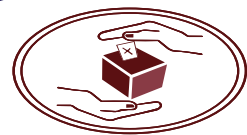


PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION - 2024

PAFFREL OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT REPORT



PAFFREL

PEOPLE'S ACTION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS (PAFFREL)



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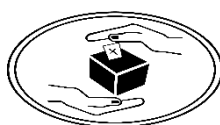
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Narrative Report

Parliamentary Election 2024



PAFFREL

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

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Abbreviations

ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections
AROs	Assistant Returning Officers
CaFFE	Campaign for Free and Fair Elections
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CCOs	Counting Center Observers
CMEV	Center for Monitoring Election Violence
CPA	Center for Policy Alternatives
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECSL	Election Commission of Sri Lanka
EDR	Election Dispute Resolution
FR	Fundamental Right
IEOM	International Election Observation Mission
IRES	Institute for Democratic Reforms & Electoral Studies
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
LTOs	Long-Term Observers
MTOs	Mobile Team Observers
NDF	New Democratic Front
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NPP	National People's Power
PAFFREL	People's Action for Free and Fair Elections
PUSW	People's Union for Social Welfare
PVOs	Postal Voting Observers
PWDs	People with Disabilities
RDF	Rural Development Foundation
RDHS	Regional Director of Health Services
RDPO	Rural Development Planning Organization
SEVO	Social Envo Vision Organization (SEVO)
SJB	Samagi Jana Balawegaya
SLCDF	Sri Lanka Center for Development Facilitation
SLPFA	Sri Lanka People's Freedom Alliance
SLPP	Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna
SPOs	Senior Presiding Officers
STOs	Stationary Observers
TISL	Transparency International Sri Lanka
YMMA	Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA)

Foreword

The People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) is pleased to present this comprehensive final report on the 2024 Parliamentary Election in Sri Lanka. As the country's leading election observation organization, PAFFREL has remained steadfast in its commitment to promoting transparency, inclusivity, accountability, and credibility in electoral processes.

This report captures the findings, observations, and recommendations arising from PAFFREL's nationwide observation mission across the pre-election, postal voting, cooling-off, election day, and post-election periods. It reflects our continued dedication to safeguarding democratic values and documenting both the strengths and weaknesses of the electoral process systematically and impartially.

The 2024 Parliamentary Election was a significant moment in Sri Lanka's democratic journey, taking place against the backdrop of political change, public demand for reform, and heightened expectations for clean and accountable governance. PAFFREL's observations highlighted important progress, including broad voter participation and an organized electoral process, while also identifying persistent concerns such as election law violations, misuse of resources, accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities, and incidents affecting the integrity of the campaign environment.

PAFFREL's work was made possible through the commitment of thousands of observers deployed across the island, including long-term observers, stationary observers, mobile teams, postal voting observers, counting center observers, and election dispute resolution observers. Their dedication enabled us to gather credible field evidence, monitor developments in real time, and produce a reliable assessment of the electoral process.

We also acknowledge the support of our partner organizations, civil society allies, and donors, whose collaboration strengthened our observation methodology and expanded the reach of our work. The use of digital tools such as Kobo Collect, as well as partnerships for social media monitoring and campaign finance observation, enhanced the precision and responsiveness of our reporting.

This report is not only a record of the 2024 Parliamentary Election, but also a call for continued reform and collective responsibility. We hope that the findings and recommendations presented here will contribute to efforts by the Election Commission, policymakers, political parties, civil society, and citizens to strengthen Sri Lanka's democratic institutions and ensure future elections are more free, fair, inclusive, and accountable.

PAFFREL extends its sincere appreciation to all observers, coordinators, partner organizations, and stakeholders who contributed to this mission. Above all, we thank the people of Sri Lanka, whose participation and trust remain at the heart of our democratic work.

Rohana Hettiarachchi
Executive Director
People's Action for Free and Fair Elections

Key Recommendations

Key Responsible Entity/Institution	Context	Recommendation	Duration
Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Campaign Finance Regulations</i>	Enhancing Enforcement Mechanisms: Introducing mandatory pre-election interim reports would allow for real-time monitoring of campaign finances. Regulating Third-Party Expenditures: Introducing provisions to regulate third-party expenditures would close potential loopholes... Implementing Contribution Limits: Setting caps on donations would prevent undue influence. Public Accessibility of Financial Records: Creating an online portal where citizens can access and scrutinize these records...	Short-Term / Mid-Term / Long-Term
ECSL	<i>Campaign Finance Regulations</i>	Consultation with relevant stakeholders such as political parties, CSOs, Sri Lanka Police, Auditor General's Department, and media on the improvements of the campaign finance regulation law. Provide awareness to the political parties and the general public on the campaign finance regulation law.	Short-Term
CSOs	<i>Campaign Finance Regulations</i>	Expand the scope of campaign finance monitoring through Long Term Observers and strengthen the network of the election observation organizations for campaign finance monitoring. Capacity building on campaign finance monitoring in the upcoming Local Government Authorities and Provincial Council Elections 2025.	Short-Term
Sri Lanka Parliament & ECSL	<i>Advance Voting System</i>	Streamline and expand the existing Postal Voting system with improved security and tracking mechanisms.	Mid-Term / Short-Term

		Clearly define the procedure for handling, storing, and counting advance votes.	
ECSL & CSOs	<i>Voter Education and Awareness</i>	Provide Braille and sign language voter education materials for persons with disabilities. Establish mobile voter education units for remote and rural areas. Address misinformation and disinformation related to elections through fact-checking initiatives. Launch a fact-checking initiative to counter false information related to elections.	Long-Term / Short-Term
ECSL / Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Voting Rights & Election Day Operations</i>	The ECSL should issue clear guidelines to Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) and Senior Presiding Officers (SPOs) working in Adivasi areas. These guidelines must cover procedures for accessibility, cultural sensitivity, voter security, and reporting mechanisms, ensuring that election officials are equipped to uphold fairness and inclusivity in these communities.	Short-Term
Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Enhance Women's Political Participation</i>	Increase Quotas: Enhance the 25% mandatory quota for women in local government bodies and consider extending it.. Enforce Political Party Reforms: Mandate political parties to nominate at least 30-40% women candidates at all levels. Introduce Sanctions for Non-Compliance: Penalize parties that fail to meet gender representation quotas. Enforce strict legal action against harassment and intimidation of women candidates.	Short-Term / Long-Term
Political Parties	<i>Enhance Women's</i>	Establish and enforce gender quotas within party structures to ensure women's representation in leadership positions.	Short-Term / Long-Term

	<i>Political Participation</i>	Ensure that women are given nominations in winnable constituencies, not just as token candidates.	
CSOs	<i>Enhance Women's Political Participation</i>	Advocate for stronger gender quotas in political parties and local government bodies. Push for policy changes that ensure gender-sensitive governance and protection against gender-based political violence.	Short-Term
Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Inclusion of PWDs in Electoral Process</i>	Legal Reforms: Amend electoral laws to explicitly mandate accessible voting for persons with disabilities, including provisions for assistive devices and support services. Election Accessibility Law: Enforce accessibility standards for polling stations and introduce penalties for non-compliance.	Long-Term
ECSL	<i>Inclusion of PWDs in Electoral Process</i>	Strengthen Accessible Polling Stations: Ensure polling stations are wheelchair-friendly, have ramps.. provide accessible voting booths with Braille ballots or electronic voting machines with voice assistance. Priority Voting & Assistance: Allow persons with disabilities to vote on a priority basis and be accompanied by an assistant of their choice.	Short-Term
Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ Voters</i>	Amend the Electoral Laws to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in voter registration, campaigning, and voting. Introduce legal recognition for transgender and non-binary individuals, allowing them to update their gender identity in official documents, including voter ID cards.	Short-Term

ECSL	<i>Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ Voters</i>	Ensure that transgender and non-binary individuals can register to vote under their preferred name and gender, even if their official documents have not been updated. Provide alternative ID verification mechanisms for individuals facing challenges in updating legal documents.	Short-Term
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Notes

Pre-Election Period: The period that began with the President issuing an Extraordinary Gazette (No. 2403/13), dissolving Parliament effective from midnight on September 24, 2024, announcing the date of the 2024 Parliamentary Election, and calling nominations from October 4, 2024, to 12 noon on October 11, 2024.

Cooling-Off Period: The period that commenced from midnight on November 11, 2024 and remained in effect until Election Day on November 14, 2024. The Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL) has announced that all candidates running for the Parliamentary Election 2024 must cease their campaign activities by midnight on 11th November, 48 hours before the polls.

Election Day: The period that began at 7 AM and ended at 4 PM on November 14, 2024.

Post-Election Period: This is the period of 02 Weeks, which began at 04 PM on the polling day on November 14, 2024 and ended after two weeks.

Postal Voting: Postal voting can be identified as an advanced voting method. The postal voting facility is exclusively available to government sector officers and employees in Sri Lanka. Postal voting for the Parliamentary Election took place on October 30, 2024, November 01, 2024, and November 04, 2024 at all District Secretariats and election offices. For those unable to cast their postal votes on these dates, ECSL allocated alternative dates on November 07, 2024 and November 08, 2024.

Incident: A single incident may lead to several violations as classified by PAFFREL in terms of electoral laws and regular law of the country.

Confirmed Incidents: Is a violation that has been reported to PAFFREL, has been recorded with the CRI Unit and its accuracy has been determined through available mechanisms.

Unconfirmed Incidents: A violation that has been reported to PAFFREL and has been recorded with the CRI Unit but its accuracy could not be validated through available mechanisms.

Acts of Violence: These include murder, grievous assault, assault, abductions, attacks with explosives, shooting, threats and intimidation using firearms, damage to immovable property, damage to movable property, intimidation and threats, and attacks on political party/candidate offices.

Abuse of State Power, Resources & Misuse of Employees: These include misuse of state properties, use of state vehicles for election campaign purposes, attempts to influence/influencing state officials, politically motivated appointments, transfers and promotions for state officials, and providing government aid for political gain.

Election Law Violations: These include destruction and sabotage of decorations, posters and cutouts of political parties, disrupting campaign activities of opponents, carrying out illegal election propaganda, threatening and disrupting work of election monitors, state officers acting in favor of political parties and in breach of official duties, carrying out unlawful meetings and processions, maintaining illegal party offices, giving incentives with political objectives, using vehicles without number plates, favoritism and misuse of state and other media, attempts to influence/influencing through security sources and state officials, spreading fake news, carrying out election campaign activities harassing and inconveniencing the general public, influencing voters, irregularities relating to ballot papers, transportation of voters, giving incentives to voters, obstructing election officials and

activities, assaulting voters/using force to turn voters away from polling stations, casting votes illegally/attempting to impersonate, and other incidents.

Election Observation: Election observation is the structured, systematic, and impartial process of monitoring an electoral process to ensure it adheres to democratic standards. This involves assessing compliance with electoral laws, identifying irregularities, and recommending improvements to enhance transparency and accountability. PAFFREL's election observation is aligned with international standards such as the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

Long-Term Observers (LTOs): LTOs are individuals deployed well in advance of election day to monitor the electoral environment, including voter registration, campaign activities, and preparations by the Election Commission. Their observations provide a comprehensive understanding of the electoral process across its various stages.

Stationary Observers (STOs): These observers are deployed specifically on Election Day to conduct monitoring inside polling stations, including voter turnout, ballot handling, and overall compliance with electoral laws.

Mobile Team Observers (MTOs): Mobile Observers operate across multiple polling stations, focusing on dynamic monitoring of external environments and addressing irregularities such as voter intimidation, unauthorized campaigning, or procedural violations.

Postal Voting Observers (PVOs): Postal Voting Observers observe postal voting across multiple polling days and are stationed at the locations where postal voting takes place.

Kobo Collect: Kobo Collect is a digital application used by observers for real-time data collection. It streamlines the reporting process by enabling structured submissions of incidents, compliance metrics, and observations directly from the field.

Election Dispute Resolution (EDR) Unit: The ECSL formed All Party Operation Units in 2001 under an initiative of PAFFREL with the objective of resolving and mitigating election disputes with the involvement of all election-related stakeholders, including the Election Commission, political parties, and election monitoring bodies. Later, this was expanded to the district level and converted into Election Dispute Resolution (EDR) centers.

People's Action for Free and Fair Election (PAFFREL)

PAFFREL, established in 1987, has been a pioneering force in promoting electoral integrity in Sri Lanka. Over the last few decades, PAFFREL has emerged as a beacon of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability, embodying the principles essential for strengthening democratic systems. The organization's primary mission is to safeguard voters' rights, advocate for meaningful electoral reforms, and foster public trust in democratic institutions.

PAFFREL has earned its reputation as Sri Lanka's foremost election observation organization by conducting systematic and impartial monitoring of presidential, parliamentary, provincial and local government elections. These efforts have played a crucial role in identifying challenges within electoral processes and offering actionable recommendations to address them. The organization's work extends beyond mere observation; it serves as an active catalyst for change by promoting legal, procedural, and institutional reforms aimed at enhancing the integrity of the electoral system.

At the heart of PAFFREL's success lies its ability to build and sustain strategic partnerships with civil society organizations, community leaders, and international bodies. This collaboration has enabled the organization to leverage expertise, resources, and networks to strengthen its observation methodologies and advocacy initiatives. PAFFREL's inclusive approach ensures representation from diverse communities, including women, youth, and marginalized groups, in its electoral activities thereby fostering a more equitable and participatory democratic process.

Over the years, PAFFREL has embraced innovation and adaptability, integrating advanced digital tools such as the Kobo Collect application to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of its observation efforts. This commitment to technological integration reflects the organization's forward-thinking approach to addressing evolving challenges in election monitoring.

PAFFREL has also partnered closely with the ECSL in election monitoring activities and works together with ECSL in the announcement and confirmation of election results. PAFFREL is also a trusted partner of several bilateral and multilateral organizations in this regard.

In addition to its core activities, PAFFREL has been instrumental in raising public awareness about the importance of free and fair elections. Through targeted voter education programs, advocacy campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives, the organization has empowered citizens to actively participate in the democratic process and to hold institutions accountable.

As Sri Lanka continues to navigate the complexities of its political landscape, PAFFREL remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding the principles of democracy. By consistently advocating for transparency, inclusivity, and accountability, PAFFREL not only safeguards the sanctity of elections but also contributes to the broader goal of building a resilient and vibrant democracy in Sri Lanka. The organization's legacy of excellence and dedication serves as an enduring foundation for its future endeavors, inspiring confidence among stakeholders and citizens alike.

1. Political Background

In the aftermath of the 2020 parliamentary elections, the Sri Lanka People's Freedom Alliance (SLPFA), led by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, secured a substantial majority. However, their tenure was marred by multiple crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and a severe economic downturn. These challenges culminated in widespread protests and political unrest, leading to the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in July 2022, followed by the appointment of Ranil Wickremesinghe to serve the remainder of the term. Despite efforts to stabilize the economy, public dissatisfaction with traditional political parties remained high.

On November 14, 2024, Sri Lanka held Parliamentary Elections to elect 225 representatives for the 10th 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.

The 2024 parliamentary elections in Sri Lanka marked a significant shift in the nation's political landscape, influenced by preceding economic turmoil and a demand for change.

Anura Kumara Disanayake, 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 Disanayake's election campaign, he stated that Parliament would be dissolved and subsequently called for a Parliamentary Election. Anura Kumara Disanayake was sworn in as President on 23rd September, followed by his appointment of former Member of Parliament (from the National List) and a renowned academic, Harini Amarasuriya as the new prime minister on 24th September. Harini Amarasuriya becomes the third woman to hold this position. Disanayake also formed a three-member Cabinet, which includes himself, Amarasuriya, and Vijitha Herath from the NPP, to serve as an interim government until the Parliamentary Elections.

The Parliamentary Election was crucial as it involved the appointment of a new President from an alliance that represents the left-wing. During the Aragalaya, the people's struggle called for political change and reforms in governance aimed at strengthening anti-corruption measures, accountability, and transparency. The election was therefore significant in establishing the mandate of the National People's Power (NPP). The NPP, which was founded in 2019 as a coalition of 21 member groups, has only held three seats during its one parliamentary term: two directly elected members and one member from the national list.¹

The left-wing Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP – People's Liberation Party) has never been in power, and its leader, Disanayake, secured only 3% of the vote in the last parliamentary election. Since independence, political power has largely alternated between two right-leaning parties: the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, later represented by the Rajapaksa-led Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna, and the United National Party, which eventually split into the Samagi Jana Balawegaya and the United National Party. Over more than 70 years, these parties have dominated governance, though challenges to political and economic stability have persisted. Having emerged from two youth-led insurgencies in the 1970s and late 1980s, the JVP has

¹ Asia-Pacific, International Foundation for Electoral Systems. 2024. *Elections in Sri Lanka: 2024 Parliament Elections: Frequently Asked Questions*. <https://www.ifes.org/tools-resources/election-snapshots/elections-sri-lanka-2024-parliamentary-elections>

since established itself as a third force within the parliamentary democratic system, despite never holding power. The NPP, which formed as a coalition of several parties under Dissanayake’s leadership, has experienced a notable rise in popularity since 2022.

The campaign for the Presidential Election was strongly centered on anti-corruption, transparency, and accountable governance. The election of Anura Kumara Disanayake, (widely known as “AKD”) as the “change candidate” was seen by many as the culmination of the 2022 *Aragalya* (people’s struggle) against Sri Lanka’s established political class, long associated with corruption, economic mismanagement, and weak governance. Reflecting widespread anti-incumbency sentiment and public demand for change, Disanayake defeated prominent political figures, including opposition leader Sajith Premadasa and incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe.²

Disanayake was elected as the ninth president of Sri Lanka, marking a major change in Sri Lanka’s political landscape. Following the second-preference vote count, Disanayake won with 55.89% of the total vote, having received 42.31% in the first count. This victory marked the first time a leftist leader had ascended to the nation’s highest office, signaling a significant departure from the traditional political elite. The NPP won a two-thirds majority in the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, taking 159 of the 225 seats. A long haul from the three seats that the NPP won in the previous election. This included 21 elected female MPs, the most in Sri Lanka’s history. Notably, the NPP prevailed in areas that had historically been dominated by other parties, such as the Jaffna District, which was once a stronghold of Tamil political parties.

ECSL issued a media release dated 25/09/2024 notifying the number of candidates to be nominated by Political Parties or Independent Groups for each Electoral District. Gampaha District elected the highest number (19) of members while Trincomalee had the lowest 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 Number of Members to be elected in the Parliamentary Election 2024

² United States Institute of Peace. 2024. *Sri Lanka’s New President Faces Daunting Challenges and High Hopes*. October 1, 2024. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/10/sri-lankas-new-president-faces-daunting-challenges-and-high-hopes>

On 25 September 2024 the ECSL published a Circular (PE/2024/03) directing ministerial secretaries, heads of departments and all officers responsible for state property to ensure that such resources are not used for the promotion or disadvantage of any political parties/groups/candidates. The circular also restricted appointments, promotions and transfers of all government officers from the date of nomination to the official release of election results.

According to 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. ECSL emphasized that adequate representation of all ethnic groups based on the national population census ratio should be ensured as much as possible, and adequate female representation should be considered when nominating candidates for the national list. It was announced that candidates for the national list must submit their declarations of assets and liabilities to ECSL in accordance with the Anti-Corruption Act, No. 9 of 2023.

According to the amended report (dated 24/10/2024) on nominations for the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, a total of 8,888 candidates contested the election, including 5,531 representing registered political parties and 3357 representing independent groups. Of the 788 nomination papers submitted, 719 were accepted, while 69 were rejected.

Electoral District	Recognized Political Parties			Independent Groups			Total No. of Nominations			Total No. of Candidates		
	Nominations			Nominations						Political Parties	Independent Groups	Total
	Received	Accepted	Rejected	Received	Accepted	Rejected	Received	Accepted	Rejected			
Colombo	28	27	01	22	19	3	50	46	04	567	399	966
Gampaha	24	24	00	18	17	1	42	41	01	528	374	902
Kalutara	20	17	03	14	11	3	34	28	06	238	154	392
Kandy	22	22	00	12	12	0	34	34	00	330	180	510
Matale	17	16	01	7	7	0	24	23	01	128	56	184
Nuwara Eliya	20	17	03	15	11	4	35	28	07	187	121	308
Galle	17	17	00	6	5	1	23	22	01	204	60	264
Matara	16	15	01	7	7	0	23	22	01	150	70	220
Hambantota	17	16	01	9	9	0	26	25	01	160	90	250
Jaffna	23	23	00	22	21	1	45	44	01	207	189	396
Vanni	24	22	02	27	25	2	51	47	04	198	225	423
Batticaloa	23	22	01	31	27	4	54	49	05	176	216	392
Digamadulla	22	21	01	50	43	7	72	64	08	210	430	640
Trincomalee	20	17	03	17	14	3	37	31	06	119	98	217
Kurunegala	22	18	04	9	9	0	31	27	04	324	162	486
Puttalam	26	24	02	18	15	3	44	39	05	264	165	429
Anuradhapura	18	17	01	9	9	0	27	26	01	204	108	312
Polonnaruwa	14	13	01	2	2	0	16	15	01	104	16	120
Badulla	19	15	04	6	5	1	25	20	05	180	60	240
Monaragala	13	12	01	3	3	0	16	15	01	108	27	135
Ratnapura	19	18	01	7	7	0	26	25	01	252	98	350
Kegalle	19	14	05	5	4	1	24	18	06	168	48	216
Total	443	407	36	316	282	34	759	689	70	5006	3346	8352
National List	25	25	00	02	02	00	27	27	0	458	11	469
Total	468	432	36	318	284	34	786	716	70	5531	3357	8819

Table 2: Information on receiving nominations from recognized Political Parties and Independent Groups

The highest number of candidates (966) was reported from Colombo District, while Polonnaruwa District reported the lowest with 120 candidates. Nominations for the Digamadulla electoral district totaled 72 and 64 of them were accepted, while 08 nomination papers were rejected. In the Nuwara Eliya District, 07 nomination papers were rejected.

