



18th April 2020

The Chairman and Members of
The Election Commission of Sri Lanka,
Elections Secretariat,
Rajagiriya, 10107.

Dear Sirs,

Holding of General Election 2020

We write to express certain serious concerns regarding the above election, considering the prevailing situation in the country.

The holding of periodic elections are indeed the cornerstone to upholding democracy. Any exception to this rule can only be in the most serious of circumstances. Unfortunately, however, Sri Lanka, like the rest of the world, today faces just such exceptional circumstances: a global pandemic posing grave threats not only to public health, safety and security, but to the national and global economy as well. Both local and global medical experts have clearly indicated that the key to containing the spread of this pandemic is to eliminate all public gatherings/movement, except for essential services, and those necessary to prevent economic collapse. Every effort must be made to contain the spread of the disease, in order to prevent further burdening an already severely overburdened public healthcare service, in order to ensure that Sri Lanka is equipped to continue to effectively deal with the health consequences of this pandemic.

In these circumstances, the paramount consideration at this time must be, indeed can only be, the health, safety and security of the public. There can be no effective exercise of democracy in the form of an election in the midst of such a pandemic, which global health experts have warned, is likely to pose an active threat for the next several months. The conducting of an election will involve large public gatherings, not only on the day(s) of election, but in the lead up to it in the form of campaigning, a crucial aspect of polls in order for them to be a meaningful and effective democratic practice. Thus fixing a date for election at this time will seriously endanger not only the health and safety of Sri Lanka's citizens, but in the longer term, the global community as well. Until and unless both local and global health experts clearly indicate that it is safe to do so, conducting an election in the present circumstances will be extremely dangerous and irresponsible.

In these circumstances, We respectfully urge that you refrain from fixing a date for the said election at the present time. Any such date must be only be fixed following the assurance by local and global health experts that it is safe to do so.

We are also enclosing herewith a Statement issued by Mr. R. Sampanthan dated 17th April 2020.

Yours sincerely,

Sgd.

R. Sampanthan, Leader,
Tamil National Alliance.

Sgd.

Mavai S. Senathirajah, Leader,
Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi.

Sgd.

A. Adaikalanathan, Leader,
Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization.

Sgd.

Dharmalingam Sitharthan, Leader,
Democratic People's Liberation Front

Encl: