



Press Release

PAFFREL to monitor and observe local government elections in Mullaitivu

February 24th, 2015 Colombo, Sri Lanka – People's Action for Free and Fair Elections – PAFFREL welcomes the decision of the Elections Commissioner to hold elections in the Puthukudiyiruppu and Maritimé pattu Pradeshiya Sabhas in the Mullaitivu District on February 28th, 2015. In order to carry out monitoring of this election, PAFFREL hopes to deploy a total number of 111 stationary and mobile observers across 95 polling stations where 52,758 voters will be eligible to cast their vote for the first time in a Pradeshiya Sabha election in these two areas since the war ended in 2009.

Elections to elect 4,327 members for 322 of the 335 local authorities in Sri Lanka were held in March 2011, July 2011 and October 2011 respectively. Of the remaining 13 Pradeshiya Sabhas, 11 had already had their elections in 2008 or 2009. Elections in Puthukudiyiruppu and Maritimé pattu Pradeshiya Sabhas were postponed in 2011 subsequent to an injunction order by the Court of Appeal after it considered a petition filed by two refugees residing at the Menik Farm in Vavuniya. The petitioners alleged that demining and resettlement in these two Pradeshiya Sabhas had not been completed and as a result, voters will be unable to use their franchise under these circumstances. Furthermore, these two areas were listed as uncleared areas by the Elections Department at that point.

As the previous government was able to hold elections in Puthukudiyiruppu and Maritimé pattu to elect members for the Northern Provincial Council and for the 2015 Presidential Election, it was deemed relevant that the Pradeshiya Sabha – local government election to be held as early as possible. This was enabled by the withdrawal of the applications by the petitioners on January 28th, 2015.

In this election, a total of 29,269 voters are eligible to vote from Puthukudiyiruppu and 23,489 are expected to vote in Maritimé pattu. In the Puthukudiyiruppu Pradeshiya Sabha where there are 45 polling districts, an increase of 6000 voters show over the 2010 voters list. In the Maritimé pattu Pradeshiya Sabha division, where there are 50 polling districts, an increase of 2000 voters show over the 2010 voters list.

The contesting parties for the forthcoming elections in Mullaitivu are:

- Ilankai Tamil Arasuk Katchi
- UNP
- JVP
- SLMC
- Purawesi Peramuna
- Nawa Samasamaja Paksha
- Independent group
- UPFA candidates withdraw their nominations



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS MULLAITIVU / PUTHUKUDIYIRUPPU 2015

In the Puthukudiyiruppu Pradeshiya Sabha division, 5 political parties and 1 independent group totaling 72 candidates have submitted nominations to fill 12 seats whilst in the Maritim Pattu Pradeshiya Sabha division 6 political parties totaling 90 candidates have submitted their nomination to fill 15 seats in this election.

To support Paffrel's deployment in this election, a total of 4 training programmes were held for to train 111 observers. Two training programmes will be held in Maritim Pattu Pradeshiya Sabha division, one in Puthukudiyiruppu Pradeshiya Sabha division and one training for mobile observers. As voter education, 10 trainings scheduled and 5 already completed and the balance to be held in the selected villages in the Puthukudiyiruppu and Maritim Pattu Pradeshiya Sabha divisions. These trainings will be completed by February 25th, 2015.

So far no violence or violations reported to us, but our observations interpret very poor interest among voters. Very few pocket meetings and poster campaign also reported in a peaceful manner.

PAFFREL has continued to monitoring the conduct of elections in the country for the past 25 years and most recently observed and monitored the 2015 Presidential Election, where the organization deployed over 14,000 stationary, mobile and vote counting centre observers island wide.

For more details on Paffrel's election monitoring work please log into www.paffrel.com.