ECSL emphasized that all candidates contesting the Parliamentary Elections, scheduled for November 14, were required to submit their asset and liability 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.

Interestingly, 59 Members of Parliament including Ranil Wickramasinghe (former president), Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Chamal Rajapaksa, Maithripala Sirisena (A former president), Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe (Candidate at 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) did not stand for re-election.

Some of the nomination papers were rejected. Famous social media influencer, Ashen Senarathna submitted his nomination for the elections representing an independent group based in Colombo. His nomination paper was rejected by ECSL and led to his disqualification because it was submitted by an unauthorized individual. He expressed his frustration publicly claiming that he would take legal action. ECSL has explicitly stated that any parties or individuals can take legal action if they experience unfairness due to the rejection of nomination papers. On the SJB ticket, actress Damitha Abeyratne was expected to contest 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 SJB and withdrew from the Parliamentary Elections one day after submitting his nomination from the Gampaha District. He highlighted his removal from the position of Gampaha electorate's chief SJB organizer as the cause for his withdrawal.

The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka received several Fundamental Rights (FR) petitions pertaining to the Parliamentary Elections. Four out of Five FR petitions contesting the district returning officers' decision to reject election-related nominations were dismissed by the Supreme Court.

ECSL was directed by a three-judge bench comprising 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 nomination 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 nomination for the Colombo District submitted by his independent group. The candidacy of former MP Ranjan Ramanayake, who was 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 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 2024 and asking for a ruling stating that the decision is unconstitutional. Respondents to the petition included the Attorney General, the Secretary to the President, the Chairman of the Election Commission, and its members. The petition cited that nominations were accepted from October 4–11 in accordance with Section 10 of the Parliamentary Elections Act. It also stated that the Act requires polling to be held at least five weeks and no later than seven weeks following the nominations deadline.

The petition noted that the five-week period finishes on November 15 and the seven weeks on November 29 because the nomination process closed on October 11. The petitioner, therefore, argued that it is illegal to schedule the general election for November 14, as it is beyond the legally required time range.

On November 04th, Court reviewed the petition asking it to declare the decision to hold the Parliamentary Elections on November 14th as 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. Introduction

The 09th Parliamentary Election took place on 14th November 2024. National People's Power (Jathika Jana Balawegaya-NPP) received 6,863,186 votes (61.56%) and secured 159 seats including 18 National List seats, while the major opposition party, Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) received 1,968,716 votes (17.66%) and secured 40 seats, including 05 National List seats. Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi received 257,813 votes and secured 07 seats, including one from the National List, New Democratic Front received 500,835 votes and secured 03 seats, including 02 from the National List, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna received 350,429 votes with 02 seats, including 01 from the National List. Sri Lanka Muslim Congress received 87,038 votes with 02 seats including, 01 from the National List, while Sarvajana Balaya, a new political party, received 178,006 and secured 01 National List opportunity. Additionally, the Democratic Tamil National Alliance, the United National Party, the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, the All Ceylon Makkal Congress, the Jaffna-Independent Group 07, and the Sri Lanka Labour Party all won one seat each.

A total of 17,140,354 persons were eligible to cast their votes through 13,421 polling stations. The Gampaha District had the highest number of eligible voters, totaling 1,881,129, while the Vanni District had the lowest, with 306,081 voters. The 225 members of Parliament were chosen to serve 05-year terms. 196 members had to be selected from 22 multi-seat constituencies using an open list proportional representation system with a 5% electoral threshold. The remaining 29 seats were to be selected from the national list. ECSL issued a media release dated September 25, 2024 to notify the number of candidates to be nominated by political parties or independent groups for each Electoral District. Gampaha District marked the highest number (19) of members, while Trincomalee marked the lowest number (04) of members.

8,821 candidates (5,464 from 432 political parties and 3,357 from 284 independent groups) contested in the 2024 Parliamentary Election. 11,815,246 votes were cast, out of which 11,148,006 were valid votes, representing 68.93% of the total voter turnout. Nevertheless, compared to the last 2024 Presidential Election and the 2020 Parliamentary Election, the voter turnout was considerably lower. 667,240 (5.65%) votes were rejected, and the number was lower than the rejected votes (744,373-6.03%) in the 2020 Parliamentary Election. The election was notable for its significant representation of women, with a record 21 female representatives elected, the highest in Sri Lanka's parliamentary history.

The Parliamentary Election in Sri Lanka was particularly significant because it marked a pivotal moment for political change and reform. Following Anura Kumara Dissanayake's victory in the 2024 Presidential Election and his intention to dissolve the Parliament, this election provided an opportunity for the NPP to increase its influence and potentially reshape the country's political landscape. The election was crucial for the people, as it came at a time when Sri Lanka was recovering from a severe economic crisis. Many viewed it as an opportunity to elect representatives who could address the ongoing economic challenges, resolve the debt crisis, and restore public confidence in governance.

Through the *Aragalaya*, people had voiced their need for a change in the entire system of governance with transparency and accountability. The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections were crucial opportunities to express their opinion. The 2024 Parliamentary Election gave citizens a great opportunity to use their right to vote for a system change in governance and economy, in the country.

There were no significant violent incidents or election law violations on Election Day that could have affected the outcome of the election, instead, it was peacefully concluded. This carries on the positive trend of elections being conducted well and election regulations being strictly enforced. Under the direction of the ECSL, and with the involvement of several stakeholders, including election observation groups, the 2024 Parliamentary Election concluded peacefully.

In order to guarantee a free and fair election, the ECSL played a crucial role from the pre-election period until Election Day. Throughout the process, Sri Lanka Police cooperated in tandem with the appropriate entities to maintain law and order in an efficient and unbiased manner with the exception of a few incidents. All their efforts helped prevent election law violations and violence, and protected citizens' right to vote. All political parties and independent groups that contested the election, media as well as citizens should be appreciated for facilitating calm and peaceful elections.

Compared with previous elections, there were significantly fewer attempts to influence and sway voters based on their race, religion, or ethnicity. Hate speech against candidates, their ideology, and their campaigns were insignificant, despite reports of election law violations and violence based on digital and cyber platforms.

In the 2024 Parliamentary Election, there were 2230 complaints reported during the pre-election period, while there were 231 complaints during the cooling-off period, 227 on Election Day, and only 16 in the post-election period. It is Important to note that the incidents and complaints on abuse of state power, resources, and employees from the pre-election period to the polling day and the post-election period were reduced compared to the 2024 Presidential Election and 2020 Parliamentary Election.

However, PAFFREL received several complaints that employees were not granted leave to cast their votes. Even though the ECSL had provided clear guidance and directives on granting leave for employees to cast their votes, some management and administrative functions of private and financial companies had not followed them properly. PAFFREL claims that the ECSL should have appropriate authority to establish adequate safeguards for voters.

PAFFREL, in collaboration with Hashtag Generation observed 29 cases of paid promotions on Facebook, 274 cases related to campaign content, and 30 cases related to Election Law violations and harmful speech on Election Day.

As noted by the Mobile Observers, Long Term Observers, and Stationary Observers deployed by PAFFREL on polling day, there were very few irregularities in the polling stations. People with Disabilities (PWDs) were provided with accessible facilities at the polling stations, except at some polling stations located in a few areas of the country. The facilities were designed to be accessible and convenient for PwDs to cast their votes, ensuring easy access, physical assistance, as well as tactile stencils frames for blind or partially blind voters, .

From the pre-election period to the polling day, PAFFREL continued election observation with 34 District Coordinators, 25 Field Coordinators, 1000 Postal Voting Observers, 3000 Stationary Observers, and 1296 Mobile Team Observers through 324 Mobile Teams, 155 Long Term Observers, 36 Campaign Finance Observers, 25 Election Dispute Resolution Center Observers and 196 Counting/Tabulation Center Observers. PAFFREL appreciates the unwavering solidarity and dedication of its observer cohort throughout the election process.

The Final Report of the Parliamentary Election 2024 aims to provide a comprehensive account of the election process, capturing the successes achieved, the obstacles encountered, and the lessons learned to inform future reforms and policy development. The primary objective is to provide a thorough analysis of the Parliamentary Election 2024, highlighting important facets of the electoral process from pre-election activities to post-election results. By carefully recording observations and events, the report aims to:

- Highlight key successes that strengthened the electoral framework.
- Identify challenges and systemic vulnerabilities that require attention.

- Propose actionable recommendations for stakeholders to foster a more transparent, inclusive, and accountable electoral process.

By serving as a knowledge resource, the report aims to support policymakers, election administrators, Civil Society Organizations, and international partners in their collective efforts to enhance Sri Lanka's electoral processes and democratic institutions.

3. Election observation mission of PAFFREL

3.1. Introduction

PAFFREL was established in 1987 by representatives of several national-level civil society organizations. Its formation came at a time when civil society intervention was urgently needed to safeguard the democratic nature of elections, which were increasingly affected by violence and violations of election laws. The main objective of PAFFREL is to promote a people's effort to prevent violence and malpractices before, during, and after elections. PAFFREL's first objective is to mobilize people-led, uninterrupted election observation to ensure flawless electoral processes from local government to provincial council and parliament to presidential elections. Since its formation, PAFFREL has monitored all the elections held in the country: Local Authority, Provincial Council, Parliamentary, and Presidential, in collaboration with a large number of civil society organizations.

In the 2024 Parliamentary Election, PAFFREL continued its election observation mission. This election was important after the 2020 Parliamentary Election, when PAFFREL had to adopt alternative preparation methods due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the successful completion of its observation process in the 2024 Presidential Election, PAFFREL carried out a review to reflect on lessons learned. A separate review was also held with Long-Term Observers and District Coordinators to identify and retain those who had performed and reported well during the previous mission.

PAFFREL developed its methodology for the 2024 Parliamentary Election, following the globally accepted guidelines and best practices in election observation. The goal of the observation mission was to guarantee a thorough assessment of the electoral process, grounded in the values of impartiality, inclusivity, and transparency. Following the announcement of the date for the 2024 Parliamentary Election, PAFFREL launched a comprehensive election observation mission that was implemented in three phases; 1) Pre-Election, 2) Election-Day, and 3) Post-Election. The exercise of election observation had the following objectives:

- To observe and report 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 the election, and be involved in democratic and governing processes.

Spanning the Pre-election, Election Day, and Post-Election phases, the methodology employed advanced tools and techniques for data collection, reporting, and analysis, ensuring accurate and actionable insights.

3.2. Election observation framework

The observation framework was created to observe all important facets of the election process, offering a comprehensive understanding of its dynamics. The main areas of concentration were:

3.2.1. Pre-Election

The trained Long Term Observers (LTOs) were deployed and mobilized 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/marginalized communities. 170 LTOs were mobilized and deployed during the pre-election period in every electoral district. Pre-election observation was conducted with several district-level Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The pre-election phase was dedicated to assessing the overall electoral

environment. Observers monitored voter education initiatives, campaign conduct, and the administrative preparedness of the ECSL. Specific attention was paid to identifying potential violations of campaign finance regulations, misuse of state power, resources, and employees, and barriers to voter accessibility.

3.2.2. Election Day

In order to establish the conditions for a free and fair election on polling day, PAFFREL scheduled the deployment of (nearly) 5862 observers, including 2945 Stationary Observers, 317 Mobile Observer Units, and 175 Long Term Observers. Furthermore, PAFFREL sent out 06 Special Mobile Units to predetermined vulnerable areas. In addition, on Election Day, 194 Counting/Tabulation Observers, 30 District Coordinators, and 26 Field Coordinators were deployed in the field. On Election Day, the focus shifted to evaluating the operational aspects of polling stations. Observers assessed the setup and accessibility of polling stations, voter turnout trends, adherence to procedural standards, and the effectiveness of security measures. Particular attention was given to the treatment of marginalized groups, such as PwDs, elderly voters, and those from geographically isolated areas.

3.2.3. Post-Election

Post-election monitoring activities were carried out after the official results of the election were declared, and continued until a peaceful and smooth transition of power was completed. The observation in this period was mainly conducted by the Long-Term Observers. This phase included observing the counting process, the announcement of results, and stakeholder reactions. Observers evaluated the transparency and efficiency of the counting process, noting any irregularities or procedural violations. Public trust in the results was also assessed through engagement with stakeholders and media monitoring.

3.2.4. Postal voting observation

As per Section 26 of the Parliamentary Elections Act No. 01 of 1981, voters entitled to request the facility of postal voting 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 until 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 an increase of 25,731 postal ballots over the most recent presidential election.

Accordingly, postal voting for the parliamentary election took 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 were 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 was scheduled for 26/10/2024. Special days for distributing official polling cards were set for 27/10/2024, 31/10/2024, and 03/11/2024. The final date for distributing official ballot papers was 07/11/2024, as confirmed by the ECSL.

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

3.2.5. Observing District Election Dispute Resolution Centers

ECSL established Election Dispute Resolution (EDR) Units (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 issued a media release on 16/10/2024 about district level EDR Units and published all the addresses and contact details. For the 2024 Parliamentary Election, from 24/10/2024, until one week after the election results were declared, district secretariat offices served as district EDR units.

The District Election Dispute Resolution Center 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 reoccur, provide relief to those affected by election-related incidents, and ensure equal opportunities for all competing parties. PAFFREL deployed 25 EDR Unit observers in all 25 districts to cover the EDR processes who daily reported back to the Head Office at Colombo.

3.2.6. Monitoring social media

PAFFREL continued to monitor social media through a long standing trustworthy partnership with Hashtag Generation and Election Commission, an 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 was deployed to monitor hate speech, wrong information, inappropriate explanation which can mislead the public and create chaos, and report to the Election Commission's attention for necessary action. After the Election Commission's attention, they were directed to Sri Lanka Facebook Representatives for necessary actions.

3.2.7. Campaign finance monitoring

ECSL 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	59465460	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 3 Expenditure limits for election campaign activities in the 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 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 is underway to track whether the parliamentary election contenders are spending their campaign funds within the allotted limitations.

Thus, ‘*Chanda Salli Meetare*’ has been designed and introduced from the Presidential Election 2024 with the aim of monitoring, estimating and analyzing the campaign expenditures of candidates and political parties. Through this specialized website, the joint coalition of election monitoring bodies supported 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 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 2024 Parliamentary Election, PAFFREL observed the campaign finance activities of 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 won seats at the previous Parliamentary Election
- High number of votes obtained at the presidential election
- High levels of expenditure incurred by political parties captured under the ‘*Chanda Salli Meetare*’ website

Particularly, these criteria were 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 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.

3.3. Election observer training

To ensure robust and credible election observation, PAFFREL recruited and trained over 5,000 observers, encompassing LTOs, STOs, and Mobile MTOs. Special Mobile Observers through 06 Special Mobile Units, Postal Voting Observers (PVOs), Counting/Tabulation Centre Observers, Campaign Finance Monitoring Observers, and Election Dispute Center (EDR) Observers. In order to guarantee varied representation, recruitment efforts placed a strong emphasis on inclusivity, specifically reaching out to women, young people, and members of underrepresented populations.

500 Stationary Observers and 34 Special Mobile Team Observers were trained and, 2500 Stationary Observers 1268 Mobile Team Observers, 1268 Mobile Team Observers, 1000 Postal Voting Observers were trained with the support of National Democratic Institute (NDI).

Training modules were designed to equip election observers with a thorough understanding of electoral laws, observation methodologies, and reporting protocols. Election observers received hands-on training in using the Kobo Collect Tool application for real-time data submission, enabling efficient and standardized reporting. The training also included simulations and case studies to prepare observers for potential challenges in the field. PAFFREL provided election observers with detailed manuals, checklists, and other resources to support their work..

3.3.1. Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities have been able to participate in the election observation process and act as observers at the PAFFREL head office, Colombo and in the districts for a number of years.

People with Disabilities received opportunities to work as election observers and the short term employees at the Head Office of PAFFREL in the election mission executed for the Presidential Election 2024. PAFFREL continued that policy in the election observation mission for the Parliamentary Election too.

3.4. Election observer deployment

Election observers were deployed strategically to ensure comprehensive geographic and demographic coverage. The deployment plan prioritized politically sensitive and remote areas, ensuring that all regions of Sri Lanka were represented in the observation mission. Each observer was assigned specific responsibilities based on their expertise and the unique requirements of their deployment area.

170 Long Term Observers were deployed in every Divisional Secretariat Division, who have been observing and reporting violations, commencing from the Pre-Election period, the Election Day and during the Post-Election period. They were also engaged in monitoring campaign expenditure regulations in 32 specific electoral divisions of Matale, Polonnaruwa, Galle, Matara, and Ratnapura districts.

During 05 Postal Voting days for the 2024 Parliamentary Election, PAFFREL deployed 1,000 Postal Voting Observers for all politically sensitive centers 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.

The Parliamentary Election was held in 13,421 polling stations across the country. PAFFREL deployed 3,000 Stationary Observers in selected polling stations to observe the inside of polling stations, voter turnout, ballot handling, and overall compliance with electoral laws on the Election Day.

1,296 Mobile Team Observers through 324 Mobile Teams were deployed on Election Day in the operation across multiple polling stations, focusing on dynamic monitoring of external environments and addressing irregularities such as voter intimidation, unauthorized campaigning, or procedural violations. 50 operators including tabulation officers were deployed at the Call Center at the Head Office of PAFFREL, Colombo. Calling Center comprehensively communicated with the Mobile Observer Teams and tabulation officers and obtained the voter turnout every hour from 07 AM to 04 PM based on the reports submitted by the Mobile Team Observers. 06 Special Mobile Teams were deployed in Colombo district.

3.5. Complaint receiving and mitigation unit

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

All complaints that this unit received from individual citizens, assigned independent observers, and political parties, media channels (mass and social) verified, confirmed and directed to the appropriate authorities and institutions for the necessary follow-up and resolution. PAFFREL referred 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 assisted these organizations in conducting their investigations, and followed-up on the complaints and prepared to take necessary mitigation and preventive actions including legal actions as necessary.

3.6. Data collection, analysis, and reporting

Real-time data collection was a cornerstone of PAFFREL's methodology. Election observers utilized the Kobo Collect Tool application to submit structured reports on incidents, compliance metrics, and procedural adherence. For areas with limited connectivity, alternative reporting methods such as WhatsApp and phone calls were established to ensure uninterrupted data flow. This multi-channel approach enabled the timely identification and escalation of issues to relevant authorities.

Election observers' reports included detailed accounts of voter behavior, polling station operations, and incidents of electoral violations. These reports formed the basis for PAFFREL's interim and final assessments, providing stakeholders with reliable and actionable insights.

PAFFREL adopted an integrated approach to data analysis, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a nuanced understanding of the electoral process. Quantitative data, such as voter turnout statistics and compliance metrics, were analyzed using statistical tools to identify trends and patterns. Qualitative data, including observer narratives and stakeholder feedback, were categorized thematically to capture the broader context of the election.

Incident reports underwent a rigorous multi-tiered verification process. Election observers' submissions were first reviewed by district coordinators for accuracy and completeness. Verified reports were then escalated to PAFFREL's Head Office, where a dedicated team cross-checked the data against external

sources such as media reports and stakeholder input. This rigorous process ensured the credibility of the findings of PAFFREL and strengthened the validity of its recommendations.

The analyzed data was synthesized into interim and final reports, providing stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of the electoral process. These reports included detailed findings, statistical breakdowns, and targeted recommendations to address systemic challenges and improve future elections.

3.7. Voter education and awareness initiatives by PAFFREL

As part of its ongoing commitment to strengthening democratic participation in Sri Lanka, PAFFREL conducted extensive voter education and awareness programs in preparation for the 2024 Parliamentary Election. These initiatives aimed to enhance the political culture by educating diverse segments of civil society on electoral processes, voter responsibilities, and the importance of democratic engagement.

The voter education and awareness programs specifically targeted first-time voters, university students, school pupils, trainee teachers, government officers, and the general public. Participants received comprehensive knowledge on voting procedures, polling station operations on Election Day, and the significance of free and fair elections. These efforts emphasized the value of each vote, the legal framework governing elections, and measures to prevent violations of election laws.

During the pre-election period, PAFFREL reached a total of 2,091 participants across various districts, including Kegalle, Ratnapura, Badulla, Jaffna, and Vavuniya. Of these, 701 were male participants and 1,390 were female participants. Additionally, 391 male and 344 female participants were under the age of 18, indicating a strong engagement with youth and future voters. These figures highlight PAFFREL's efforts in reaching a broad spectrum of society, ensuring that all eligible citizens are well-informed about their electoral rights and responsibilities. To ensure the effectiveness of these programs, PAFFREL collaborated with experts in voter education and active members of the March 12 Movement. Their contributions enriched the sessions with valuable insights, fostering a well-informed electorate capable of making independent and informed decisions during the election process. These collaborative efforts strengthened the impact of the awareness programs, providing participants with deeper knowledge and practical understanding of the electoral system.

Beyond imparting knowledge, PAFFREL's voter education programs emphasized the importance of ethical political participation and responsible citizenship. By addressing issues such as vote-buying, misinformation, and electoral malpractice, these initiatives sought to cultivate a culture of political integrity and transparency. The sessions also included interactive discussions, case studies, and real-life examples to help participants grasp the significance of fair electoral practices.

Moreover, the organization extended its voter education activities to digital platforms, ensuring a wider reach across different demographics. Social media campaigns, informational videos, and online workshops were integrated into the awareness initiatives, allowing greater accessibility for individuals unable to attend in-person sessions. These digital efforts complemented traditional educational approaches, ensuring that PAFFREL's message reached urban and rural communities alike.

