



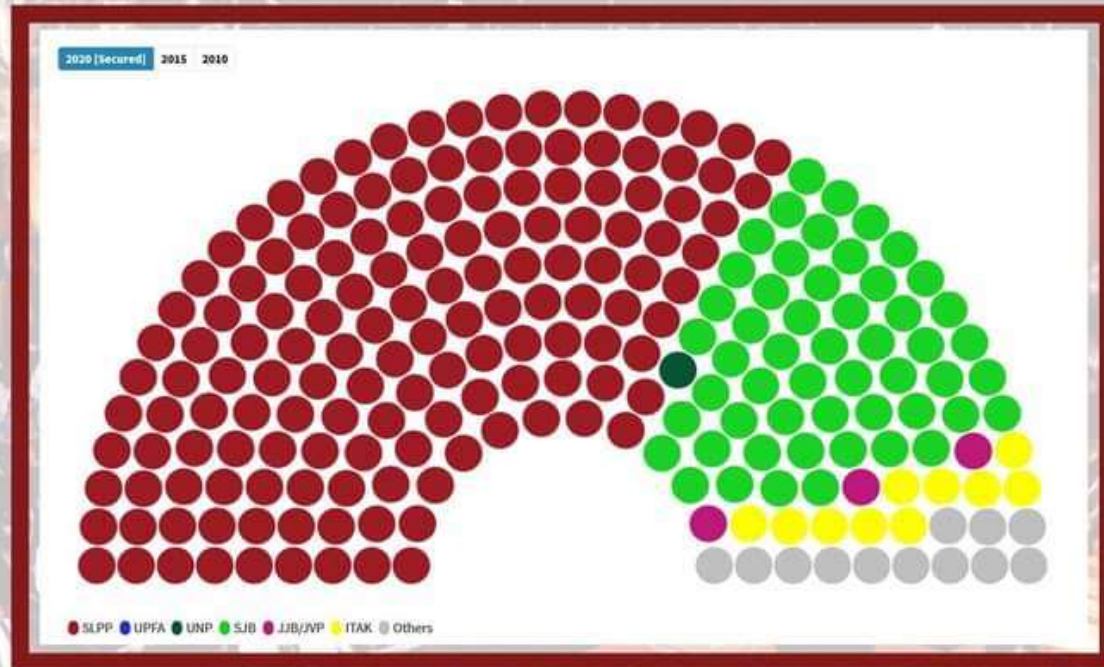
"Strengthening Voters Role in Election Amid Pandemic"
The Sri Lanka Experience

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2020 Sri Lankan Parliamentary Election

- Parliament dissolved at midnight on March 2
- Parliamentary Elections scheduled for April 25
- EC set Nominations from March 12-19
- Elections postponed after completing nominations (but did not issue a gazette for candidate and their numbers)
- New Parliament supposed to commence on May 14
- Election set for June 20 and postponed again to August 5
- Five months and 18 days without parliament – parliament dissolve on March 2 and new parliament supposed to be called on Aug 20

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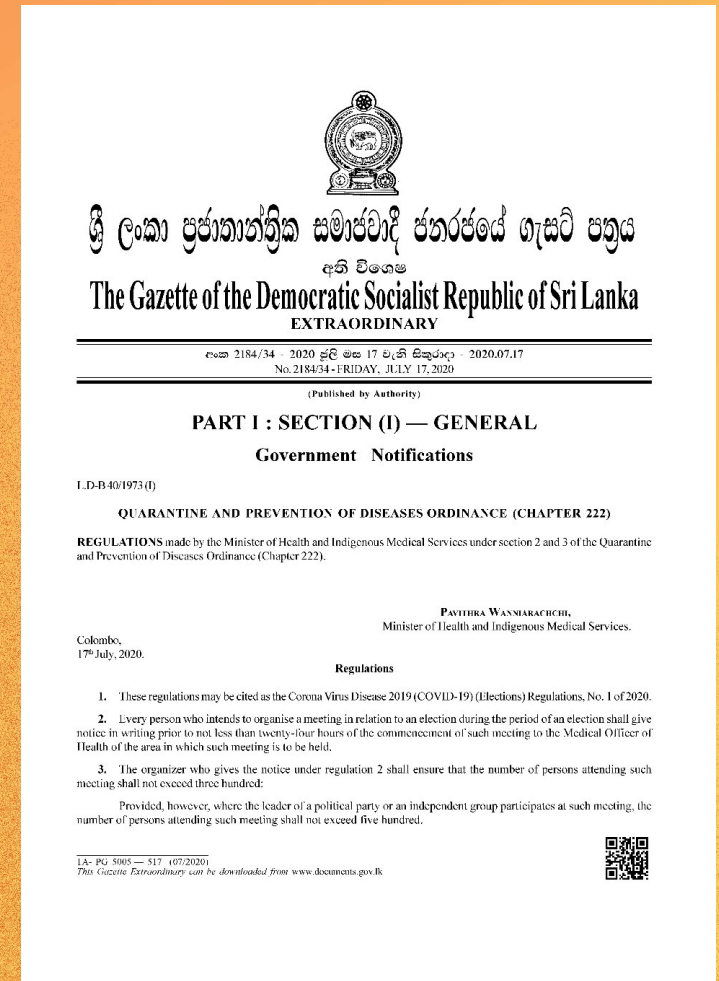


