

# People's Alliance returns to government

SRI LANKA was plunged further into uncertainty over its political future in the new millennium, when the island's general elections on 10 October failed to return any party with an overall majority in Parliament.

In an election held in 22 electoral districts\* under a proportional representation system, 5,045 candidates belonging to 29 political parties and 99 independent groups contested for 196 seats in the 225 member Parliament. Twenty nine members were to be nominated on the National List, proportionate to the number of votes received by each party.

Throughout the island, 12,076,062 people were registered as voters. More than 9,800 polling centres and 800 counting centres were established. The turn out on election day was 75.6%. President Chandrika Kumaratunge's People's Alliance (PA) won 107 seats gaining 3,900,901 votes (45.1%). The United National Party (UNP) led by Ranil Wickremasinghe secured only 89 seats receiving 3,477,770 votes (40.2%), while the People Liberation Front (JVP) continued to rise as the third force in Sri Lankan politics, securing 10 seats with 518,774 votes (6%).

The PA constituents, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), Communist Party (CP) and Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) won 92, three and one seats respectively. The National Unity Alliance (NUA or Sri Lanka Muslim Congress), contesting on the PA candidate list won five seats. The Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) and Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) won three seats each on the PA list.

With another four members of NUA, (which it won by contesting separately), and four members of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), the PA mustered 115 seats in Parliament and was able to form the government. Despite the support of five CWC dissidents, the promise of constitutional and administrative reforms and talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the UNP failed again to match the PA.

The newly formed nationalist party Sihala Urumaya (Sinhala heritage)

gained 127,863 votes, becoming entitled to one seat on the National List. Sihala Urumaya campaigned for the supremacy of the Sinhalese Buddhists and gained its votes mainly in the urban centres of the Western Province, but failed to convince Sinhalese voters in the rest of the island. The party split after some members objected to its leader SL Gunasekara, who is a Christian, becoming an MP to represent the Sinhalese Buddhists.

The turn out for the election in the north-east was a low 48% and in Jaffna only 20.4% voted. In Kilinochchi, only 1,014 (17.4%) of the 57,543 registered voters turned up. Massive displacement and continuing war prevented people participation in the election. Further, there was no possibility of holding elections in LTTE-controlled areas. Reports say that Jaffna people who fled to the mainland were not registered to vote in the Vanni.

The EPDP, which had been allowed to retain arms during election campaign, gained 41,256 votes in Jaffna winning four seats. The EPDP is accused of ballot stuffing and preventing other parties entering Jaffna islands. Despite EPDP intimidation the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) won three seats.

In the Vanni, government ally, the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) fared miserably and failed to gain even one seat. PLOTE's downfall is attributed to the large-scale violation of human rights and imposition of illegal taxes in the region. Another Tamil party, Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) secured three seats. TELO says the Vanni people have recognised its role in constantly opposing Emergency rule and calling for talks with the LTTE.

Just over 32% turned out to vote in the Vanni. In Mannar and Vavuniya it was 32.7% and 50.8%. But in the Tiger stronghold of Mullaitivu only 682 (1.3%) of the 53,054 voted. Observers say LTTE pressure and extreme poverty caused by the government economic blockade are important factors keeping people away from the ballot box. The Tigers are also accused of attacking election meetings and threatening candidates in the east.

Despite the deployment of 80,000 security forces throughout the island, the election was marred by extreme violence in the run-up to and during polls. Local election monitoring agencies, Movement for Free and Fair Elections (MFFE) and People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) reported observing a high level of violence, intimidation and ballot stuffing in Anuradhapura, Gampola, Kandy, Kegalle, Kurunegala, Matale, Nuwara Eliya and Puttalam.

According to the police, from the last nomination day on 28 August to 12 October, over 1,570 violent incidents were recorded. This included 55 murders, 40 attempted murders, 40 incidents of grievous hurt and 14 abductions. Five people were killed on election day.

Elections Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake rejected a demand by the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV), to annul elections in 1,081 polling stations in 17 electoral divisions where the nature and extent of the violence allegedly affected the outcome. But the Commissioner nullified elections in 22 stations in six districts, including 13 in Kandy where Deputy minister Anuruddha Ratwatte's two sons were accused of a campaign of violence.

By contrast, the British monitoring team led by Lord Naseby voiced satisfaction that elections in four districts monitored were 'broadly free and fair'. But the team expressed deep concern over reports of violence and intimidation and criticized the censorship, the use of government media for PA propaganda and the use of government resources and personnel for electioneering. The team said: "By any yardstick, over 50 deaths are unacceptable. Such an experience must bring into question the integrity of the democratic process".

The new Parliament met on 18 October and elected opposition UNP candidate and President Chandrika's brother, Anura Bandaranaike as Speaker. Former military spokesman Maj. Gen. Sarath Munasinghe was chosen Deputy Speaker. The following day, President Chandrika appointed a 44-member Cabinet, the largest in independent Sri Lanka.

\* Sri Lanka is divided into twenty five administrative districts. Jaffna and Kilinochchi administrative districts form the Jaffna electoral district. The Vanni electoral district comprises the Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar administrative districts.



# Election Results

10 October 2000

Districts	% turnout	PA	UNP	JVP	TULF	EPDP	NUA	TELO	ACTC	SU	IND	Total
Colombo	74.8	8	10	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Gampaha	77.9	10	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Kalutara	79.7	5	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Kandy	78.3	6	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	12
Matale	77.3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Nuwara Ellya	81.4	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Galle	79.1	5	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Matara	77.6	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Hambantota	79.9	2	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Jaffna	20.4	-	1	-	3	4	-	-	1	-	-	9
Vanni	32.6	1	1	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	6
Batticaloa	70.5	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	5
Digamadulla	77.7	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7
Trincomalee	66.1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Kurunegala	76.3	8	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Puttalam	72.4	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Anuradhapura	84.6	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Polonnaruwa	79.3	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Badulla	78.9	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Moneragala	80.4	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Ratnapura	82.1	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Kegalle	76.9	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
National list		13	12	2	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	29
Total	75.6	107	89	10	5	4	4	3	1	1	1	225

Votes	
Valid	8,647,668
Rejected	481,155
Total	9,128,823
Registered	12,076,062

Party	Votes	%
PA	3,900,901	45.1
UNP	3,477,770	40.2
JVP	518,774	6.0

TULF	106,033	1.2
EPDP	50,890	0.6
NUA	197,983	2.3
TELO	26,112	0.3

ACTC	27,323	0.3
SU	127,863	1.5
IND	19,812	0.2
Others	194,207	2.3

## The Sri Lankan Cabinet

### President Chandrika Kumaratunge:

Defence, Finance, Planning

**Ratnasiri Wickremnayake:** Buddha

Sasana, Religious Affairs, Plantations

**DM Jayaratne:** Agriculture

**SB Dissanayake:** Samurthi, Rural

Development, Parliamentary Affairs

**Batty Weerakoon:** Justice

**Indika Gunawardena:** Higher Education,

Information Technology Development

**Arumugam Thondaman:** Estate

Infrastructure, Livestock Development

**Rauff Hakeem:** Internal, International

Trade & Commerce, Muslim Religious

Affairs, Shipping Development

**Douglas Devananda:** Development,

Rehabilitation & Reconstruction of the

North, Tamil Affairs North-East

**Dinesh Gunawardena:** Transport

**Ronnie de Mel:** Ports Development,

Development of the South

**Mahinda Rajapakse:** Fisheries, Aquatic

Resources Development

**Richard Pathirana:** Public

Administration, Home Affairs,

Administration Reforms

**Amarasiri Dodangoda:** Vocational

Training

**Nimal Siripala de Silva:** Posts,

Telecommunication

**Mangala Samaraweera:** Urban

Development, Construction, Public Utilities

**Anuruddha Ratwatte:** Power, Energy

**AHM Fowsie:** Highways

**Lakshman Kadirgamar:** Foreign Affairs

**GL Peiris:** Constitutional Affairs,

Industrial Development

**Jeyaraj Fernandopulle:** Aviation, Airports

Development

**Maithripala Sirisena:** Mahaweli

Development

**Alavi Maulana:** Labour

**Nandamithra Ekanayake:** Provincial

Councils, Local Government

**WDJ Senaviratne:** Health

**Ms Sumedha Jayasena:** Women's Affairs

**Mahinda Wijsekera:** Forestry,

Environment

The Sri Lanka Project

The British Refugee Council

3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ

Tel: (020) 7820 3100; Fax: (020) 7820 3107

E-mail: slproject@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Internet: www.gn.apc.org/brcslproject

The Refugee Council:

Tel: (020) 7820 3000; Fax: (020) 7582 9929

E-mail: info@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Internet: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Charity No. 1014576

Company No. 727514

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**Sarath Amunugama:** Irrigation, Water

Resources Management

**Reggie Ranatunga:** Food & Marketing

Development

**HB Semasinghe:** Co-operative

Development

**MC Gopallawa:** Cultural Affairs

**Milroy Fernando:** Social Services,

Housing Development for Fishing

Community

**Jeewan Kumaranatunge:** Youth Affairs

**Ms Pavithra Wanniarachchi:** Plan

Implementation

**Lakshman Kiriella:** Tourism, Sports

**Reginald Cooray:** Ethnic Affairs, National

Integration

**Salinda Dissanayake:** Land Development,

Minor Export Agriculture

**Anura Priyadarshana Yapa:**

Information, Media

**Tissa Karalliyadda:** Indigenous

Medicine

**Maheepala Herath:** Rural Industrial

Development

**Susil Premajayantha:** Education

**Leslie Gunawardena:** Science,

Technology

**Ms Fariel Ashraff:** Development &

Reconstruction of the East, Rural Housing

**Wijepala Mendis:** Without portfolio