PAFFREL remains dedicated to its mission of promoting electoral integrity and civic participation, reinforcing the fundamental principles of democracy in Sri Lanka. Through these education initiatives, the organization continues to empower citizens with the knowledge and awareness needed to contribute to a transparent and credible electoral process. Moving forward, PAFFREL aims to expand its voter education programs, incorporating more inclusive strategies to reach marginalized groups, persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented communities. By continuously evolving its approaches, PAFFREL ensures that voter education remains an integral part of Sri Lanka's democratic development.

3.8. Know your candidate

On October 11, 2024, the 'Know Your Candidates' platform was officially launched through a strategic partnership between the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), the March 12 Movement, and Bhasha Lanka Private Limited, which operates the widely-used Helakuru Digital Platform. This initiative was designed to provide the public with comprehensive information about candidates contesting the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, ensuring greater transparency and accountability in the electoral process.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the three parties to facilitate the launch of 'Know Your Candidates.' The primary objective of this platform was to grant voters direct access to crucial details about parliamentary candidates, including their educational and professional qualifications, proposed solutions to pressing national issues, and party affiliations. Through this initiative, candidates had the unprecedented opportunity to engage with over four million Helakuru users at no cost, significantly broadening their reach and facilitating better voter-candidate engagement.

By offering voters easy access to structured information about parliamentary nominees, 'Know Your Candidates' empowered citizens to evaluate candidates based on merit rather than rhetoric. This digital initiative enabled voters to make informed decisions and encouraged a culture of political accountability. For the first time in Sri Lanka's electoral history, candidate information was made widely and conveniently accessible, marking a significant milestone in the country's democratic evolution.

The Helakuru Digital Platform, a widely embraced communication tool among Sri Lankans, played a pivotal role in disseminating candidate information. It allowed nominees to share their preference numbers and personal details, thereby enhancing their public engagement. Additionally, this platform served as a crucial digital space for voters—particularly the younger generation—who actively participate in political discourse through online communication.

PAFFREL emphasized that an informed electorate is fundamental to fostering clean politics. Since the Aragalaya (People's Struggle) in 2022, public demand for accountability, transparency, and higher standards for public representatives has surged. In response, the 'Know Your Candidates' platform served as a bridge between the electorate and nominees, ensuring that voters could assess a candidate's suitability based on verified facts rather than mere campaign promises. Furthermore, the March 12 Movement introduced eight key criteria that determine the eligibility of candidates aspiring for public office. These criteria set a benchmark for integrity, competence, and public service, helping voters distinguish credible candidates from those lacking the necessary qualifications. The platform was instrumental in elucidating these criteria, offering voters a structured approach to evaluating their choices rather than resorting to guesswork when selecting public representatives.

Candidates submitted their details via email, following which the platform's partners verified all relevant information before publication. This stringent verification process reinforced the credibility of the initiative, ensuring that voters received accurate and reliable data. In a country where digital solutions are frequently proposed as a remedy for various challenges, the 'Know Your Candidates' platform demonstrated the tangible impact of purpose-driven digital advocacy. By harnessing technology to enhance transparency and voter awareness, this initiative showcased how digital innovation can be effectively employed to strengthen democracy and civic engagement. Through this pioneering collaboration, the 2024 Parliamentary Elections set a new precedent in Sri Lanka's electoral landscape. The 'Know Your Candidates' platform not only enriched voter awareness but also

underscored the power of digital solutions in fostering a more transparent, accountable, and participatory democratic process.”³

Analysis of election observation data

3.9. Pre-election period

The nomination period for Sri Lanka’s Parliamentary Election was from October 4th to 11th October 2024. During this period, the ECSL had made a special request to ensure representation as reflected in the national ethnic census ratios and women representation on national lists, and for candidates to declare assets and liabilities as required by the Anti-Corruption Act, No. 9 of 2023.

The ECSL also mandated all candidates to submit their assets and liabilities statements along with nomination papers, reinforcing accountability and compliance with anti-corruption standards. Comprehensive voter instructions and guidelines for marking preferences were published to promote voter education and minimize procedural errors during the election

Postal voting for the 2024 Parliamentary Election in Sri Lanka occurred on 30th October, 01st November, and 04th November 2025. For those unable to cast their vote on above mentioned dates, additional dates were provided at District Election Offices on 07th November and 08th November 2025.

The Silent period for the 2024 Parliamentary Election began at midnight on November 11 and lasted until Election Day on November 14. During this time, the Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL) mandated that all campaign activities cease by midnight on November 11, 48 hours before polling began. The ECSL permitted the telecast of video footage and information about final political campaigns on November 11 to be broadcast on main television and radio news channels on November 12. They emphasized that equal airtime should be provided to all candidates to publicize the details of their final campaign meetings.

The political climate before Sri Lanka's 2024 Parliamentary Election showed signs of fatigue and disappointment. Although more than 8,000 candidates were running, fewer than 1,000 were actively campaigning. The Executive Director attributed this lack of interest to the strain on political parties, due to them having been compelled to face two major elections one after the other.⁴ New campaign finance laws added to the quiet atmosphere by stopping questionable people and groups from putting money into campaigns, which made many big spenders from past elections step back. Even though parties and groups were allowed to set up about 600,000 campaign offices, only around 9,200 were actually established. This showed how slow and quiet the political activity was during this period.

The legal preparedness for the 2024 Parliamentary Election in Sri Lanka reflected a comprehensive approach by the Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL) and election monitoring organizations, including PAFFREL. The ECSL established a robust legal framework, publishing clear rules and regulations to ensure a transparent and well-organized electoral process.

³ New online platform empowers voters with information on parliamentary candidates, Daily Mirror Online, 2025. <https://www.dailymirror.lk/front-page/New-online-platform-empowers-voters-with-information-on-parliamentary-candidates/238-293602>

⁴ Voter apathy might produce a distorted picture of the electorate - EDITORIAL, November 12, 2025, Daily Mirror Online, https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Voter-apaty-might-produce-a-distorted-picture-of-the-electorate-EDITORIAL/172-295749?utm_source=chatgpt.com

PAFFREL contributed to the legal and political readiness by deploying Long Term Observers island-wide to oversee the Pre-Election period. This initiative aimed to ensure compliance with electoral regulations and detect potential violations, enhancing the credibility of the election process.

LTOs were trained on observing and reporting 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/marginalized sectors. 160 of LTOs were mobilized and deployed during the pre-election period in every electoral district. Pre-election observation conducted with several district-level Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) such as Sarvodaya, Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA), Asia Lanka Social Development Cooperation-SDC, Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC, Child Vision, Citizen Committees (*Purawesi Sabha*), Social Envo Vision Organization (SEVO), Diriya Women Development Foundation, Sama Sevaya Foundation, People's Union for Social Welfare (PUSW), Rural Development Planning Organization (RDPO), Rural Development Foundation (RDF), Sri Lanka Center for Development Facilitation (SLCDF) in the training programs for the election observers and mobilizing and deploying them.

According to the ECSL, 759,210 Postal Voting applications were received and 21,160 applications were rejected and 738,050 applications were accepted. Kurunegala District recorded the highest number of accepted postal voting applications, with a total of 78,036, while Mullaitivu District had the lowest, with only 3,947 applications.

1,000 Postal Voting Observers were deployed by PAFFREL in all politically sensitive centres such as district secretariats, bus depots, educational offices, military camps and in police stations on the postal voting days as part of PAFFREL's efforts to guarantee a free and peaceful election. The information received from the field observers that in general, postal voting was conducted peacefully. These observers conducted extensive monitoring to assess the fairness of the election from various perspectives. Postal voting observers closely monitored key aspects of the voting process including:

1. Election Preparation
2. Voting Process
3. Election Law Violations

In the election preparation process the design of polling stations to protect the confidentiality of casting voting was observed. In the Postal Voting, almost all postal voting polling stations observed were made to keep the confidentiality of casting votes of persons. This shows a strong effort taken by the related entities to ensure a formal postal voting process.

The right to vote is an important and crucial aspect of democracy. To ensure an all-inclusive election, the Election Commission, election monitoring organizations, and other relevant authorities worked together. In particular, this election focused on and observed polling station accessibility for People with Disabilities (PWDs). In this context, PAFFREL observed that 76% of polling stations had adequate facilities for the PWDs, while 24% still lacked these necessary accommodations.

District-wise Accessibility Limitations for the Disabled

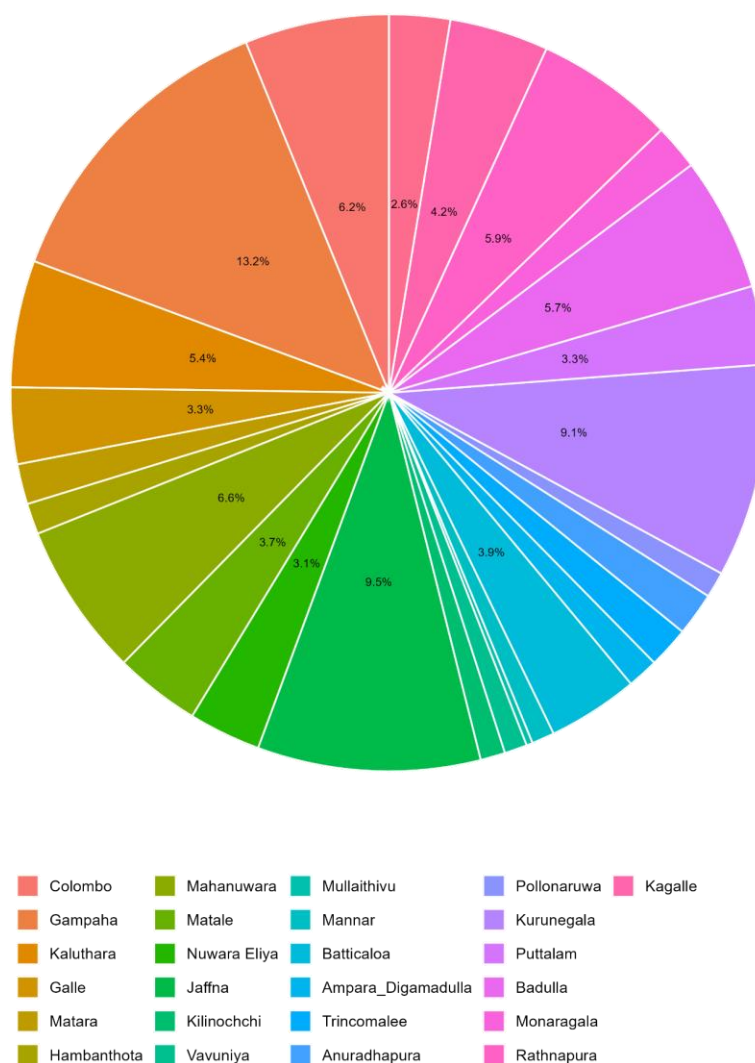


Figure 2 Availability of accessible facilities for Voters with Disabilities

There were no photographs of politicians displayed in postal voting polling stations. As observed, photographs of politicians have been found in only 03 polling stations located in Rathnapura, Hambantota and Jaffna.

There have been instances during the voting process where voters' identities have not been verified at two polling stations: the Regional Director of Health Services (RDHS) in Ampara and the Colombo South Teaching Hospital in Kalubowila, according to some Postal Voting Observers.

In all polling stations that were observed by Postal Voting Observers, there were no incidents reported on taking photographs of the ballot papers.

ECSL emphasised that any photograph, brochure, symbol or signs should not be exhibited at the premises of polling stations in order to promote the candidates and leaflets should not be distributed for this purpose. PAFFREL observed whether such activities were conducted by parliamentary election candidates and supporters in polling stations. Only one incident occurred at the polling station located

at Divisional Education Office, Kattankudy, Batticaloa. And leaflets were distributed by two supporters attached to the New Democratic Front on the road near the polling station. Police have reached the place where the incident happened and filed a police complaint.

The security status of the polling stations of postal voting was also observed. 99% of the polling stations were secured by the police and armed forces of Sri Lanka. Only a few polling stations such as District Forest Office Walawwatta; Divisional Education Office, Mallagam, Tellippalai; Urban Council, Minuwangoda; Divisional Secretariat, Negombo; Mihintale Pradeshiya Sabha; Mihintale Veterinary Office; and, Wariyapola Divisional Education Office did not have inside or outside protection provided by the security entities.

As the findings of the postal voting observation detailed below, there were relatively few cases of election law violations at postal voting polling stations of the 2024 Parliamentary Election. This is a noteworthy indication of a free and fair election and the establishment of democracy in general.

During the days of the Postal Voting, the Complaint Receiving and Mitigation Unit of PAFFREL received several complaints. From 30th October to 04th November, a total of 724 complaints were reported and 711 of complaints were confirmed. It Included 08 complaints on Act of Violence, 08 complaints on Abuse of State Power, Resources and Employees, and 695 complaints on Violation of Election Laws.

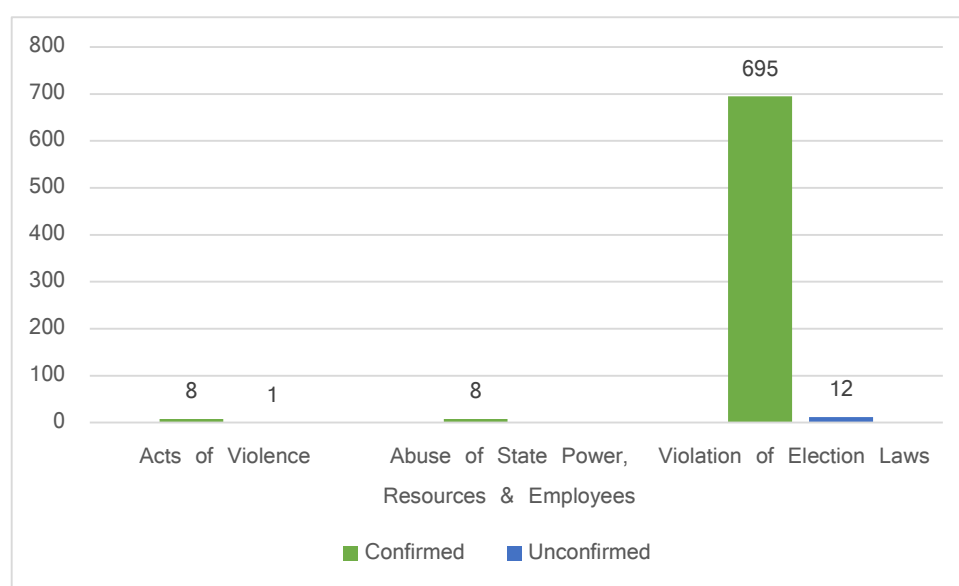


Figure 3 Election Complaints in Postal Voting of the Parliamentary Election 2024

These complaints include the following notable instances of violence and election law violations pertaining to the 2024 Parliamentary Election Postal Voting:

Among these complaints, there are some significant incidents on violation of election laws and acts of violence related to the Postal Voting of the Parliamentary Election 2024 as follows:

- On 30/10/2024, a complaint was received regarding approximately 10 vehicles belonging to a candidate contesting for the Parliamentary Election from the Samagi Jana Balawegaya in the Kalutara District. These vehicles have been seen roaming around polling stations with slogans "Yuthukame Manapaya" (preferential vote of gratitude).

- On 30/10/2024, a complaint was received stating that voters who arrived at the Postal Voting polling station at Matara Rahula Vidyalaya were informed that voting would not take place today, causing them significant inconvenience.
- On 01/11/2024, a complaint was received that voters are being pressured to vote for a particular party by an officer-in-charge and an assistant officer at the polling station located at the office of the Deputy Provincial Director of Agriculture, Sri Bodhi Mawatha, Gampaha.
- 01/11/2024, a complaint was received that a vehicle with stickers related to the election campaign of a parliamentary candidate from the Samagi Jana Balawegaya in the Ratnapura district is roaming near the polling station located at Weligepola Divisional Secretariat, Balangoda.
- 01/11/2024 a complaint has been received that a vehicle with stickers related to the election campaign of a parliamentary candidate from the Samagi Jana Balawegaya in the Ratnapura district is roaming in the Northern Kalutara area.
- On 03/11/2024, in the Jayanthipuran area, supporters of the Tamil People's Party were attacked by a group from the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal party while putting up posters. A complaint has been filed regarding the conflict between the two groups. The report also indicates that two supporters of the Tamil People's Party were admitted to Batticaloa Hospital, and the Batticaloa police have arrested two individuals involved in the attack.
- On 03/11/2024, a complaint was received and the Laggala Police announced the deployment of a special police team to arrest an individual involved in a dispute at a hotel located within the environmentally sensitive Knuckles area. The individual in question is reportedly an organiser for the Dambulla electorate of Samagi Jana Balawegaya, a candidate of the Parliamentary Election (Chief Inspector, Police Station, Laggala said that in relation to this incident, two friends of the parliamentary candidate Dambulla constituency organizer have been arrested and in addition to this, investigations have been started to arrest one of his brothers).
- On 04/11/2024, a candidate of Samagi Jana Balawegaya in Monaragala District was attacked with Chilli Powder and also assaulted by an unidentified group around 3:00 AM in the Dambagalla area. The injured candidate has been taken to the hospital, and the police have begun an investigation to identify the suspects.
- On 04/11/2024, a complaint was received regarding the handling of ballot papers at the polling station located at the Education Office in Kattankudy, Batticaloa. It was reported that the ballot papers of Muslim voters were sealed after they marked their votes, whereas the ballot papers of Tamil voters were not sealed after voting. This issue was resolved through the intervention of the Election Dispute Resolution Center, Batticaloa.

The ECSL was providing adequate facilities and resources in polling stations and was acting appropriately to guarantee a free and fair election on the designated days of the postal voting. In order to guarantee safe and peaceful polling station operations, the Department of Police also has provided sufficient protection. However, there haven't been any incidents or circumstances that have significantly affected the election during postal voting.

During the Pre-Election period, PAFFREL received 2,280 (2,232 Confirmed and 48 Unconfirmed) election complaints.

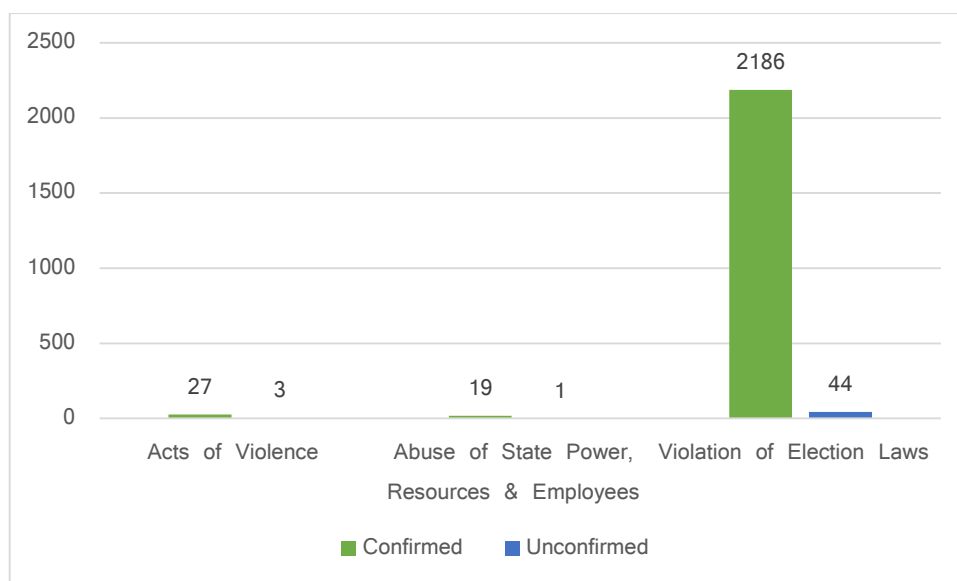


Figure 4 Election Complaints during the Pre-Election period of the Parliamentary Election 2024

During the pre-election period in Sri Lanka, a total of 2,330 reported incidents highlighted various forms of election-related misconduct. These incidents included 30 acts of violence, which involved physical intimidation or disruptions aimed at candidates or voters, contributing to an atmosphere of fear. In addition, 20 cases of abuse of state power, resources, and employees were documented, where public assets or government personnel were improperly used to support certain political interests, undermining the fairness of the election process. 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.

The most significant issue, however, was the 2,280 violations of election laws, which encompassed a wide range of breaches, from illegal campaigning to the misuse of public spaces and failure to follow the election commission's rules, indicating a pervasive disregard for electoral integrity. These issues emphasize the importance of strict monitoring and enforcement to ensure a free and fair election. Among the incidents occurred in violation of election laws, the 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 was admitted to Government Hospital, Gangodagama and transferred to Tangalle Hospital.
- An assault was 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 was filed regarding the incident. However, no life-threatening injuries were reported.
- An incident was reported on 24th October from Bogawantalawa Siripura area on a meeting held in a private reception hall to confirm the victory of the candidates running for the Parliamentary Election from the National People's Power from Nuwara Eliya District. Following the meeting, two Tamil Progressive Alliance supporters threatened to murder National People's Power candidates if they visited the estates to solicit votes. The Bogawantalawa Police had received a complaint about this.

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 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 was opened to be obtained through an application which was available at District Offices, Divisional Secretariats, Grama Niladhari Offices or www.elections.gov.lk website.

Before commencing the Cooling-Off period, a fight between the followers of former Member of Parliament, Rishad Bathiudeen of Vanni Electoral District and former State Minister, Kader Masthan, was reported from Vavuniya. On the 11th November, three injured individuals were brought to the General Hospital in Vavuniya. This incident also resulted in vehicle damage.

In the Parliamentary Election 2020, there was a bigger number of complaints received; 84 on acts of violence, 129 complaints on abuse of state power, resources & employees, and 1684 complaints on violations of election laws during the pre-election period. There are fewer complaints on acts of violence and abuse of state power, resources and employees received during the pre-election period in the Parliamentary Election 2024. Nonetheless, compared to 2020, there were a lot more complaints about election law violations in 2024.

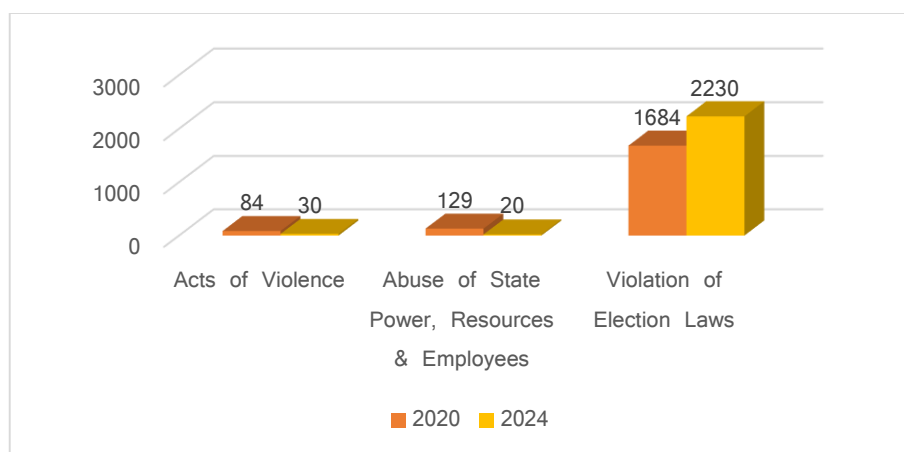


Figure 5 Election Complaints during Pre-Election periods of the Parliamentary Election 2020 and 2024

Long Term Observers deployed by PAFFREL observed illegal political party campaign offices that have been established across the country. The observers reported on 125 electoral divisions out of total 160 and identified 547 illegal political party campaign offices as of 11th November.

The Complaint Receiving and Mitigation Unit made more follow-ups with the complaints received during this election. PAFFREL corresponded with the ECSL and Sri Lanka Police. Accordingly, 110 follow-up letters were sent to the ECSL and 03 letters to Sri Lanka Police.

3.9.1 Social Media Monitoring

PAFFREL executed its social media monitoring in the Parliamentary Election 2024 through a long standing trustworthy partnership with Hashtag Generation and ECSL. PAFFREL reported on social media activities and submitted to the ECSL on a daily basis. During the pre-election period, social media monitoring identified below types of violence:

Cases are significant under the Use of national anthem, flag, and religious symbols, flags while there are 81 cases on use of minors, 80 cases on harassment and bullying and 71 cases on hate speech. PAFFREL conducted the social media monitoring with Hashtag Generation in the Cooling-Off Period, Election Day and the Post-Election Period.

The ECSL 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 Parliamentary Election 2024 conclude after 12 AM on 11th November 2024. In the event that a social media campaign was reported to the Election Commission, they were directed to related social media institutions to remove the contents of campaigns.

The ECSL and Sri Lanka Police performed their duties to the best of their abilities except on misuse of state power, resources, and employees. The ECSL and Sri Lanka Police, used best practices to prevent acts of violence and limit the use of illegal election propaganda, particularly cutouts and posters.

According to the ECSL, more than 20 foreign observers were to oversee the Parliamentary Election 2024. The ECSL has invited ten observers to attend from Russia, and Thailand. The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) commenced their election monitoring mission from the Pre-Election period. ANFREL deployed its International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) for the 2024 elections with a team of 30 observers, including two Electoral Analysts, 13 Long-Term Observers (LTOs) from October 31, and 10 Short-Term Observers (STOs) from November 11. The mission covered key stages of the electoral process, including campaign activities, voter education, media monitoring, administrative preparations, Election Day operations, vote counting, and post-election developments across all 22 districts.⁵

All the efforts taken by the International election observers and monitors are to ensure a transparent and fair election process.

3.10. Silent Period

The “Silent” period commenced from midnight on 11th November 2024 and remained in effect until Election Day on 14th November and ECSL 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 whole purpose of such a Cooling-Off/Silent period is to soothe any politically surcharged atmosphere and give a quiet, pensive atmosphere for the voters immediately before voting day. According to rule, the system halts all types of campaigns during this period so that no undue influence or pressure is exerted on the electorate. This ban serves the purpose of keeping sanctity in the electoral

⁵ The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL). 2024. *Interim Report of the ANFREL International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to the 2024 Sri Lanka Parliamentary Elections*. <https://anfrel.org/interim-report-of-the-anfrel-international-election-observation-mission-ieom-to-the-2024-sri-lanka-parliamentary-elections/>

process, maintaining peace, and upholding democratic principles that limit the chances of last minute disruptions or acts of violence.

The ECSL, notified that only telecast video footage and information of final political campaigns is allowed on 11th November on main news broadcasting on each television and radio channel on 12th November. (?) As they mentioned, this time should have been equal for all candidates to publicize the information of final campaign meetings.

155 Long Term Observers (LTOs) deployed in 25 districts across the country observed the election process during the Silent 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 Silent period.

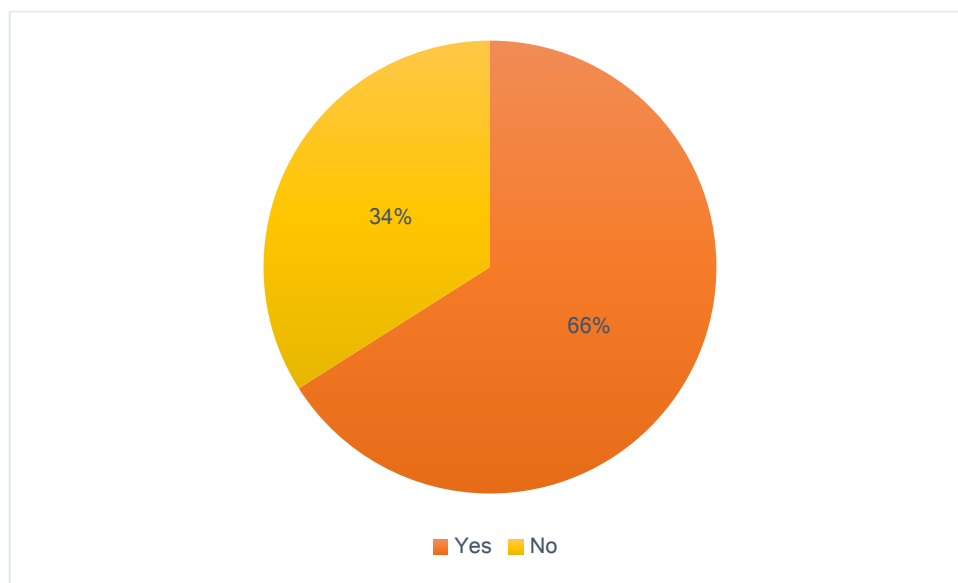


Figure 7 Complaints reported on the non-removal of political cutouts and posters in the monitored area during the Cooling-Off period

As reported by LTOs, most of the voters received their poll cards prior to Election Day.

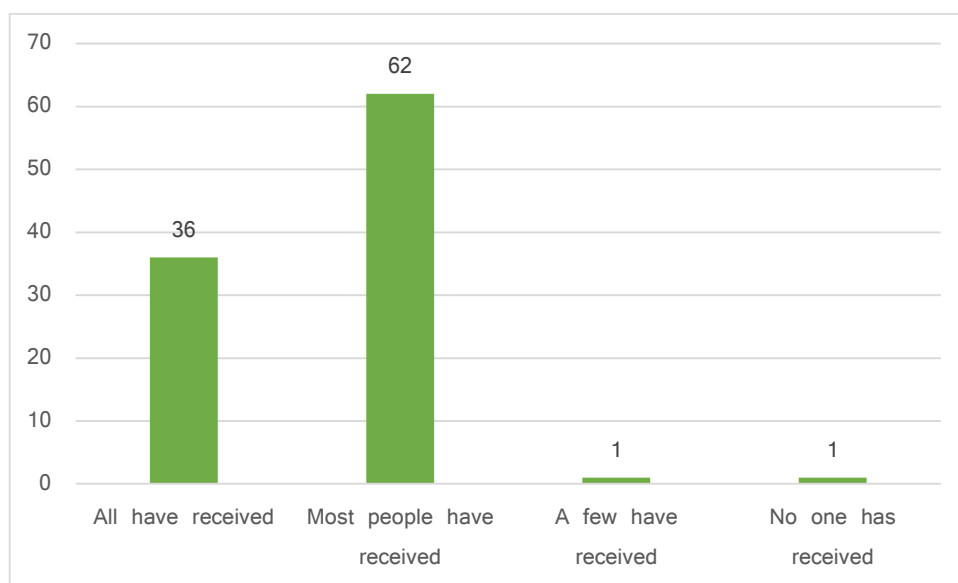


Figure 8 Receiving the official ballot notice by the time of the silent period

During the silent period, very few political parties and independent groups implemented their campaigns with false claims and misleading comments to the voter.

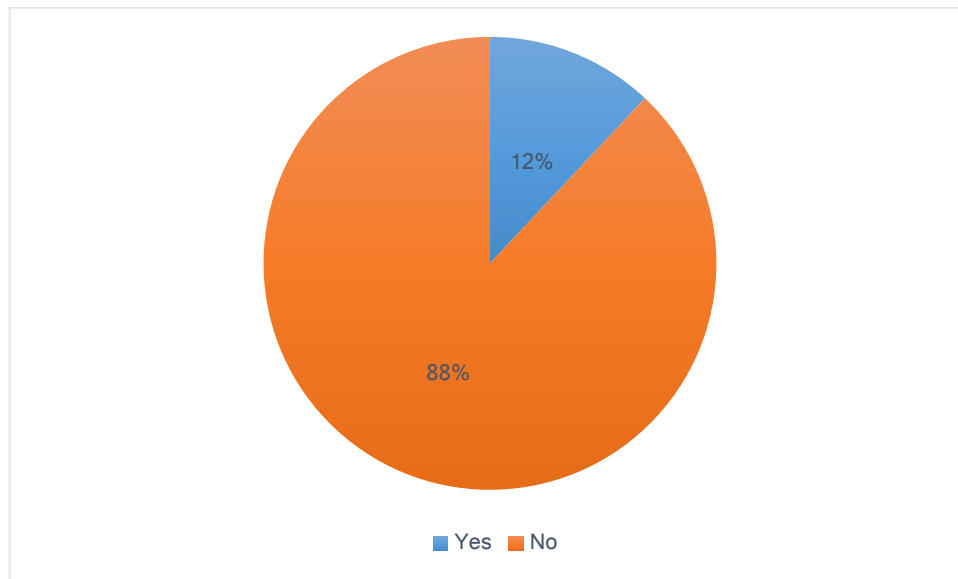


Figure 9 Campaigns political parties and independent groups with false claims and misleading comments to the voter

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. Impartiality of police in the electoral period varied in the Cooling-Off period.

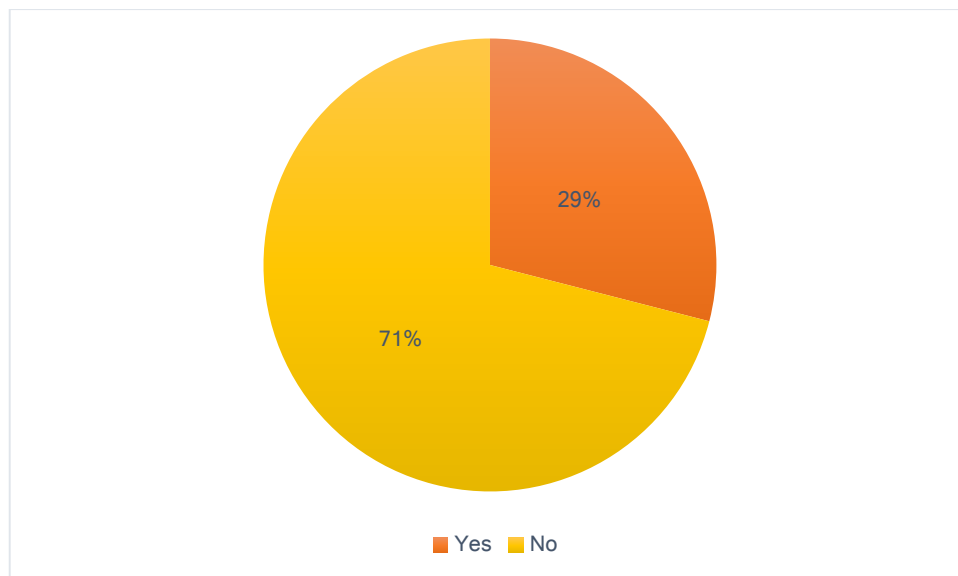


Figure 11 Impartiality of media/social media organizations in electoral period

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

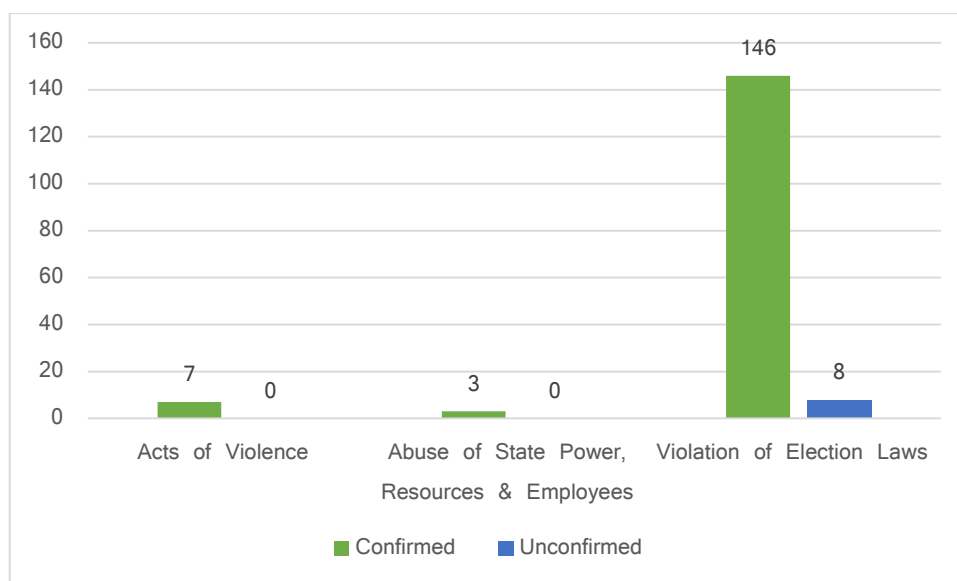


Figure 12 Election Complaints during the Cooling-Off period of the Parliamentary Election 2024

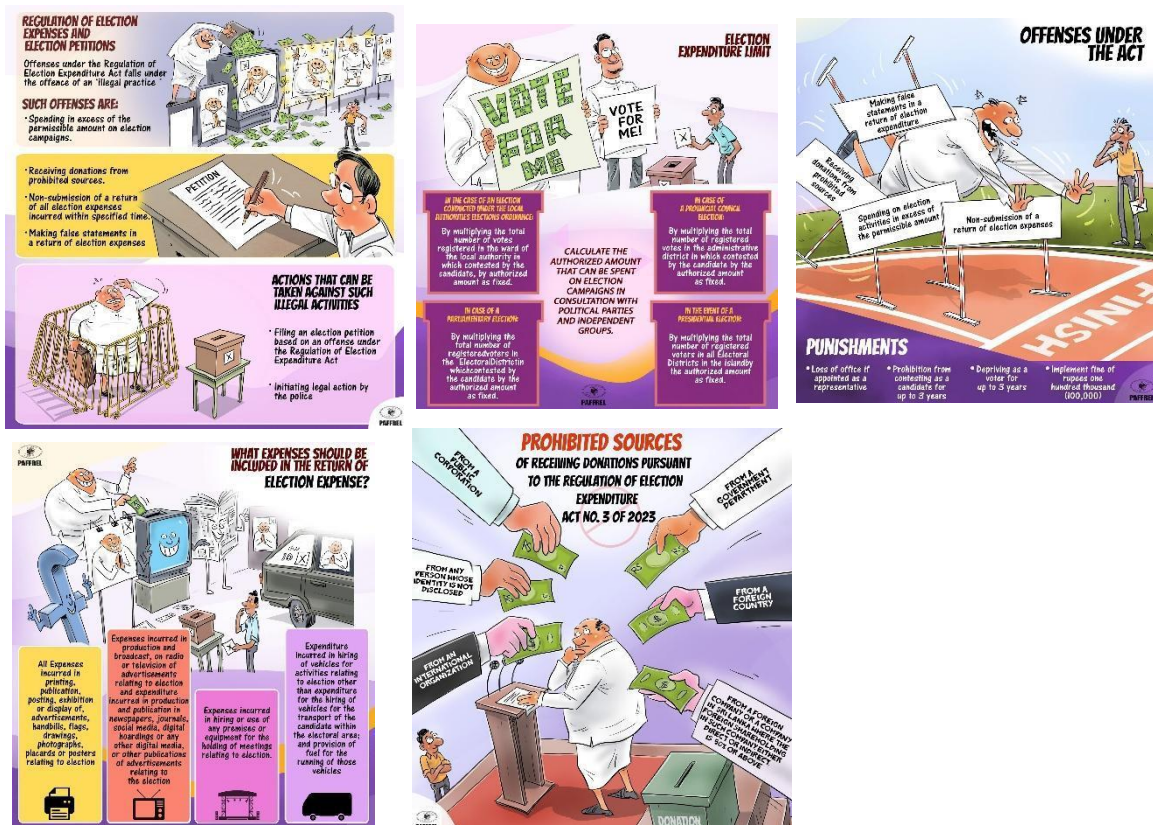
During the cooling period, a total of 164 incidents were recorded in three key categories. There were 07 Acts of Violence, including physical confrontations and threats, which are typically aimed at intimidating political opponents or disrupting peaceful campaigning. Additionally, there were 03 instances of abuse of state power, resources, and employees, where public resources or government personnel may have been misused to gain an electoral advantage, violating ethical norms and election laws. The most prevalent issue was the 154 violations of election laws, which involved unauthorized campaigning, illegal gatherings, or breaches of the Election Commission's rules, such as exceeding campaign limits or distributing materials without permission. These incidents highlight the ongoing challenges of maintaining a fair and lawful election process, even during the cooling-off period when campaigning is restricted.

Hashtag Generation in collaboration with PAFFREL has 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.

Provision of leave for public and private sector employees to cast their votes in national elections without loss of pay or personal leave is Half a day if you're 40 kilometers or less, one day if you're 40–100 km, one and a half days if you're 100–150 km, and two days if you're beyond 150 km. In addition, the ECSL informed the heads of all State Sector and Private Sector banks and financial institutions that they should grant leave appropriately to the employees of these institutions to go to the polling stations assigned to them and cast their votes. Furthermore, leave shall be granted to the staff and students in universities and G.C.E (A/L) students in tuition classes for voting.

PAFFREL continued its voter education and awareness 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 urged that the first time voters in particular have a significant opportunity to use their right to vote properly as youth voters in this election. PAFFREL encouraged active citizens to be involved to promote collective community initiatives to prevent violence and malpractices in the Cooling-Off period, Election Day and Post-Election period.

[illegible]



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	

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			

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, or 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. Voters 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 personnel to enter the polling stations: Electors registered at the polling station

1. Polling staff of the polling station
2. Police Officers deployed in election duties at the polling station
3. Contesting candidates
4. Duly appointed Polling Agents of each candidate
5. Representatives of Local/Foreign Election Monitoring Organizations approved by the Election Commission
6. 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 announced several facilities to support disabled voters in the Parliamentary Election 2024. 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.

3.11. The Election Day

Under the direction of the ECSL and with the involvement of several stakeholders, including election observation groups, the Parliamentary Election 2024 has been peaceful compared to the elections that took place before. In order to guarantee a free and fair election as well as an all-inclusive election, the ECSL played a crucial role from the pre-election period until Election Day. Throughout the process, Sri Lanka Police cooperated in tandem with the appropriate entities to maintain law and order in an efficient and unbiased manner with the exception of a few incidents. PAFFREL is grateful to the Sri Lanka Police and ECSL for preventing election law violations, violence, and protecting citizens' right to vote. All political parties and independent groups that contested in the election, as well as the citizens should be appreciated for facilitating calm and peaceful elections.

On the Election Day, 1,320 Mobile Team Observers were deployed across multiple polling stations, focusing on dynamic monitoring of external environments and addressing irregularities such as voter intimidation, unauthorized campaigning, or procedural violations.

As reported by MTOs, 68% of the polling stations were set up at schools, while 22% were at religious places, 9% polling stations were at other public buildings and no polling stations were located as temporary polling stations.