Health Authorities Issued Health Guidelines to Mitigate Risks

- Organized mock polling stations and counting stations as part of preparations
- According to health guidelines, door to door campaigns are limited, meeting allow only 300 people, party leader only 500
- Wearing masks, hand sanitizer, social distancing are compulsory for all of elections process
- Voters were asked to bring their pen when they come for voting
- Two days for elections – August 5 voting and August 6 Counting
- Extending voting time from 4-5 – this hour specially allocated for self-quarantine people

Challenges EC Faced

- Health guidelines gazette was released only after many advocacy efforts from civil society and only three guidelines were gazzetted
- Advance voting for quarantine was cancelled as no regulations to implement and the object from the political parties
- High cost for election



Civil Society Engagement

- This document was initiated by and endorsed by 6 domestic observer groups and ANFREL.
- It assists organizations in making appropriate preparations for the deployment of their staff and volunteers (PPE, social distancing, contact tracing, etc.), and comes together with a pledge.



2020 Sri Lankan Parliamentary Elections COVID-19 Code of Conduct for Election Observers

We, election monitoring organizations planning to observe the 2020 parliamentary elections, realize the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic and our responsibility to help contain the spread of the disease.

Election observers are an integral part of a democratic and transparent electoral process, and this remains true during the unprecedented situation we are currently facing. We remain committed to the highest standards set by international and regional instruments for our line of work.

We want, however, to ensure that election observation takes place in the safest possible manner and does not adversely impact voters, polling staff, or other electoral stakeholders. Therefore, we have jointly prepared the following guidelines, to be implemented throughout our respective election observation activities:

1. Our organizations are committed to following COVID-19 policies implemented by health authorities, the Election Commission of Sri Lanka, and other government agencies. We will ensure that our staff members and volunteers behave accordingly, and will keep them periodically updated.
2. We will prioritize online forms of communication, to limit as much as possible the need for in-person meetings.
3. Our staff members and volunteers will be instructed to maintain a social distance of at least one meter at all times. We will make the necessary arrangements to avoid physical contact as much as possible.
4. Our staff members and volunteers will be instructed to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly with soap or hand sanitizer.
5. Our staff members and volunteers will be required to wear face masks in public and provided guidance on how to wear one properly.
6. We will instruct our staff members and volunteers to limit their use of public transportation as much as possible. Private vehicles will be disinfected before and after use.
7. Our staff members and volunteers will be mandated to keep a daily journal of their activities, including places visited and persons met, to provide health authorities with the information needed for contact tracing, should it be necessary.
8. We will strive to provide staff members and volunteers with adequate health insurance coverage. Their health situation will also be regularly monitored with the help of health professionals, and any person experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate.

Endorsers:

- Asian Network for Free and Fair Elections (ANFREL)
- Campaign for Free & Fair Elections (CaFFE)
- Center for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV)
- Mothers & Daughters of Lanka (MDL)
- Movement for Free and Fair Elections (MFFE)
- National Polls Observation Centre (NPOC)
- People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL)

PAFFREL Engagement

- 3040 Stationery observers
- 260 mobile vehicles
- 1100 observers for election day only
- 319 LTOs
- This is first time they used online applications for gathering data. For their effort- NDI Sri Lanka given their support
- Social media monitoring



CMEV Engagement

- CMEV deployed stationery, long term observers, mobile observers.
 - 90 long-term observers (LTOs)
 - 1,500 Short-term observers (STOs)
 - 175 mobile vehicles
 - 200 mobile observers
 - 100 PWD mobile observers to promote inclusiveness
- Apart from that they were observing media campaign- ground campaign, TV, radio and paper advertisement – they counting the expenses



ANFREL Engagement

- The ANFREL assessment of the 2020 Sri Lankan Parliamentary Election is ongoing with the theme:

Assessing the 2020 Sri Lankan Parliamentary Elections: “Electoral Challenges in Sri Lanka amid the COVID-19 Pandemic”

- Objective:
To assess the 2020 Sri Lankan Parliamentary Elections are conducting with COVID-19 Pandemic



ANFREL Engagement

Activities:

- Desk review of recent election process (EMB, Health, Security, Civil Society, Media, Political Parties, Candidates, laws and regulations)
- Interviewing selected stakeholders (EMBs, Health, Security, civil society, media, political parties, candidates)
- Monitoring polling processes, including cooling period, voting, and counting
- Post-election scenario: monitoring the release results and transfer of power, if applicable



Initial Findings

- According to PAFFREL and CMEV, polling day was peaceful and no election violence was reported during the time polling was conducted.
- Major issues of Sri Lankan elections:
 - Elections law is not appropriate for free and fair elections
 - There is no campaign finance law
 - There is no adequate media laws