



USTPAC Hails Tamils' Landslide Victory in Sri Lanka's Provincial Vote

In Sri Lanka's Northern Provincial Council vote held on Saturday, the Tamil National Alliance defeated the Sri Lanka government alliance securing firm control of the Council. Despite violence and voter intimidation with suffocating military presence, Tamils signal to chart their own destiny.

Washington, September 24 2013: United States Tamil Political Action Council (USTPAC) congratulates the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) on their overwhelming victory in the Northern Provincial Council election conducted on September 21, 2013. USTPAC also salutes the Tamil and Muslim people who defied the [intimidation and violence](#) by the occupying Sri Lankan military forces and voted for their dignity and quest for self-rule.

Reflecting on the mood of the electorate, Mr. E. Saravanapavan, a legislator for the Tamil Alliance stated, "These results show that we want political rights, and not just peanuts from the government," [reported the New York Times](#). The TNA obtained more than 78% of the votes cast and won every single electoral district, capturing 30 of 38 council seats.

The TNA election platform clearly articulated the distinctiveness of Tamils as a nation in their traditional homeland of the NorthEast with right to self-determination. It further acknowledged the need for a political solution outside the ambit of the unitary constitution and the flawed 13th Amendment. It also called for an independent international investigation into the war crimes and mass atrocities committed against the Tamil people.

Commenting on the election results, USTPAC President Dr. Elias Jeyarajah said, "Tamils have sent the message loud and clear to the world. Their quest for dignity and self-rule trumps the process of reconciliation through infrastructure reconstruction only, the model touted by the Sri Lankan state." "Their votes for TNA despite threats of withholding development assistance by the Sri Lankan government affirms the universal truth that development is not a substitute for fundamental freedoms," added Jeyarajah.

USTPAC appreciates the contribution by the International Community including the UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR) for their positive influence in convincing Sri Lanka to allow this vote to take place. "We recognize that the Government of Sri Lanka took cognizance of the International Community's and the UNHRC's counsel and resisted calls from extreme elements to weaken the Council or scrap the election. The Government of Sri Lanka should heed to the Tamil people's voice and help the Council to implement the mandate given to their elected representatives," said Jeyarajah.

Tamil Americans convey their best wishes to the TNA-led Northern Provincial Council to provide good governance, engage in total rehabilitation of the war-afflicted population, resolve land issues, effect demilitarization and create conducive environment for political negotiations. The Sri Lankan

Government can help the process by appointing without delay a civilian Governor to the Northern Province in consultation with the Tamil National Alliance.

USTPAC reiterates the need for accountability through credible international investigation as the path for true reconciliation, and calls on the International Community to recognize the Tamil people's democratic voice and support them to achieve their legitimate aspirations.

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