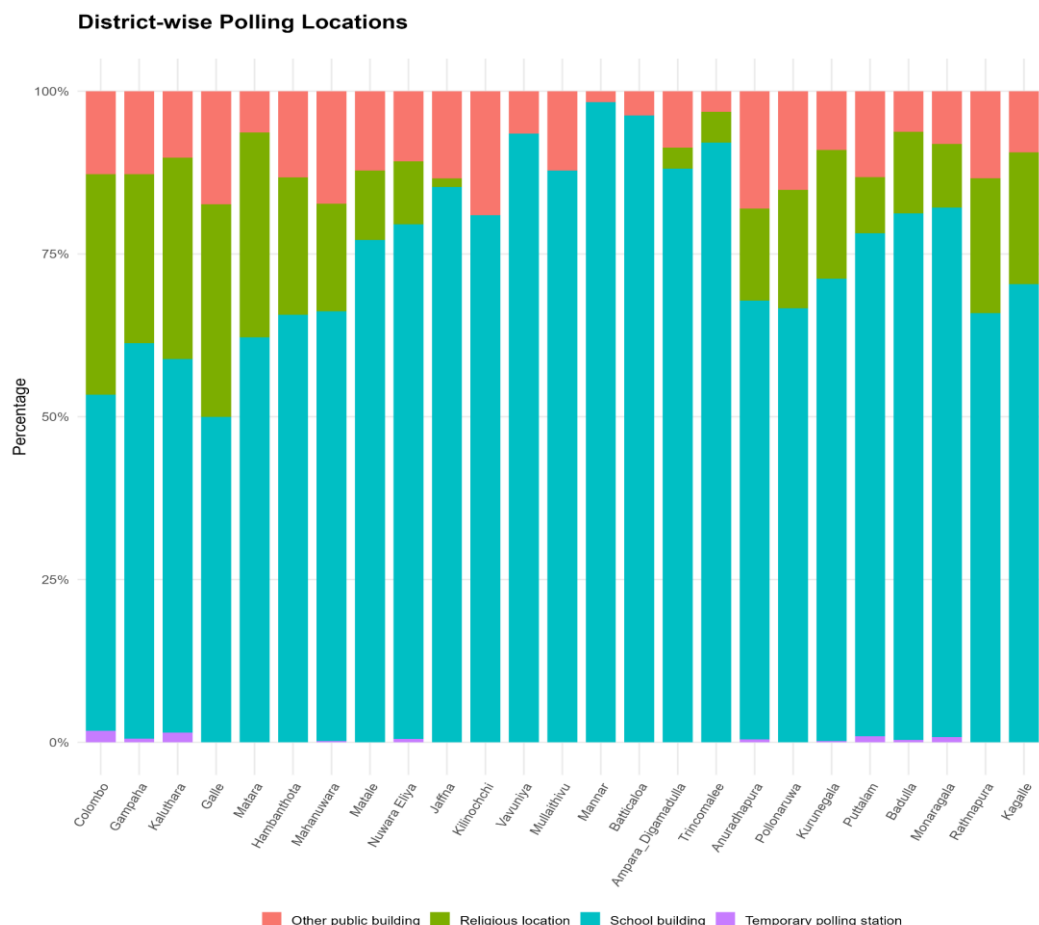


Figure 13 Polling Station Locations

Regarding the irregularities in the polls of the Parliamentary Election 2024, majority of the MTOs reported that no irregularities happened.

Regarding the observations made at the polling stations, the majority of polling stations provided accessible facilities for those with disabilities while 31% of MTOs were not able to provide proper facilities for the PWDs.

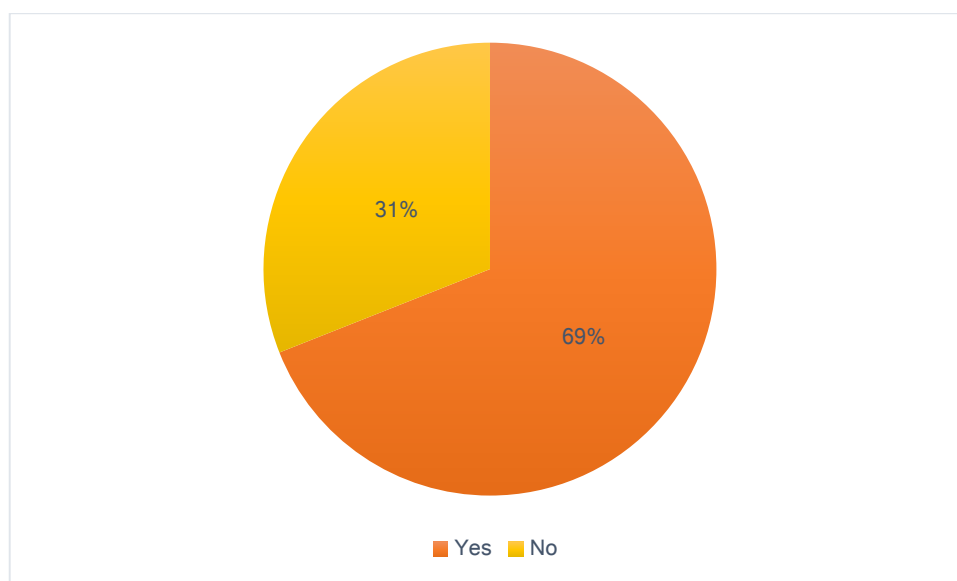


Figure 14 Providing proper facilities for disabled persons to access the polling station

Most of the officers who were doing their duties in the polling stations also were providing adequate support to PWDs while officers from 26% polling stations were not able to support.

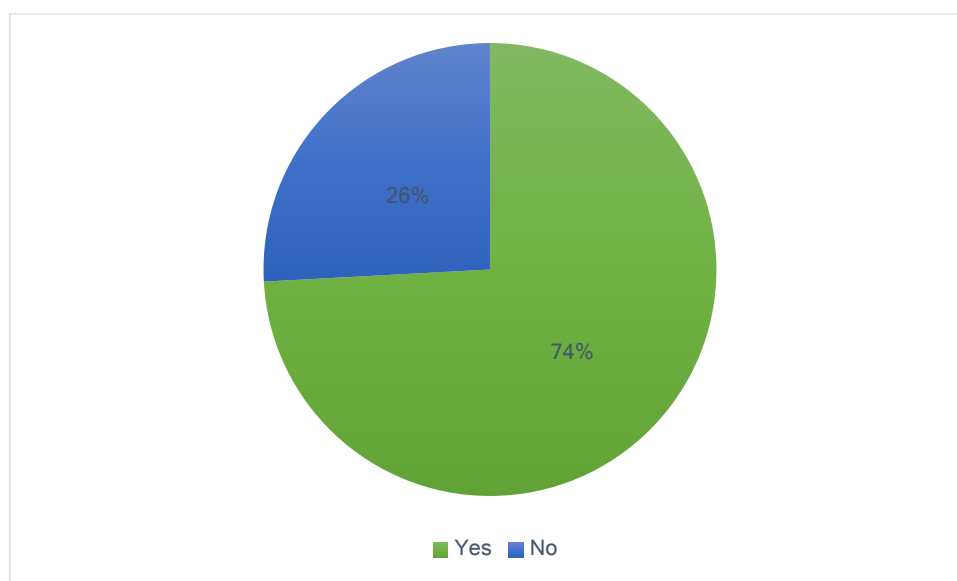


Figure 15 Providing sufficient support to disabled voters from polling officers

In most of the polling stations, facilities designed to be accessible and convenient for disabled individuals to cast their votes were ensured. For the convenience of PWD voters, ramps were occasionally required (and/or provided?) in voting stations.

Additionally, the majority of polling places had facilities that made it easy and accessible for PWDs to cast their vote while 30% of polling stations were unable to ensure adequate facilities for PWDs.

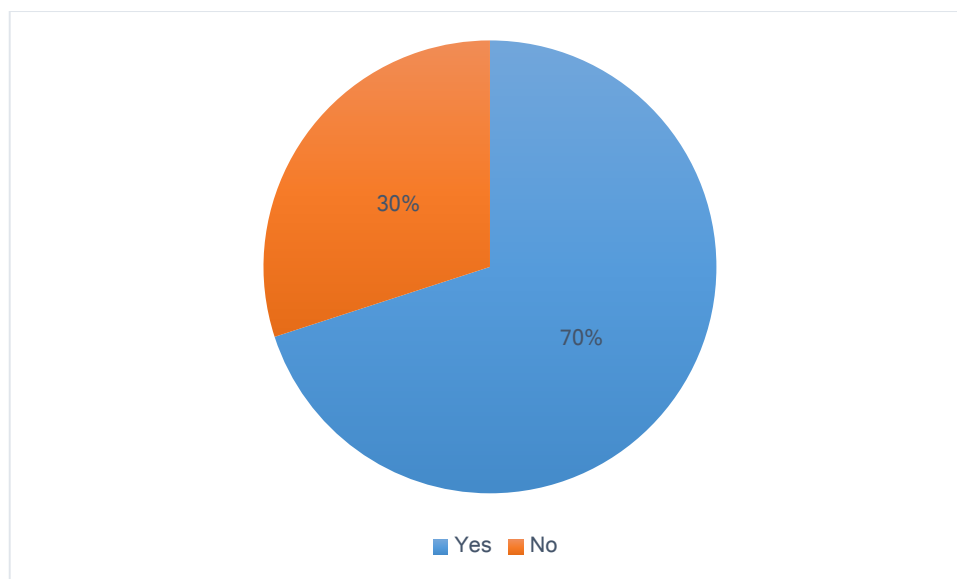


Figure 16 Ensuring polling station facilities are designed to be accessible and convenient for disabled individuals to cast their votes

Election-related officers provided assistance in 70% of polling stations with a person who was staying in the premises to provide assistance for PWDs. In these polling stations, PWDs had easy access. In some polling stations, voter instructions through tactile stencil frames were available for the PWDs while other polling stations had hand fences, separate and special entrance for them.

MTOs also observed the participation of transgender people on Election Day. According to 96% MTOs, voters who represent the transgender community have reached the polling stations to cast their vote. As 98.7% MTOs reported, the transgender people have cast their vote without any obstacles.

Regarding the observations made out of the polling stations, only 0.1% of incidents have been reported on intimidation at polling stations, while 99.9% polling stations were peaceful without any intimidations. 93.3% of MTOs reported that adequate security arrangements were made outside the polling station while only 6.1% reported that there was no such security arrangements. 99.9% polling stations did not report any information about transporting the voters.

In almost all the polling stations observed by the deployed MTOs, the process of closing the polls was done without interruptions. As MTOs concluded their observation on Election Day, the polling was comparatively peaceful and well-designed even though the voter turnout was low (68.93%).

In addition to the MTOs, 3,000 + STOs conducted observation at polling stations across the country. STOs were deployed specifically on Election Day to monitor inside polling stations, voter turnout, ballot handling, and overall compliance with electoral laws.

As reported by 99.5% of STOs, no special incidents happened on the day before the polling day. Also, 99.9% STOs reported that there was no undue influence on the voters due to the location of their respective polling station while 99.5% STOs reported that the locations of polling stations were free from political influence. According to STOs, 99.7% of polling stations were designed to preserve the privacy of voters through confidentiality. 96% STOs also reported that PWDs had no difficulties in accessing their respective polling stations.

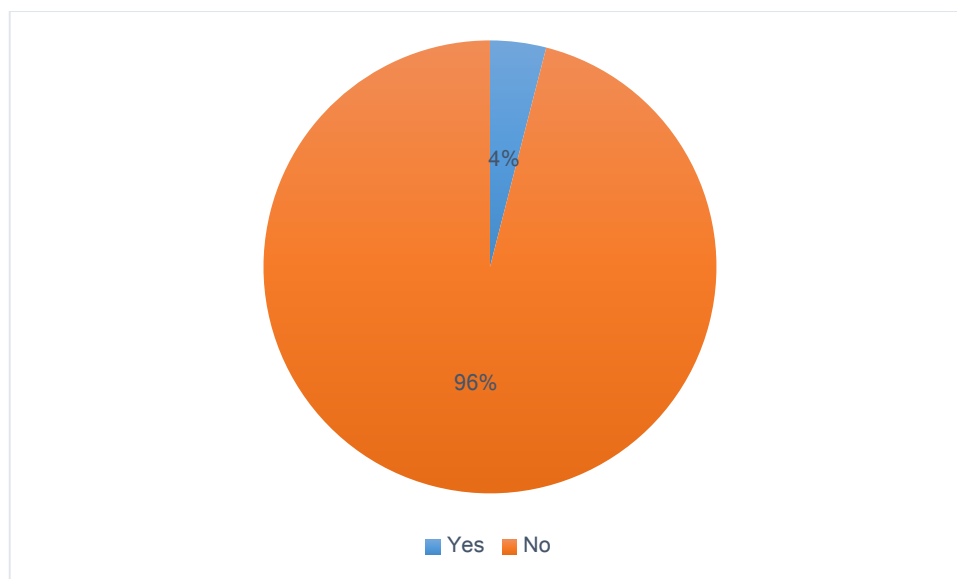


Figure 18 Difficulties of accessing the polling station disabled community

In case of polling, STOs observed the incidents and that affected the election officials. 99.1% STOs reported that there was no influence or assault on election officials, and there were no instances of election officials being evicted from any of the polling stations that STOs observed. Likewise, there were no records on threats or assaults on representatives of parties and independent groups on the Election Day and no instances of representatives of political parties being evicted from any of the polling stations.

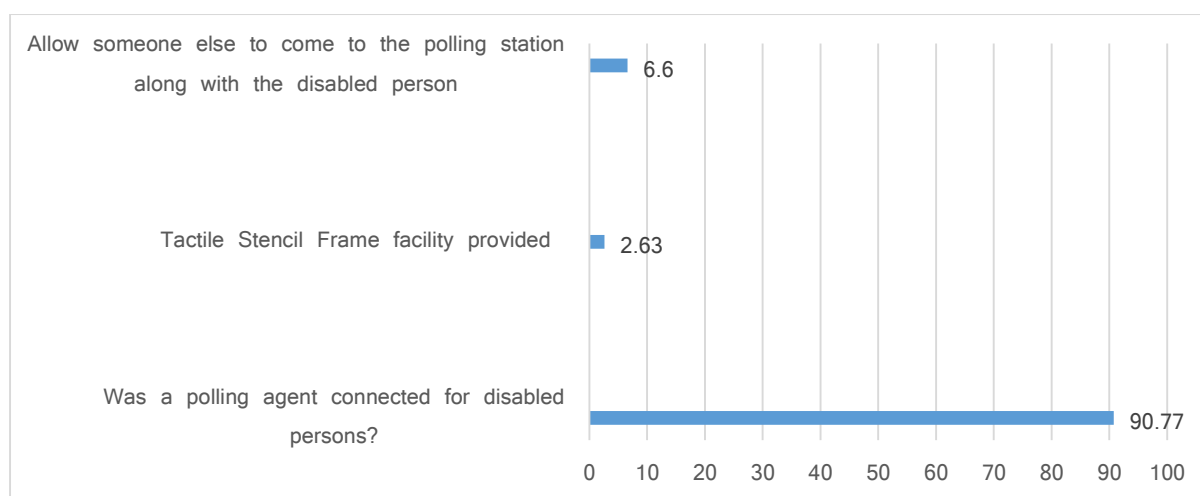


Figure 20 Polling station facilities to accessible and convenient for disabled individuals to cast their votes

Among the selected sample, 90.8% polling stations had a polling agent present for PWDs, 2.6% polling stations had tactile Stencil Frame facility, and 6.6% polling stations allowed someone else to come to the polling station along with PWDs. As reported by STOs, there were instances where ballot papers were photographed or photographs or videos were taken inside the polling station.

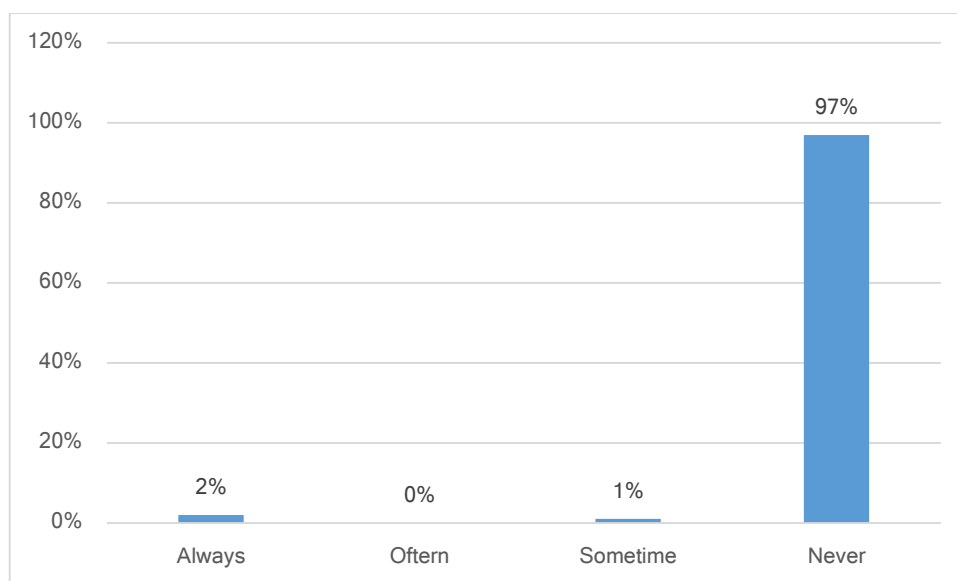


Figure 21 Instances where ballot papers were photographed or photographs/videos were taken inside the polling station

However, only 1.73% polling stations had these incidents while 97.43% polling stations had no such incidents. There were no reports of prejudicial marking of votes outside the polling station.

On Election Day, PAFFREL conducted a thorough observation mission through the Head Office in Colombo in addition to the field observations. Nine individuals were assigned as tabulation officers, while fifty individuals (through two sessions) were assigned as calling center operators. The calling center operators mostly communicated with the MTOs regarding their observations, concentrating on the routes they were required to take in order to reach the polling stations. On the basis of the observation data that MTOs obtained using the KOBO Collect Tool, the calling center operators were also involved in monitoring, gathering, and sharing the events that transpired on Election Day.

The tabulation officers monitored the data on the voter turnout of the election from 07 AM to 04 PM. They gathered the district level voter turnout of the Parliamentary Election 2024. according to the final official results published by the ECSL on November 15, 2024, the total voter turnout was 68.93% out of 11,815,246 of the number of votes polled.

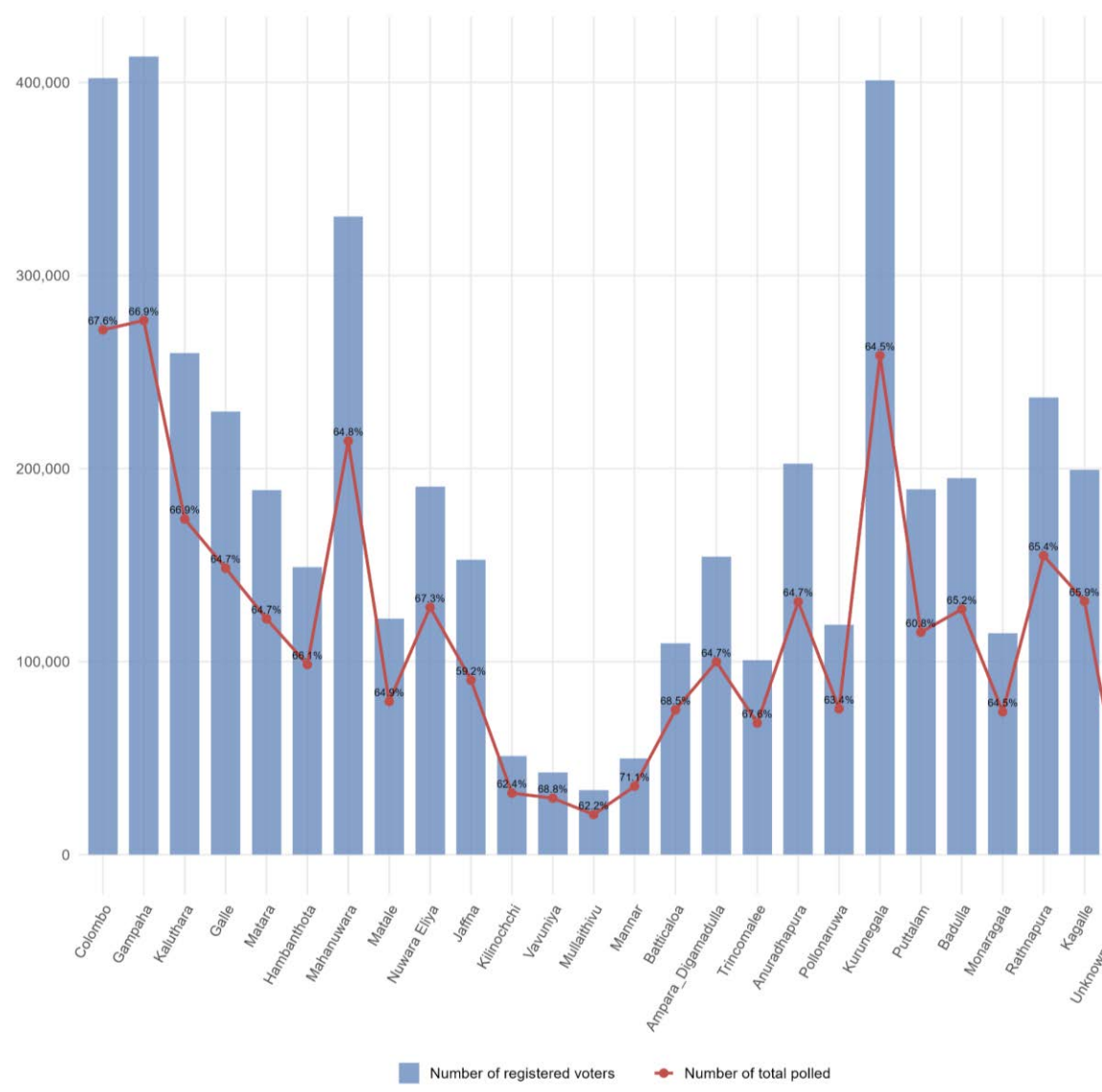


Figure 22 District-Level Voter Turnout of the Parliamentary Election 2024- PAFFREL Observer Data

According to the ECSL, Puttalam district had the lowest voter participation, while Badulla district had the highest. A sizable portion of the polling stations were covered by PAFFREL, with the active participation of more than 5,000 election observers. PAFFREL has received 223 complaints (197 confirmed and 26 unconfirmed) during the Election Day.

