

### **C.V. Wigneswaran Statement- 29 October 2019**

Six parties met together and five parties came to an understanding as to the scope and extent of our problems. And we prepared a 13-point request with regard to our problems.

What we thought was that these problems ought to be brought to the notice of the presidential candidates, and whoever is prepared to look at it satisfactorily or who are prepared to discuss what is very beneficial to us- then let us, at that stage, decide whom to vote because we may be able to ask our people to vote.

You will remember that in 2015, a position like this came up. In order to bring back democracy we worked very hard for President Sirisena. But then once he came to power, he just forgot about all his liabilities. He never had any sort of feeling of remorse for having kept away from doing the needful to the Tamil community or the minorities- both Tamils and Muslims.

So, we are in a similar position now. Though we set out all of these requests, we find that the main contestants, except for Mr. Sirithunga Jayasuriya who seems to have said that he will consider them very favorably and that he is fully in support of all of our requests. Except for him, almost all the other Sinhalese candidates have rejected or did not want to even discuss it or open the file even and have a look at the problems that we have. So, under those circumstances we have decided that we will not ask our people to vote for a particular person, but allow a free vote with regard to our people, let them decide, whomever whom they want to vote for, one.

Two- it is our desire that our five-party leadership will not have any public meeting in support of any one of these people. But they can tell their people who to vote- that is their business. But not to have any public meetings. Not to invite them for any public meetings, because they have thought it fit, not to consider our request. They say that these are demands. These are not demands. These are requests- because it concerns our day to day life. So ,these are requests. We are in difficulties- we are requesting you to do something. There is nothing to demand in this- we are not in a trade union here.

So, we want them not to- the other party heads and us- not to have any public meetings in support of any one of those Sinhala candidates who have rejected our request. So, it is not boycotting the election; it is allowing the people of free vote. But we will not want any public meetings to be held in favor of any one of the candidates. the five parties should not be party to such a thing.

And after the elections are over, we hope to discuss these very same formulas, the very same requests, with whomever becomes president. By this, we are not having any hard dealings with anyone. We have allowed the people to vote as they please. But we will be able to talk to the people who come to power, and explain to them, our political difficulties. And that is the way in which our party has come to these decisions. Thank you.