachchi

Executive Director

Copies - 1. Mr. Chinthaka Kularatne, Chairman of the Committee appointed to seek views on the voting rights of Sri Lankans working overseas.

2. Other interested institutions