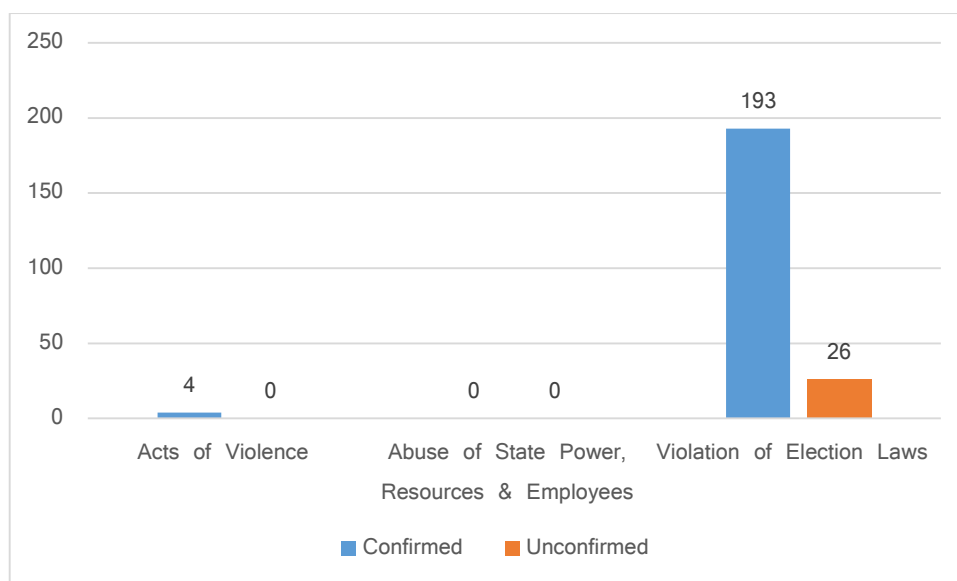


Figure 23 Election Complaints on the Election Day of the Parliamentary Election 2024

Among these, 219 complaints were in violation of election laws including illegal election propaganda, attempts to influence the voters, and procedural breaches at polling stations. These figures highlight ongoing challenges in ensuring compliance with electoral laws during critical phases of the democratic process. However, No instances of abuse of state power, resources, or employees were reported, suggesting adherence to regulations in this area.

Several incidents of violation of election laws were reported from Kattankudy, Tissamaharama, Badulla, Viyaluwa, Puttalam, Wennappuwa, Padirippu, Kurunegala, Galle, Gampaha, Thalawa, Aranayaka, Nuwara Eliya, Matara, Rathnapura, Anuradhapura, Kalutara, Minuwangoda, Chilaw, Maharagama, Gampola, Divulapitiya, Kandy, and Kothmale. The Dambana Adivasi (Tribal) Vice Chief and his family who went to cast their votes have been prevented from voting since the Vice Chief came to the center to cast his vote with the traditional axe. In the light of this incident clear guidelines should be provided by the election commissions to the Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) and Senior Presiding Officers (SPOs) covering Adivasi areas.

As reported by the observers, no serious incidents were reported on illegal election campaigns in the vicinity of polling stations, public gatherings, intimidation, and influencing and transportation of voters. There were incidents reported which are counted as violent assault and intimidation from Mahiyanganaya and Kotapola. Nevertheless, there were no major incidents or situations during the Election Day that have had a significant overall impact on the final result.

PAFFREL received several complaints of not granting the provisions for leave for the employees to cast their votes. Even though the ECSL has given clear guidance and directives on granting leave for employees to cast their votes, some of the management and administration of private and financial companies have not followed those properly. PAFFREL claims that the ECSL should have an appropriate authority to establish adequate safeguards of the voters.

PAFFREL in collaboration with Hashtag Generation observed that there had been 29 cases of paid promotions on Facebook, 274 cases related to campaign content, and 30 cases related to Election Law violations and harmful speech on Election Day.

As noted by the Mobile Observers, Long Term Observers, and Stationary Observers deployed by PAFFREL on the polling day there were very few irregularities in the polling stations. People with Disabilities (PWDs) were provided proper facilities to access the polling station. The facilities are designed to be accessible and convenient for disabled individuals to cast their votes have ensured easy access, physical assistance, and tactile stencils frame for blind or partially blind voters with some exception of polling stations located in Kalalpitiya in Gampaha, Meewanapalana in Kalutara, Yatiyantota in Kegalle, and Kolonnawa.

Compared to previous elections, there were significantly fewer attempts to influence and sway voters based on their race, religion, or ethnicity. Hate speech against candidates, their ideology, and their campaigns was insignificant, despite reports of election law violations and violence based on digital and cyber platforms.

(The preceding five paragraphs are repetitive in that this information has already been provided earlier in the report).

3.12. Post-Election Period

The Post-Election period is defined as Two (02) weeks which began at 04 PM on the Election Day on November 14, 2024. Post-election monitoring activities were carried out after the official results of the election were declared, and continued till a peaceful and smooth transition of power, which is another salient sign of healthy democracy. This covered the counting process including the preferential vote counting and the announcement of results, and stakeholder reactions. Observers evaluated the transparency and efficiency of the counting process, noting any irregularities or procedural violations. Public trust in the results was also assessed through engagement with stakeholders and media monitoring. After the counting process, LTOs were involved in the observations in the post-election period.

For parliamentary elections, vote counting and tabulation was carried out in approximately 1,400 counting centers across Sri Lanka's 25 administrative districts. Each counting station counted votes from approximately 10 polling stations, and there were dozens of counting stations in each counting center. Each political party or independent group may appoint two to five counting agents, depending on the capacity of the counting center.⁶

PAFFREL deployed 196 Counting Center Observers (CCOs) in all 25 districts of the country. Vote counting and tabulation were carried out in three stages at counting centers. In the first stage, the chief counting officer and counting staff appointed by the Election Commission of Sri Lanka counted the number of ballot papers in each box. In the second stage, the chief counting officer and counting staff sorted and counted the ballot papers according to the votes cast in favor of each party or group in the electoral district. In the third stage, candidate preferences were counted to determine the total number of votes that each candidate in the electoral district received. Returning officers, through assistant returning officers, direct chief counting officers and counting staff to begin counting votes. Historically, vote counting and tabulation were conducted on Election Day after the closing of polls and through the night.⁷

⁶ Asia-Pacific, *International Foundation for Electoral Systems*. 2024. *Elections in Sri Lanka: 2024 Parliament Elections: Frequently Asked Questions*. <https://www.ifes.org/tools-resources/election-snapshots/elections-sri-lanka-2024-parliamentary-elections>

⁷ *ibid*

The CCOs were given a checklist by PAFFREL to be filled prior to the counting process. According to 99% of the CCOs, ballot boxes were in good condition without any unusual features such as damages, improper wrapping, unavailability of sealing, and differences in the sizes.

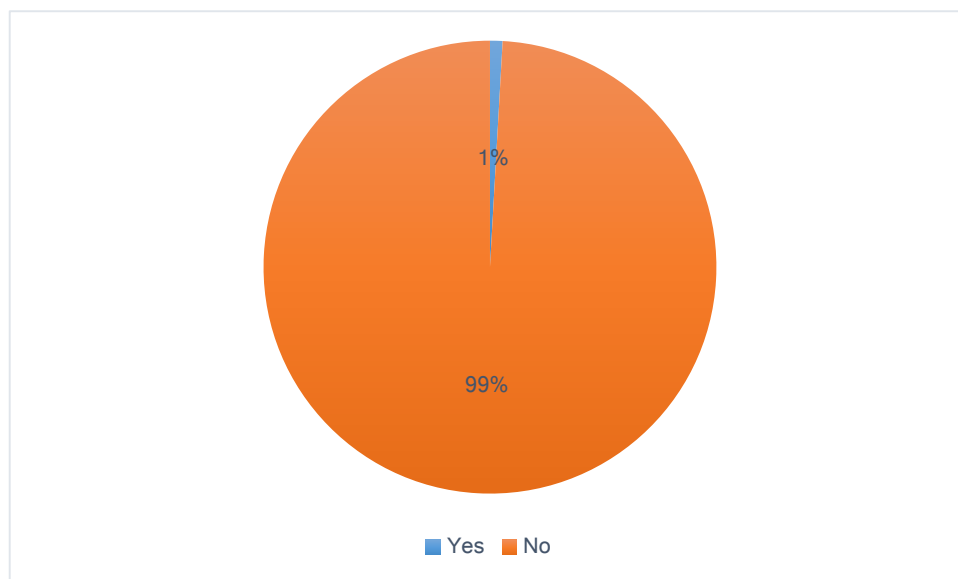


Figure 24 Unusual features of Ballot Boxes (Damaged/Not Wrapped Properly/No Sealing/Different in Size)

In the initial stage of counting, CCOs also verified that the number of votes in the voter account and the actual number of votes in the boxes matched. According to 89% of CCOs, the number matched, however 11% said there were discrepancies.

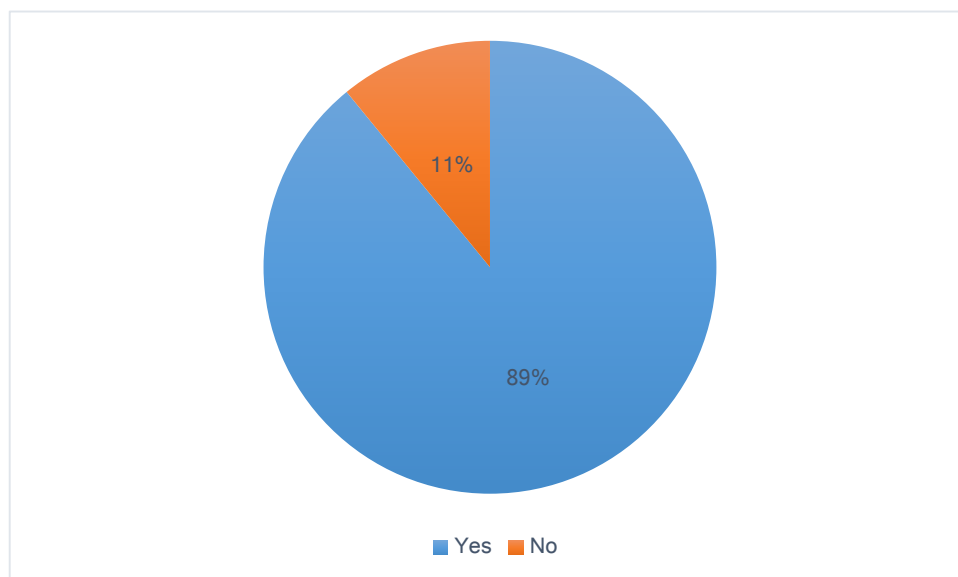


Figure 25 Number of votes in the voter account and the actual number of votes in the boxes is the same

CCOs observed the number of valid votes and the number of rejected votes. 99.1% of CCOs checked this while only 0.9% were not checked.

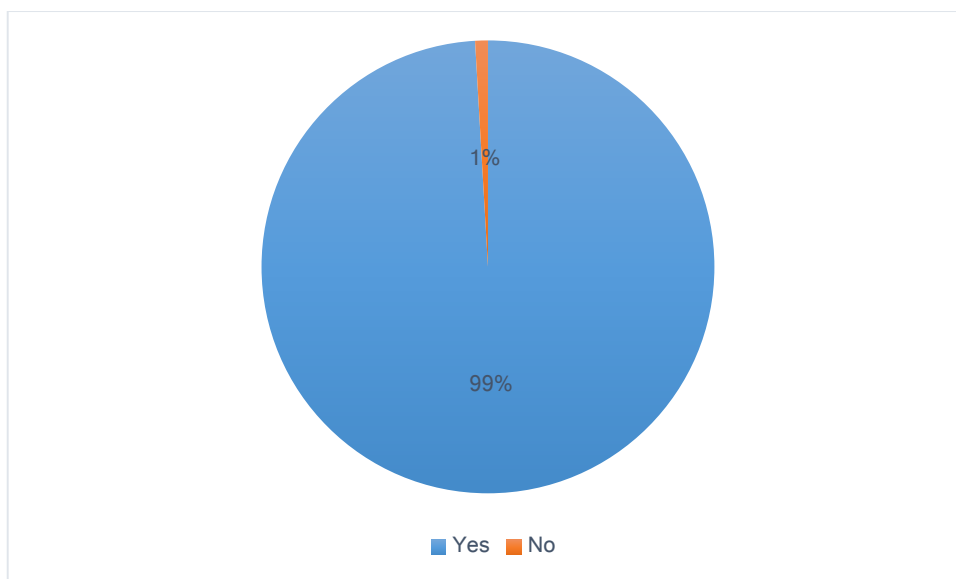


Figure 26 Observation on the number of valid votes and the number of rejected votes

According to all the CCOs, the result was communicated to the representatives.

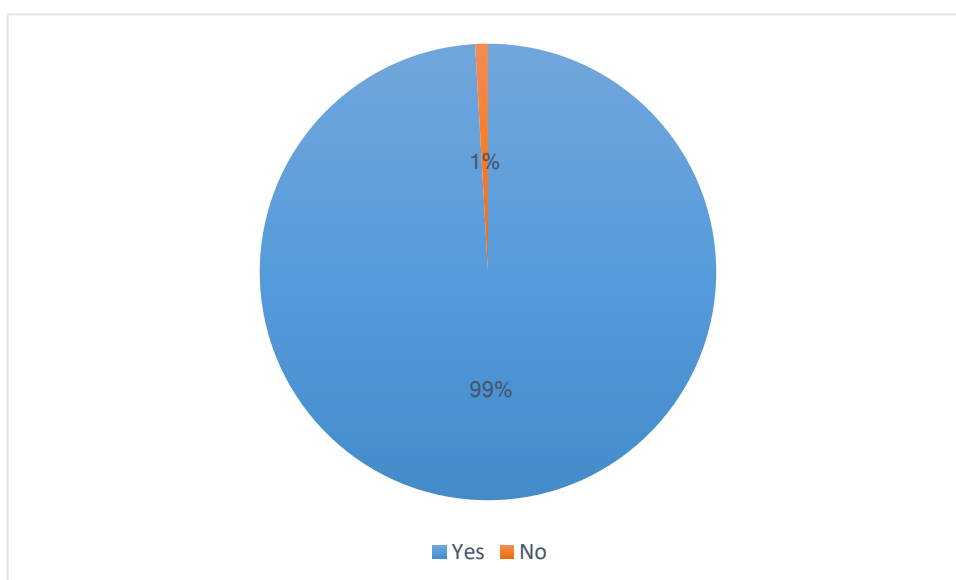


Figure 27 Satisfaction of representatives on results

Just 1% of observers claimed that the representatives were not satisfied with the results, compared to 99% of CCOs who said that they were.

As reported by 97% of CCOs, there was no objection from the representatives about the result while 3% observers mentioned some objections.

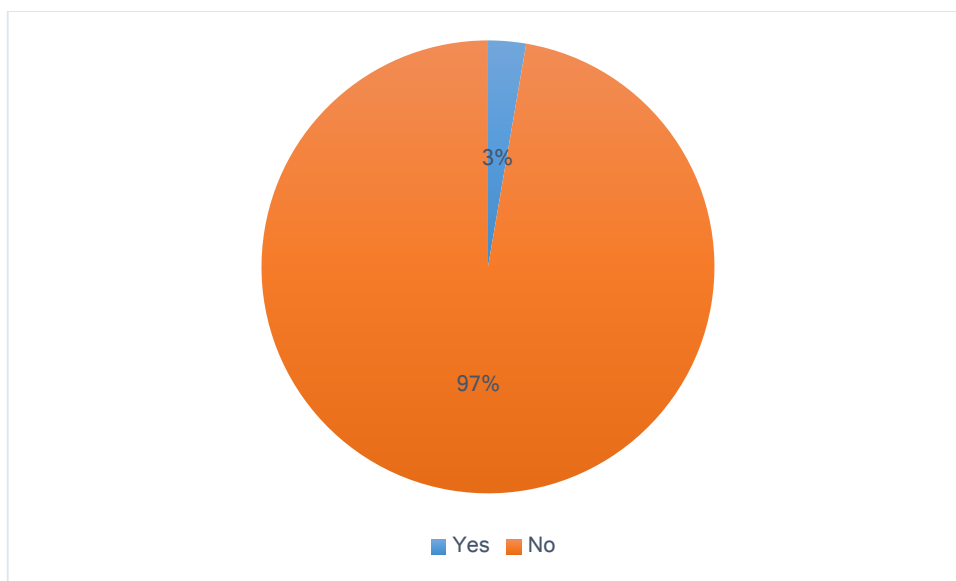


Figure 28 Objection from the representatives about the result

According to the CCOs, in 23% polling stations a recount happened in the counting process while 77% polling stations had no recount in the counting process.

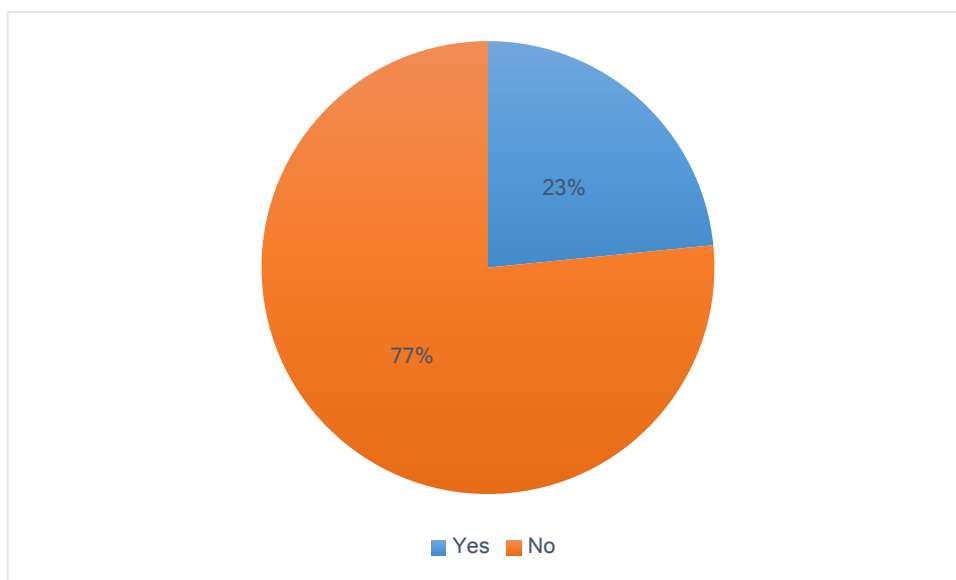


Figure 29 Holding a recount

The CCOs checked whether the representatives agreed with the results. As reported by 99% of CCOs the representatives agreed with the results.

In 7% polling stations a recount was executed since the representatives of polling stations did not agree with the results. Even though the second count has taken place, the results in 97% of polling stations have not changed from the first one.

CCOs made their observations in the counting center preparation, first stage of counting process, second stage of counting for political parties and independent groups, and preferential vote counting process.

In the observation of counting center preparation, CCOs noted Following the Returning Officer's decision, the Chief Counting Officers began counting if any unsettling situations were recorded.

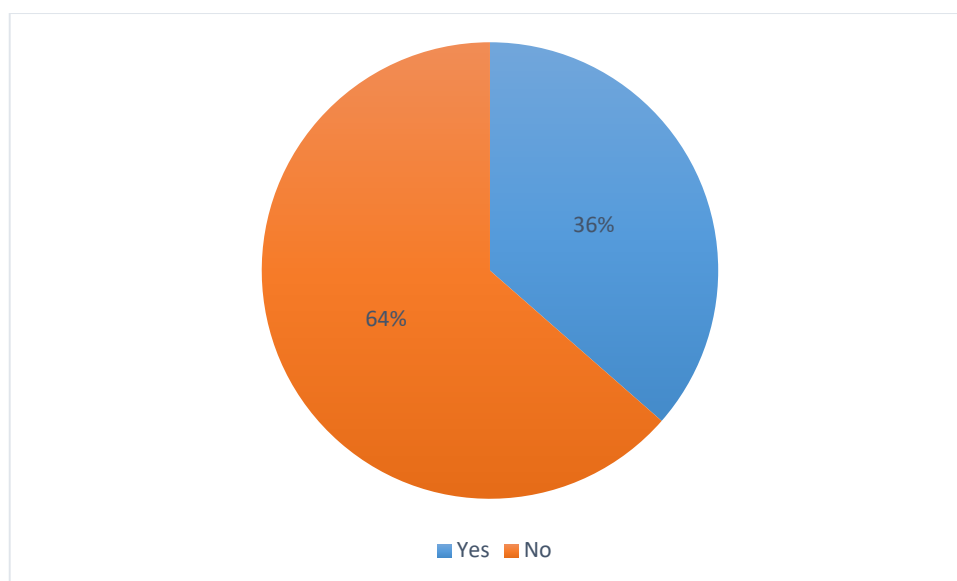


Figure 30 If disturbing incidents were reported, the counting was opened by the Chief Counting Officers after taking the decision of the returning officer

As reported by 64% of CCOs, counting was not opened while 36% observers reported that the counting was opened in said unsettling situations. During the re-checking of the second counting procedure, the observers looked for ballots belonging to independent organizations and other political parties.

