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News Editor/ News Director,

**PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ**  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2008**  
**BATTICALOA DISTRICT**

The arrangements are being made to conduct the elections for 9 Local Government Institutions in Batticaloa District in the Eastern Province where the said elections had been postponing for a longer period. The 270,100 registered voters are eligible to use their franchise at this election to elect a total number of 128 representatives for Batticaloa Municipal, Eravur Pattu Pradeshiya Sabha, Korala Pattu Pradeshiya Sabha, Korala Pattu North Pradeshiya Sabha, Manmunai South and Iruvil Pattu Pradeshiya Sabha, Manmunai Pradeshiya Sabha, Manmunai West Pradeshiya Sabha, Manmunai South-West Pradeshiya Sabha, and Porativu Pradeshiya Sabha. Although the elections for Katthankudy urban Council, Korale Pattu West Pradeshiya Sabha and Eravur town Pradeshiya Sabha, were held in 2006, proposed elections for above mentioned 9 institutions will bear a significance in the historical and political aspects.

The Election Commissioner has issued a notice to entertain the nominations for those Local Government Institutions from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2008 to 25<sup>th</sup> January 2008. Several registered political parties and Independent groups are expected to contest at this election. According to the sources of Election Commissioner's Department, the applications from 17 new political parties have been forwarded to the Election Commissioner requesting for the registration. One may raise the question of the necessity of some more new political parties to our country where there are already 53 registered political parties. There will not be any dispute that being organized in to political parties is one of the democratic rights of the people. However, without consistently engaging in the political activities in the country, one also can argue that, neither the country nor the political parties themselves will not obtain any benefit by the "pop-up" actions during the election period. There are certain name-sake political parties which do not engage at least in the political dialogues with the people based on the understanding of the changes and developments in the daily socio-political life. Therefore, PAFFREL believes the validity of the new political parties should be considered under that context.

Further, over 50,000 of displaced persons as a result of the war and the Tsunami disaster in Batticaloa District, will have an opportunity to cast their votes to elect their representatives. Under a special programme, they have been asked to make themselves register to become eligible for voting till 8<sup>th</sup> January and subsequently the period has been extended up to 11<sup>th</sup> January. PAFFREL appreciates it as a positive action to protect the voter's right and if this period can be further extended it may offer them a good chance to be registered as voters.

However, by fulfilling its historical duty, PAFFREL, in this occasion too, has planned to monitor the Batticaloa District's election from the initial stage; the handing over the nominations. As the first step of it PAFFREL has made arrangements to establish monitoring centers at all the Local Government areas and to deploy ten foreign observers in the pre-election period. Similarly PAFFREL has decided to engage two stationary monitors for each Polling centre, 30 mobile vehicles on the basis of one vehicle to a ten number of Polling centres and 20 foreign observers on the Election Day. Accordingly, a District Co-ordinating committee and a National co-ordinating committee to liase with the field monitors have already commenced their functions. While the pre-elections and Election Day monitoring is under way, our organization has made a decision to engage in post-Election monitoring for a period of two weeks after the election.

PAFFREL wishes, the scheduled elections to hold in Batticaloa District after many years for 9 Local Government bodies may be conducted in a free and fair manner. In order to reach that goal, the government that bears the responsibility of entire administration of the country, the voters, and civil society bear a collective responsibility. Therefore PAFFREL appeals to the all contesting parties and the candidates to create a programme that will enable to conduct a fair election.

Thanking you,



Kingsley Rodrigo  
Chairmen