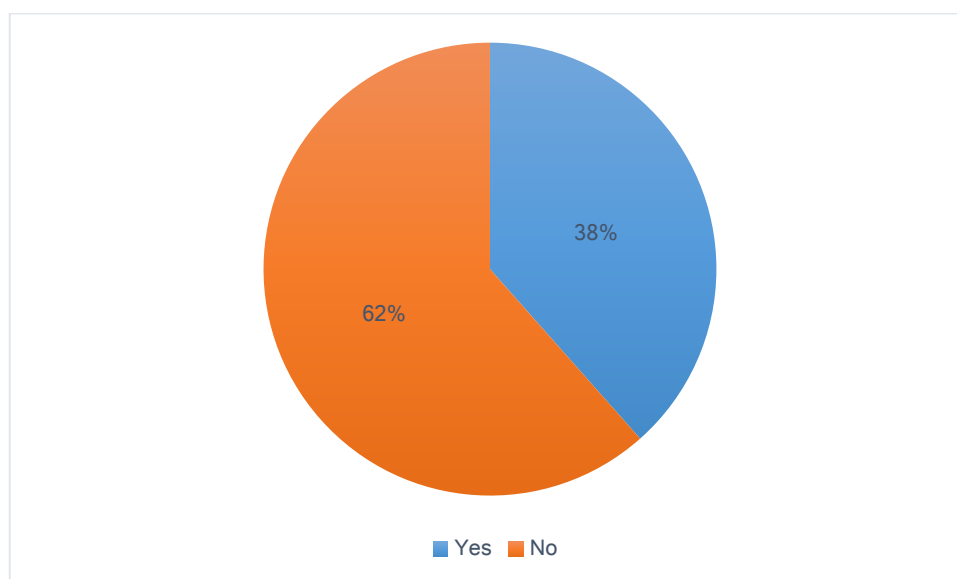


Figure 31 Ballot papers belonging to other parties and independent groups were found during re-checking

38% of CCOs reported that ballots from independent groups and other political parties were found, but 62% of observers said that no such ballots were found.

CCOs observed the objections occurring from the representatives regarding the decisions on rejected (spoiled) ballot papers.

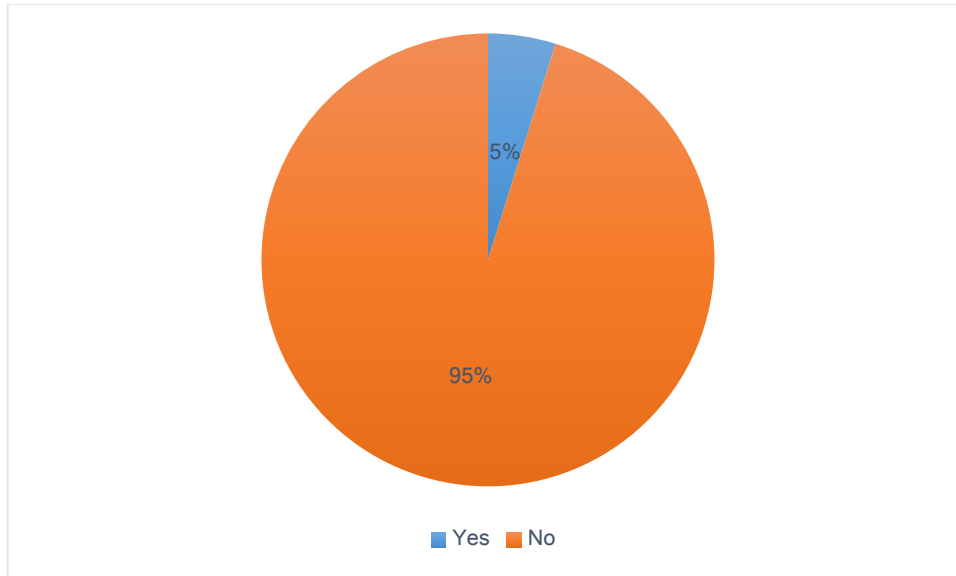


Figure 32 Objections from the representatives regarding the decisions on rejected (spoiled) ballot papers

95% of observers said that the representatives had no objections when deciding which ballot papers were rejected (spoiled), compared to just 5% who said that the representatives had objections.

CCOs observed the bundles of ballot papers belonging to each political party or independent group were repeatedly checked (triple or random checks).

Frequent checking (triple or random checks) of bundles of ballot papers from each political party or independent parties were observed by CCOs.

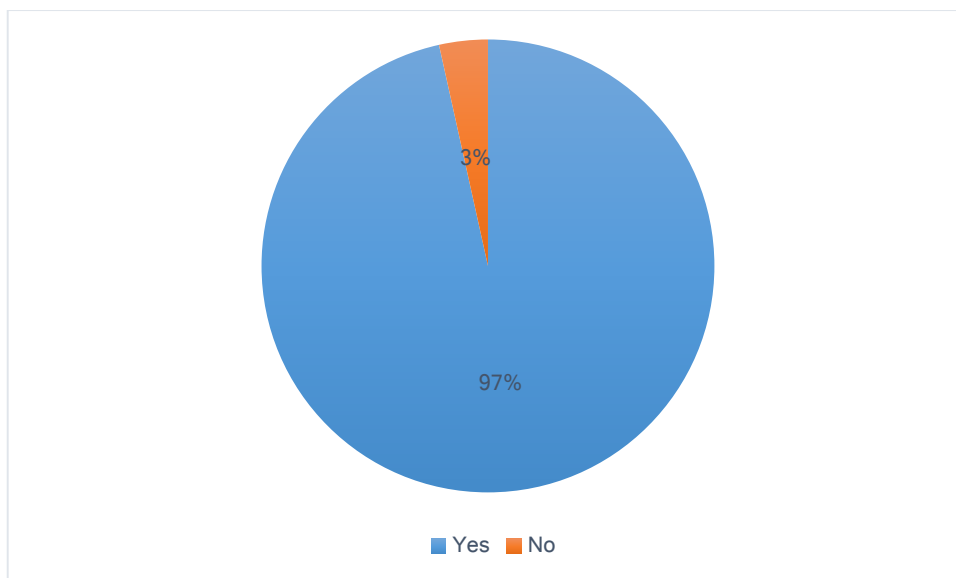


Figure 33 Bundles of ballot papers belonging to each party or independent group were repeatedly checked (Triple or Random Checks)

Only 3% of observers claimed that frequent checking did not occur, whereas 97% of observers said that frequent checking did occur.

All the CCOs have reported that the representatives at the counting centers were given the opportunity to record the total number of votes obtained by each party or independent group and 97.9 were satisfied with it. Hence, no recount happened after that.

Overall the counting process was peaceful in the Parliamentary Election 2024. ANFREL mentioned that their observers noted the absence of significant disturbances or protests, even as the vote-counting process continued late into the night. Law enforcement was visible but maintained a balanced approach, effectively ensuring peace at key locations such as vote-counting centers and election commission offices.⁸

In the case of the election complaints on the incidents that took place during the Post-Election period, PAFFREL received 16 complaints.

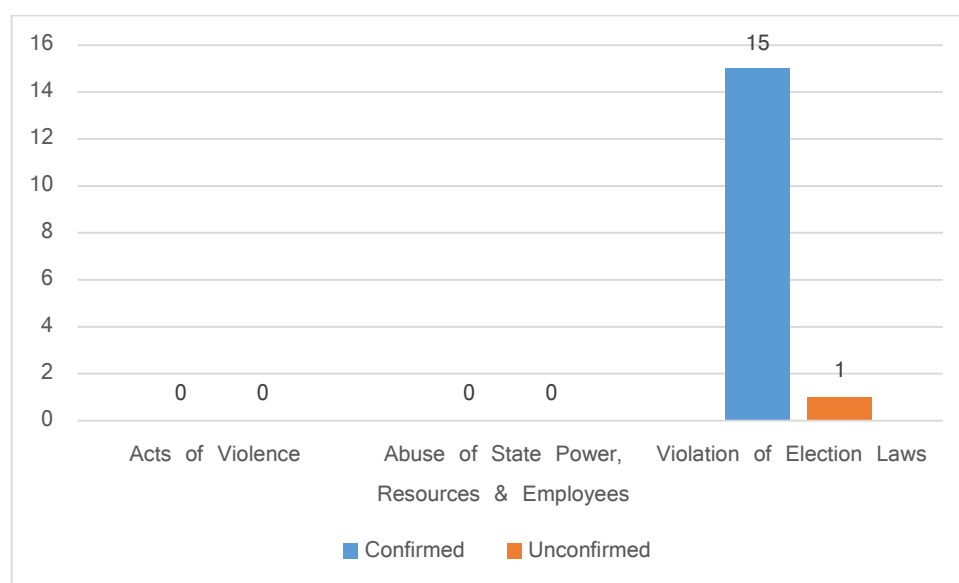


Figure 34 Election Complaints during the Post-Election period of the Parliamentary Election 2024

These 16 complaints were about the violation of election laws. Importantly, there were no complaints received by PAFFREL on either acts of violence or abuse of state power, resources & employees. Following the presidential elections, the aftermath of Sri Lanka's 2024 Parliamentary Elections has also been characterized by a notably calm and peaceful environment, reflecting broad acceptance of the results.⁹

During the Post-Election period, political parties assessed their performance. Additionally, the ECSL and other national, regional, and international election observers such as PAFFREL, CMEV, ANFREL, European Union, The Commonwealth, etc. reviewed the electoral process to address any reported violations or disputes. ANFREL has published an interim report on November 17, 2025 and published the data on the Election Day observations and recommendations. Other international election observers

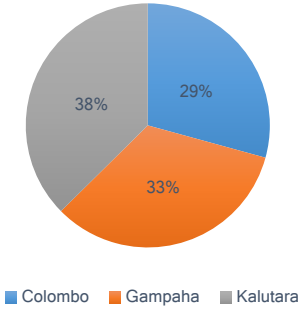
⁸ The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL). 2024. *Interim Report of the ANFREL International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to the 2024 Sri Lanka Parliamentary Elections*. <https://anfrel.org/interim-report-of-the-anfrel-international-election-observation-mission-ieom-to-the-2024-sri-lanka-parliamentary-elections/>

⁹ The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL). 2024. *Interim Report of the ANFREL International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to the 2024 Sri Lanka Parliamentary Elections*. <https://anfrel.org/interim-report-of-the-anfrel-international-election-observation-mission-ieom-to-the-2024-sri-lanka-parliamentary-elections/>

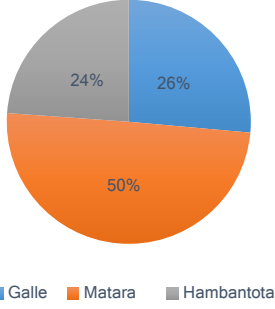
such as the European Union and The Commonwealth are yet to launch their reports on the Parliamentary Election 2024.

3.13. Incidents received from all districts

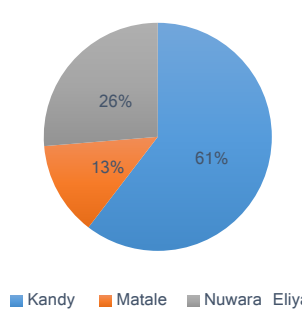
Western Province

District	Number of Incidents
Colombo	180
Gampaha	205
Kalutara	230
	

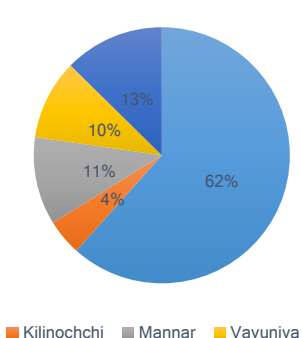
Southern Province

District	Number of Incidents
Galle	93
Matara	175
Hambantota	84
	

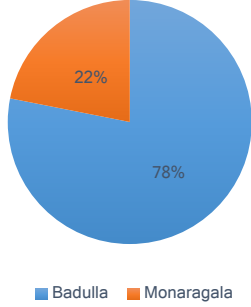
Central Province

District	Number of Incidents
Kandy	209
Matale	46
Nuwara Eliya	91
 	

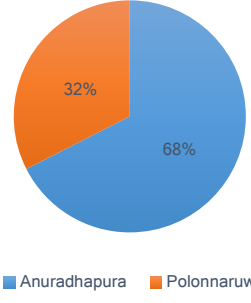
Northern Province

District	Number of Incidents
Jaffna	122
Kilinochchi	09
Mannar	22
Vavuniya	20
Mullatiuve	25
 	

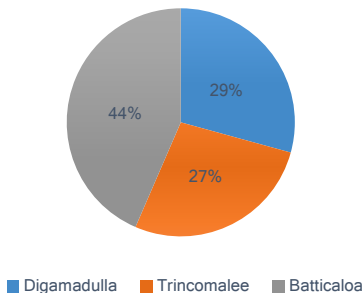
Uva Province

District	Number of Incidents
Badulla	132
Monaragala	37
  ■ Badulla ■ Monaragala	

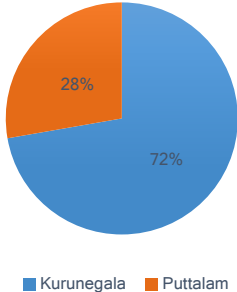
North-Central Province

District	Number of Incidents
Anuradhapura	133
Polonnaruwa	64
  ■ Anuradhapura ■ Polonnaruwa	

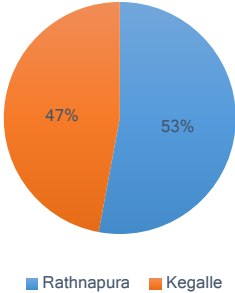
Eastern Province

District	Number of Incidents
Digamadulla	72
Trincomalee	67
Batticaloa	107
 	

North-Western Province

District	Number of Incidents
Kurunegala	198
Puttalam	76
 	

Sabaragamuwa Province

District	Number of Incidents		
Rathnapura	172		
Kegalle	153		
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3.14. Success Stories

In the calm and peaceful 2024 parliament elections, from the pre-election period to post-election period, PAFFREL was able to intervene in the complaints received from the different sources and follow up and cope with the relevant entities and authorities to ensure necessary actions to bring justice for the sectors being excluded and victimized. PAFFREL has several success stories that can be shared as follows:

Complaint No.	Date of Receiving	Source of the Complaint	Description of the Complaint	Action taken by PAFFREL
PAF/2024PGE/KAN/05	October 31, 2024	Citizen	We received a complaint that the Governor of Central Province, Mr. S.B Abekoon, has appointed Mr. Ananda Stephen, a strong activist of the National People's Force, as the Chairman of the Regional Economic Development Institute on 29.10.2024.	As a heads – up we sent a letter to the attention of the Deputy Election Commissioner of Elections in the District Election Secretariat in Kandy.
PAF/2024PGE/C/04	October 18, 2024	Long Term Observer	On 18.10.2024 at 6.00 pm arrangements had been made to hold an election campaign meeting with representatives of local government bodies and voters of Kandy district with the participation of Mr. Mahindananda Aluthgamage and Mr. Anuradha Jayaratne at the Peradeniya Inn. We received a complaint that they prepared to provide alcohol and food to the participants. After informing the Kandy District Election Office about this, it was stopped by the intervention of the election office and the police.	As a heads – up we sent a letter to the attention of the Deputy Election Commissioner of Elections in the District Election Secretariat in Kandy.
PAF/2024PGE/BAD/02	November 11, 2024	LTO	We received a complaint that a day and night football tournament has been prepared to be held under the chairmanship of Mr. Harin	As a heads – up we sent a letter to the attention of the Assistant Election Commissioner of Elections in the District

			Fernando, the parliamentary election candidate, Nimal Wickramatunga Badulla constituency, Badulla constituency. It further stated that cash prizes will be given. The Badulla District Election Office was informed about this and it was stopped.	Election Secretariat in Badulla.
	November 14, 2024	Employees (Security Officers) of Sitrek Security Institute	A complaint was received that nearly 50 security officers of the Sapugaskanda Pattivila Mawatha, Sitrek Security institute were not given leave to vote by the management of the institute. The Gampaha District Election Office was informed about this and the officials were given leave.	As a heads – up we sent a letter to the attention of the Deputy Election Commissioner of Elections in the District Election Secretariat in Gampaha.
PAF/2024PGE/C/48	November 18, 2025	Citizen	A complaint was received that election posters of parliamentary election candidates Mr. Lafir and Mrs. Chamindrani Kiriella have been pasted at many places in Thivanka Bodhi Mawatha, Kandy. The Kandy District Election Office was informed about this and the police intervened and removed these posters and cutouts.	As a heads – up we sent a letter to the attention of the Deputy Election Commissioner of Elections in the District Election Secretariat in Kandy.

4. Recommendations

PAFFREL provides the following Short Term, Mid-Term, and Long-Term recommendations for the following stakeholders:

Key Responsible Entity/ Institution	Context	Recommendation	Duration
Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Campaign Finance Regulations</i> The Regulation of Election Expenditure Act, No. 3 of 2023, represents a significant step towards enhancing the transparency and integrity of electoral processes in Sri Lanka by setting limits on campaign expenditures and mandating financial disclosures.	Enhancing Enforcement Mechanisms: Introducing mandatory pre-election interim reports would allow for real-time monitoring of campaign finances, promoting greater transparency during the election period.	Short-Term
		Regulating Third-Party Expenditures: Introducing provisions to regulate third-party expenditures would close potential loopholes and ensure a level playing field for all candidates.	Mid-Term
		Implementing Contribution Limits: Setting caps on donations would prevent undue influence by wealthy donors and promote equity in the electoral process.	Mid-Term
		Clarifying Legal Ambiguities: Providing clear definitions and guidelines would enhance the Act's enforceability	Mid-Term
		Public Accessibility of Financial Records: Creating an online portal where citizens can access and scrutinize these records would enhance public trust and enable civil society to play a more active role in monitoring election finances.	Long-Term
		Periodic Review and Adjustment of Limits: Include provisions for the periodic review and adjustment of expenditure and contribution limits to ensure that the regulations remain relevant and effective over time.	Long-Term
ECSL		Consultation with relevant stakeholders such as political parties, CSOs, Sri Lanka Police, Auditor General's Department, and media	Short-Term

		on the improvements of the campaign finance regulation law.	
		Provide awareness to the political parties and general public on the campaign finance regulation law.	Short-Term
CSOs		Review the campaign finance regulation law with its practice in last two elections (Presidential and Parliamentary) in 2024.	Short-Term
		Capacity building on campaign finance monitoring in the upcoming Local Government Authorities and Provincial Council Elections 2025.	Short-Term
		Expand the scope of campaign finance monitoring through Long Term Observers and strengthen the network of the election observation organizations for campaign finance monitoring.	Short-Term
Political Parties		Adhere and comply with the requirements of the campaign finance regulation law and develop a mechanism to submit the expenditure reports in an advance way.	Short-Term
		Work with ECSL and CSOs to improve the campaign finance regulation law.	Mid-Term
Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Advance Voting System</i> Sri Lanka has only one provision/system for advance voting, referred to as postal voting. Postal voting only	Legislative Amendments for Advance Voting: Amend the Parliamentary Elections Act No. 1 of 1981 to include clear provisions for advance voting, defining eligibility, procedures, and security measures and Ensure	Mid-Term

	allows members of the Sri Lankan armed forces or police force, civil service positions related to transport, prisons, and communications, other officers or public servants or work for the Central Bank or Local Government Service, candidates for the election, on the grounds that they are unlikely to be able to vote in person at their assigned polling stations to cast their vote before the Election Day. Sri Lanka has not yet addressed the issue of enabling the migrant workforce; inmates	advance voting aligns with constitutional provisions and maintains the secrecy and integrity of the ballot.	
Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL)	of hospitals and remand prisons, security personnel in the private sector, and those who are required to man essential services on Election Day, diplomatic personnel and those who are temporary domicile abroad to exercise their franchise. The total number thus deprived would be close to two million voters, a very significant number. ¹⁰	Eligibility Criteria for Advance Voting: Expand the eligibility criteria for Advance Voting to include the specific categories such as public servants engaged in election duties, security forces and police officers deployed on duty, Sri Lankan citizens residing abroad (e.g., emergency workers, employees of Free Trade Zones, migrant workers), elderly citizens and persons with disabilities, essential service workers (e.g., health workers).	Short-Term
		Advance Voting Mechanisms: - Improve and maintain a database that contains voter information for the PWD community and other underrepresented groups through a collaboration of Disability Organizations Joint Front, Ministry of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment & Tourism, Board of Investment (BOI), and other relevant government institutions. - Introduce an Early In-Person Voting system to establish designated polling stations before Election Day in each district. - Streamline and expand the existing Postal Voting system with improved security and tracking mechanisms. - Explore electronic voting options to facilitate advance voting in a secure manner. - Deploy mobile polling stations/units for voters with disabilities or those in remote areas.	Mid-Term

¹⁰ People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), *Final Report of the Parliamentary Election 2020*, 38.

		Security and Transparency Measures: ● Implement strong voter identification measures to prevent fraud. ● Use biometric verification¹¹ or secure voter lists to ensure only eligible voters participate. ● Allow independent observers and party agents to monitor the advance voting process. ● Implement tamper-proof ballot boxes and secure transportation/storage until counting.	Long-Term
		Ballot Counting and Results Management: ● Clearly define the procedure for handling, storing, and counting advance votes. ● Ensure advance votes are counted simultaneously with Election Day votes to prevent leaks and speculation. ● Maintain transparency by allowing observers to monitor advance vote counting.	Short-Term
		Pilot Testing and Phased Implementation: ● Establish a separate department/section at ECSL on advance voting systems. ● Before full implementation, conduct pilot projects in selected districts (this can be tested in the upcoming Local Government Authorities and Provincial Council Elections) ● Analyze pilot results and refine procedures before national rollout.	Short-Term

¹¹ The process of confirming a person's identity using their unique biological traits, such as fingerprints, facial recognition, iris scans, or voice patterns.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)		Advocacy for Policy Reforms: • Lobbying policymakers and the ECSL to introduce and expand advance voting provisions. • Engaging with political parties and legislators to push for legal frameworks that allow early voting, especially for marginalized groups. • Conducting research and publishing policy papers highlighting the benefits of advance voting	Short-Term
		Voter Education and Awareness: • Organizing public campaigns to inform citizens about the importance of advance voting. • Conducting workshops, seminars, and media programs to educate voters on how and when they can utilize advance voting options. • Using digital platforms to reach a wider audience with infographics, videos, and informative articles.	Mid-Term
		Promoting Inclusivity and Accessibility: • Advocating for special provisions for persons with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant women, and essential workers to use advance voting. • Ensuring that advance voting facilities are accessible and voter-friendly, especially in rural and marginalized areas. • Collaborating with government institutions to facilitate mobile voting for people with mobility challenges.	Mid-Term
		Election Monitoring and Safeguarding Integrity: • Deploying election observers to monitor the advance voting process and report any irregularities. • Ensuring that advance voting is conducted in a transparent and accountable manner to prevent fraud and	Short-Term

		manipulation. Working with the ECSL to develop mechanisms that enhance security and credibility in early voting procedures.	
		Engaging with Stakeholders: - Partnering with the media to highlight the significance of advance voting and its impact on democratic participation. - Working with trade unions, women's organizations, and youth groups to mobilize support for early voting initiatives. - Coordinating with international organizations to adopt best practices from other democracies.	Mid-Term
		Strengthening Electoral Reforms: - Proposing amendments to election laws that institutionalize advance voting in Sri Lanka. - Encouraging the ECSL to introduce digital and postal voting mechanisms. - Ensuring that women, first-time voters, and underrepresented communities have better access to advance voting options.	Long-Term
ECSL	<i>Voter Education and Awareness</i> Voter education and awareness in Sri Lanka is mainly carried out by the ECSL, central government, local government, CSOs, INGOs, and media. Voter education initiatives are only carried out at the national level during election season. NGOs and CSOs have also played a significant role in implementing voter awareness and education initiatives. Election	Strengthen Community-Based Awareness Campaigns: - Conduct village-level voter education programs to ensure that all citizens, especially women, are informed about their voting rights. - Collaborate with community leaders, religious groups, and women's organizations to promote election awareness. - Use door-to-door campaigns to reach marginalized	Short-Term

	observation organizations such as Campaign for Free and Fair Elections (CaFFE), Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) , and People’s Actions for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) have conducted many activities at local and national levels. Yet interlocutors note that topics related to voter registration and identification, and special voting arrangements are not always sufficiently covered. ¹² Voter education and awareness campaigns are generally limited in scope, and they still need to incorporate the use of preferential voting, marking a second or third preference, and other strategies. The role of the political parties in voter education and awareness should be improved and streamlined.	groups, including women in rural areas.	
		Improve the voter education and awareness means through Digital and Social Media Effectively: • Create and share informative videos, infographics, and live sessions on social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and TikTok. • Develop a dedicated website and mobile app with information on voter rights, the election process, and candidate profiles. • Use SMS and WhatsApp campaigns to send reminders and key election updates.	Short-Term
		Special Focus on Women’s Participation: • Promote women candidates and their policies through media campaigns. • Conduct leadership training programs for potential female candidates to encourage more participation in elections. • Educate women voters on the importance of electing representatives who advocate for gender equality in local governance.	Mid-Term
		Enhance Traditional Media Engagement: • Work with TV and radio channels to air debates, panel discussions, and short awareness clips in multiple languages. • Use newspapers and magazines to publish voter education content, especially targeting regions with lower digital access.	Mid-Term

¹² European Union Election Observation Mission, *Final Report, Presidential Election, 21 September 2024*, 39–40.

ECSL and CSOs		Strengthen School and University Engagement: ● Introduce voter education programs in schools and universities to encourage young voter participation. ● Organize mock elections and debates in educational institutions to teach democratic values.	Long-Term
		Ensure Accessibility for All Voters: ● Provide Braille and sign language voter education materials for persons with disabilities. ● Establish mobile voter education units for remote and rural areas.	Long-Term
		Combat Misinformation and Violation of Election Laws: ● Launch a fact-checking initiative to counter false information related to elections. ● Work with law enforcement to monitor and prevent electoral malpractices.	Long-Term
		Encourage Youth Engagement: ● Create youth ambassador programs where young people educate their peers about voting. ● Use influencers and celebrities to promote voter awareness campaigns.	Long-Term
CSOs		Targeted Voter Education Campaigns: ● Develop inclusive and gender-sensitive voter education programs that encourage both women and marginalized groups to participate in elections. ● Utilize multiple communication channels (radio, TV, social media, and community outreach) to reach diverse voter groups. ● Translate educational materials into local languages and	Short-Term

		use accessible formats for people with disabilities.	
		Promoting Women's Participation: ● Improve leadership training and awareness programs to empower women candidates and encourage voter support. ● Organize community dialogues and forums to challenge gender biases and stereotypes about women in leadership. ● Collaborate with women's organizations and grassroots groups to enhance advocacy for increased women's representation.	Long-Term
		Strengthening Voter Awareness and Engagement: ● Educate voters on electoral processes, including voter registration, ballot procedures, and the importance of participation. ● Address misinformation and disinformation related to elections through fact-checking initiatives. ● Encourage youth and first-time voters to actively participate by engaging schools, universities, and youth organizations.	Short-Terms
		Collaboration with Electoral Bodies and Media: ● Partner with ECSL to ensure accurate voter information is disseminated. ● Work with local media to broadcast voter education messages, debates, and discussions on women's role in governance. ● Train journalists on gender-sensitive election reporting to create fair and balanced narratives.	Mid-Term
		Election Observation and Monitoring: ● Train independent election observers to monitor gender	Long-Term

		disparities in voter turnout, candidate representation, and election-related violence. • Document and report incidents of voter suppression, intimidation, or gender-based electoral violence. • Advocate for policy reforms that promote women's political participation based on observation findings.	
		Addressing Electoral Barriers: • Work towards eliminating legal and procedural barriers that hinder women's participation in elections. • Advocate for safe and accessible polling stations, especially for women, persons with disabilities, and rural voters. • Provide capacity-building workshops for election officials on gender-responsive electoral processes.	Long-Term
		Post-Election Engagement: • Promote the participation of elected women leaders in decision-making processes. • Conduct post-election reviews and lessons-learned discussions to improve future voter education initiatives. • Support elected women in governance through mentorship and leadership development programs.	Short-Term
Political Parties		Targeted Voter Education Programs for Women: • Political parties can organize voter education campaigns focusing on encouraging women's participation in the electoral process. Providing gender-sensitive content can help empower women voters, especially in rural areas. • Campaigns should use language and visuals that resonate with women, highlighting the importance of female representation in local governance.	Short-Term

		Workshops and Community Engagement: • Conducting workshops in different communities to educate citizens about the importance of voting, the electoral process, and the significance of women in leadership roles. Women should be encouraged to attend and actively participate. • Political parties can train local female leaders who can then educate women in their communities about the voting process and the importance of women in decision-making.	Mid-Term
		Utilize Media and Social Media Campaigns: • Develop radio and TV programs that provide information about the election process, especially for those without access to the internet. • Use social media platforms to reach a broader audience, with a special emphasis on women. Online platforms can promote discussions, share success stories of women in politics, and provide information on how to vote. • Regular social media posts and advertisements highlighting women's voting rights and the importance of their participation in elections can build engagement.	Mid-Term
		Inclusive Election Materials: • Political parties should produce educational pamphlets and materials in local languages, emphasizing the roles women can play as both voters and candidates. • Ensure that information about candidates, parties, and voting procedures is accessible to all, including people with disabilities, by producing materials in Braille or audio formats.	Short-Term

		Foster Partnerships with NGOs and Women's Groups: - Political parties can collaborate with local NGOs and women's organizations to reach out to more women, especially in marginalized communities, to provide them with information about their rights and the importance of voting. - NGOs can help build leadership capacity among women, providing them with the tools to run for office and participate actively in political discussions.	Mid-Term
		Provide Information on Election Integrity: Educate voters, particularly women, about election fraud and manipulation, and encourage them to report any unethical practices. Transparency and integrity in elections should be a central theme in voter education programs.	Short-Term
		Engage in Awareness Campaigns on Gender Equality - Highlight the Importance of Equal Representation: Political parties should promote the importance of gender equality in governance and leadership positions, encouraging voters to choose female candidates and support gender-sensitive policies. - Celebrate Female Political Achievements: Publicize successful stories of female politicians and their impact on their communities to inspire women voters.	Mid-Term
Government Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Enhance the women's political participation</i>	Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks: Increase Quotas: Enhance the 25% mandatory quota for women in local government bodies and consider extending it to provincial and national levels (The current government's goal is to gradually increase the representation of women to 50% in all decision-making bodies, from Parliament to local government)	Short-Term

		institutions).¹³ ● Enforce Political Party Reforms: Mandate political parties to nominate at least 30-40% women candidates at all levels. ● Introduce Sanctions for Non-Compliance: Penalize parties that fail to meet gender representation quotas.	
		Capacity Building and Leadership Development: ● Training and Mentorship: Establish national-level leadership training programs for aspiring women politicians. ● Financial and Technical Support: Provide state funding or subsidies for women candidates to run election campaigns. ● Promote Gender-Sensitive Governance: Encourage women's leadership within political parties and decision-making bodies.	Short-Term & Mid-Term
		Addressing Socio-Cultural Barriers: ● Awareness Campaigns: Conduct nationwide campaigns to challenge stereotypes and promote women's leadership. ● Community Engagement: Work with religious leaders, civil society, and media to foster public acceptance of women's political roles.	Long-Term
		Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms: ● Empower the Women's Caucus in Parliament: Provide it with greater legislative authority to drive gender-related policy changes.	Long-Term

¹³ Jathika Jana Balawegaya (NPP Sri Lanka), *A Thriving Nation, A Beautiful Life*, 1st ed. (August 2024), 6.

		● Improve Reporting and Monitoring: Establish an independent Gender Equality Commission to track progress in women's political participation.	
		Ensuring Safety and Security for Women Politicians: ● Address Gender-Based Violence in Politics: Enforce strict legal action against harassment and intimidation of women candidates. ● Digital and Legal Protection: Create mechanisms to protect women politicians from cyberbullying and defamatory campaigns.	Long-Term
ECSL		Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks: ● Enforce and expand the 25% mandatory quota for women's representation at local government levels to provincial and parliamentary elections. ● Introduce sanctions for non-compliance by political parties failing to nominate sufficient women candidates. ● Advocate for gender-sensitive electoral reforms, such as proportional representation with reserved seats for women.	Long-Term
		Support Women Candidates and Leaders: ● Establish leadership training programs for women interested in politics. ● Create mentorship networks linking experienced women politicians with new candidates.	Mid-Term
		Engage Political Parties: ● Introduce incentives for parties that nominate more women (e.g., additional funding, media time). ● Require parties to adopt internal gender policies and	Long-Term

		ensure fair selection processes for female candidates. ● Implement mandatory training on gender equality for party members and decision-makers.	
		Strengthen Institutional Mechanisms: ● Establish a dedicated Gender Unit within the Election Commission to monitor women's participation. ● Collect and publish gender-disaggregated election data to track progress. ● Work with civil society organizations to monitor and prevent gender-based violence in politics.	Long-Term
		Ensure a Safe and Inclusive Political Environment: ● Implement strict measures against online and offline harassment of women candidates. ● Provide legal aid and protection mechanisms for women facing threats. ● Promote gender-sensitive security arrangements during elections.	Long-Term
Political Parties		Strengthening Internal Party Policies: ● Establish and enforce gender quotas within party structures to ensure women's representation in leadership positions. ● Create women's wings or forums to provide a platform for female political engagement. ● Introduce internal training programs to empower women candidates with leadership and governance skills.	Long-Term
		Increasing Candidate Representation: ● Ensure that women are given nominations in winnable constituencies, not just as token candidates.	Short-Term

		● Encourage female party activists to step forward for leadership and election roles. ● Provide mentorship and networking opportunities with senior female leaders.	
		Capacity Building and Training: ● Conduct leadership and political training to improve women's skills in governance, public speaking, and policymaking. ● Train women on electoral processes, campaigning strategies, and media engagement. ● Offer support in handling gender-based political violence and discrimination.	Mid-Term
		Financial and Logistical Support: ● Provide financial assistance for women candidates to compete in elections effectively. ● Facilitate access to resources such as campaign materials, media exposure, and transport. ● Introduce a party fund dedicated to supporting female political participation.	Short-Term
		Addressing Societal and Cultural Barriers: ● Conduct awareness campaigns to change societal attitudes towards women in politics. ● Promote role models and success stories of women in politics to inspire new entrants. ● Collaborate with CSOs and media to advocate for gender equality in governance.	Long-Term

		Legislative and Policy Advocacy: • Advocate for stronger implementation of electoral laws supporting women's representation, such as enforcing the 25% quota at the local government level. • Work towards gender-sensitive policy reforms that encourage women's participation in decision-making.	Long-Term
		Ensuring a Safe and Inclusive Political Environment: • Implement measures to prevent harassment and violence against female politicians. • Promote a zero-tolerance policy against discrimination within political parties. • Establish grievance mechanisms to address complaints related to gender-based discrimination.	Long-Term
CSOs		Capacity Building and Leadership Training: • Conduct training programs for women candidates on political leadership, campaigning, public speaking, and governance. • Offer mentorship programs connecting experienced female politicians with aspiring women leaders. • Educate women on electoral laws, political party structures, and decision-making processes.	Mid-Term
		Advocacy and Policy Reform: • Advocate for stronger gender quotas in political parties and local government bodies. • Push for policy changes that ensure gender-sensitive governance and protection against gender-based political violence.	Short-Term

		• Work with political parties to adopt internal gender policies and create inclusive nomination processes.	
		Public Awareness and Community Engagement: • Run awareness campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes and encourage voters to support women candidates. • Engage youth and community leaders in discussions on the importance of women's representation in politics. • Use media and social media platforms to highlight success stories of women in politics and governance.	Mid-Term
		Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Politics: • Establish mechanisms to report and address harassment, intimidation, and discrimination against women in politics. • Work with law enforcement and election authorities to provide protection measures for women candidates. • Conduct campaigns against online and offline gender-based political violence.	Long-Term
		Strengthening Alliances and Networks: • Form women's political networks and alliances across different parties and CSOs to promote collective action. • Partner with international organizations and donors to gain resources and technical expertise. • Engage with male allies and political leaders to create an enabling environment for women in politics.	Mid-Term
Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Inclusion of PWDs in the electoral process</i>	• Legal Reforms: Amend electoral laws to explicitly mandate accessible voting for persons with disabilities, including provisions for assistive devices and support	Long-Term

		services. • Quota System: Consider introducing a minimum quota for candidates with disabilities in local government and parliamentary elections. • Election Accessibility Law: Enforce accessibility standards for polling stations and introduce penalties for non-compliance. • Sensitization and Awareness: Mandate disability inclusion training for election officials and political parties. • Funding & Budget Allocation: Allocate specific funding for accessibility improvements in the electoral process.	
ECSL		• Strengthen Accessible Polling Stations: Ensure polling stations are wheelchair-friendly, have ramps, and provide accessible voting booths with Braille ballots or electronic voting machines with voice assistance. • Mobile Voting: Introduce mobile voting services for persons with severe mobility impairments who cannot physically reach polling stations. • Sign Language & Assistive Technology: Provide sign language interpreters and assistive technology for persons with visual or hearing impairments during election campaigns, debates, and at polling stations. • Voter Education: Conduct targeted awareness campaigns to educate voters with disabilities about their voting rights and available accessibility services. • Training for Election Officials: Train election officers to assist voters with disabilities respectfully and effectively. • Priority Voting & Assistance: Allow persons with disabilities to vote on a priority basis and be accompanied by an assistant of their choice.	Short-Term

CSOs		● Advocacy & Awareness: Campaign for legal reforms and better enforcement of accessibility measures in elections. ● Capacity Building: Train persons with disabilities on their voting rights, how to engage in the political process, and how to run for office. ● Monitoring & Reporting: Work as election observers to document barriers faced by disabled voters and report findings to the ECSL and Parliament. ● Partnerships: Collaborate with political parties, media, and government institutions to promote inclusive election practices. ● Civic Education Programs: Develop inclusive voter education materials in multiple formats, including Braille, large print, audio, and easy-to-read formats.	Mid-Term
Political Parties		● Internal Training on Disability Inclusion: Conduct training sessions within political parties to raise awareness of the issues that disabled voters face and ensure that party members are equipped to address those needs during campaigns.	Mid-Term
		● Accessible Campaigns: Political parties should ensure that their campaign materials (e.g., posters, social media posts, speeches) are accessible to people with different disabilities. This could involve producing materials in sign language, audio formats, and Braille, as well as ensuring that campaign events are physically accessible.	Short-Term
Sri Lanka Parliament	<i>Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ Voters in the electoral process</i>	Legal & Policy Reforms: ● Amend the Electoral Laws to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in voter registration, campaigning, and voting.	Short-Term

ECSL		● Introduce legal recognition for transgender and non-binary individuals, allowing them to update their gender identity in official documents, including voter ID cards. ● Strengthen hate speech laws to prevent political actors and parties from using homophobic or transphobic rhetoric during election campaigns.	
		Representation & Political Participation: ● Enforce inclusive candidate nomination policies to encourage political parties to field LGBTIQ+ candidates. ● Introduce affirmative action measures, such as quotas or reserved seats for marginalized communities, including LGBTIQ+ persons.	Long-Term
		Voter Registration & Identification ● Ensure that transgender and non-binary individuals can register to vote under their preferred name and gender, even if their official documents have not been updated. ● Provide alternative ID verification mechanisms for individuals facing challenges in updating legal documents.	Short-Term
		Sensitization & Capacity Building: ● Train election officers, polling station staff, and law enforcement agencies on LGBTIQ+ inclusion and non-discrimination during elections. ● Develop and distribute LGBTIQ+-inclusive voter education materials to ensure awareness of voting rights.	Short-Term
		Safe Voting Environment: ● Set up gender-neutral or safe voting booths to ensure that transgender and non-binary individuals feel secure when casting their vote.	Short-Term

		Establish a complaints mechanism for LGBTIQ+ voters to report discrimination or harassment at polling stations.	
CSOs		Advocacy & Awareness: - Engage in policy advocacy for LGBTIQ+ electoral rights, pushing for legal reforms and protections. - Conduct awareness campaigns to encourage LGBTIQ+ voter participation and educate them about their rights.	Long-Term
		Monitoring & Reporting: - Monitor elections for cases of discrimination or voter suppression against LGBTIQ+ individuals and report findings to the ECSL and human rights bodies. - Provide legal support and assistance for LGBTIQ+ persons facing voting challenges.	Short-Term
		Community Mobilization: - Work with political parties to sensitize candidates and policymakers on the importance of LGBTIQ+ inclusion in electoral processes. - Establish safe spaces for political engagement, encouraging LGBTIQ+ individuals to participate in civic and electoral activities.	Mid-Term
Political Parties		Inclusive Candidate Selection & Representation: - Encourage and support LGBTIQ+ individuals to contest elections by providing training, financial assistance, and safe spaces within political parties. - Introduce non-discrimination policies within party structures to ensure equal opportunities for LGBTIQ+ members.	Short-Term

		Policy Commitments & Public Advocacy: ● Include LGBTIQ+ rights in party manifestos, advocating for equal electoral participation. ● Commit to zero tolerance for hate speech and ensure that political messaging does not discriminate against or marginalize LGBTIQ+ communities.	Long-Term
		Engagement with LGBTIQ+ Communities: ● Conduct dialogues with LGBTIQ+ groups to understand their electoral challenges and develop policies that address their concerns. ● Support inclusive political debates that recognize and amplify the voices of LGBTIQ+ citizens.	Mid-Term

Election resources/funding

Expenses - Election Monitoring 2024		Amount Spent (LKR)
01	All Party Operation Unit Coordinators Allowances & Training	1,440,000.00
02	Field Coordinators Expences	3,380,571.59
03	Printing & Translation	548,719.00
04	Observer Reporting Database (KOBO)	520,717.55
05	Observer Facilitators Receive Training of Trainers	275,685.92
06	LTO Training & Allowances	10,015,660.27
07	Deployment of District Coordinators	3,462,800.32
08	District Finance Officers Training & Allowances	630,000.00
09	Training of Stationary Postal, Mobile Observers	1,568,795.00
10	Counting/Tabulation Centre Observers Traning & Allowances	3,703,549.90
11	Deployment for Stationary, Mobile & Postal Observers	16,718,500.00
12	Mobile Observation Vehicle Charges	6,558,080.00
13	Reporting & News Releases	59,000.00
14	Administration Expenses	4,979,543.92
15	40 Campaign Finance Observres Training & Allowances	1,175,000.00

16	Election Coordinator's Allowances	5,527,149.99
17	Staff Salaries & Statutory Payments	9,905,143.48
18	Tools for Observers	2,332,855.00
19	Special Mobile Vehicle Expences	431,764.00
20	Technical Training for PAFFREL staff on managing the complaint handling database	623,500.00
	Total Expenses	73,857,035.94

Name of the Donor	Fund Received
DIAKONIA	792,286.14
Foundation Open Society Institute	4,818,508.05
National Democratic Institute	63,470,237.75
PACT International	3,144,204.00
French Embassy	745,000.00
Westminster Foundation	886,800.00
Total	73,857,035.94

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Annexes

- PAFFREL interim reports

First Interim Report -

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tPIsfDbSckgdiGyU1NjhrrVbZeL1hOwb/view?usp=drive_link

Postal Voting Report-

https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Xg8-T1QxNp50eO1DBv0ZuLOHq25FkU6/view?usp=drive_link

Second Interim Report -

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j0se3yjXv7eHzAZAfTi11O3pbYj8dDXa/view?usp=drive_link

Silent period -

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Rab4ilpB6jZSNf5ey5Rv8kdOjYq9iSl3/view?usp=drive_link

- PAFFREL election day communique

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-w3O81i0Mh9FdtDGRNwqiFtvcM7wP7uy/view?usp=drive_link



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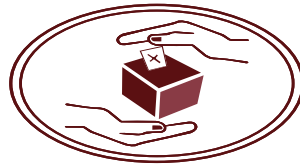
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