

# A Constitutional Performance Assessment: National Poll

Social Indicator - Centre for Policy Alternatives

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) Sri Lanka

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# INTRODUCTION

The Presidential and Parliamentary electoral victory paved the way for the Rajapaksas' to secure a large majority in Parliament and roll back reforms brought in by the previous administration. The 20th amendment to the Constitution that was passed into law on the 22 October 2020 provided wide sweeping powers to the executive that further endangered the crippling democratic space that's prevalent in the country. Furthermore, the pandemic and its limitations have enabled the regime to continue with its autocratic rule and sustain it with intense militarization of civilian spaces.

This survey was conducted in light of the government's plans for further constitutional change. The island wide survey aimed to assess the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of the general public in relation to the current constitution, nature of political order, the presidency, the nature of economy, human rights and the judiciary.

This survey was conducted by Social Indicator, CPA's survey research arm which has been conducting public opinion polls since 1999 on a wide range of socio-political issues in Sri Lanka. The survey team comprised of Dr. Pradeep Peiris, Sakina Moinudeen and M. Krishnamoorthy. Social Indicator would like to thank Dr Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu (CPA) and Hubertus von Welck and the team from Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) Sri Lanka for their support extended towards conducting a study of this sort in the country.

## METHODOLOGY

The survey was carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire administered through face-to-face interviews with 936 sample respondents from the four main ethnic communities (Sinhala, Tamil, Up Country Tamil and Muslim) across all 25 districts of the country. The sample distribution was done considering the district and ethnic population. Random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents.

Fieldwork for the entire study was conducted from the 25th of April to the 31st of July 2021. A total of 66 field enumerators both males and females from the three main ethnic communities – Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim participated in this study. The interviews were conducted in the first language of both the respondents and the field enumerators.

Field briefings for the field supervisors were done online via zoom, considering limitations due to the pandemic. With virtual supervision from Social Indicator, face to face trainings were conducted by senior field supervisors to field enumerators in their respective districts. A maximum of three field enumerators participated in each training session.

The field enumerators were given an extensive training on the study, the research instrument and field techniques prior to the commencement of field work. In order to ensure the quality of the data collected - a minimum of 10 % of the total sample population were quality checked. The dataset was weighted in order to reflect the actual district and ethnic proportion of the population. The data set was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On constitutional reformation, around 44% of respondents indicate that the current Constitution should continue with some needed changes, whilst approximately 35 % of the respondents indicate that a new Constitution is needed.
- Overall the top three factors that respondents look forward to in either a new Constitution or in the outcome of a constitutional reformation process is that, it ensures economic prosperity for all (48.1%), it ensures/ strengthens national security (24.4%) and it ensures a pluralistic society (11%).
- Whilst 37.3% of the respondents claim that the government has been somewhat successful – nearly 36% claim that the government has not been successful in communicating information about the drafting of a new Constitution.
- Although there is an overwhelming support for an elective principle (97.6%) there appears to be some substantial support towards an executive form of governance, with a majority of respondents supporting leadership that can govern and make decisions without having to consult the Parliament or having to be concerned about elections.
- Although a majority (53.9%) indicates that they are satisfied with the way in which democracy functions in Sri Lanka, a considerable proportion of respondents (42.6%) indicate that they are dissatisfied.
- Whilst nearly 40% of the respondents claim that the executive presidential system should be completely abolished, around 47% of the respondents claim that the executive presidential system should be retained in some form.
- A majority of respondents (66.7%) believe that the President should not have immunity over civil or criminal proceedings.
- A slight majority of respondents (53.5%) are of the opinion that it is important for public officials to represent their ethnicity or religion. This sentiment is mostly shared amongst respondents from the Muslim (71.2%) and the Tamil (51%) communities.
- A significant proportion of respondents (47.3%) claim that they are dissatisfied with the way in which law and order is maintained in the country.
- On procedural justice, a majority of respondents believe that if an individual belonged to an economically poor background (57.4%), a minority religious group (52.4%) or a minority ethnic community (53.6%) they will be unfairly treated by the judicial system, if accused for crime and corruption.

# CURRENT CONSTITUTION

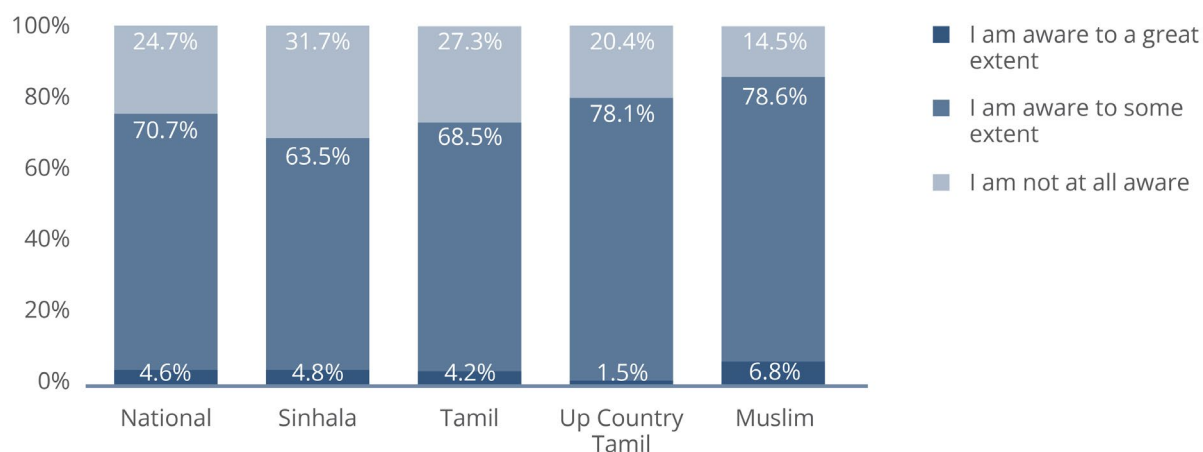
## Awareness

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of awareness on the contents of Sri Lanka's Constitution. Whilst a majority of respondents (75.3 %) claim that they are aware of the contents of Sri Lanka's Constitution, only a mere 4.6 % indicate that they are aware of it to a great extent.

It is noteworthy to point out that nearly one fourth of the respondents (24.7%) claim that they are not at all aware of the contents of Sri Lanka's Constitution.

From an ethnic perspective, minority communities appear to have a marginally higher level of awareness of the contents of Sri Lanka's Constitution. (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Perceived level of awareness on the contents of Sri Lanka's Constitution, by ethnicity

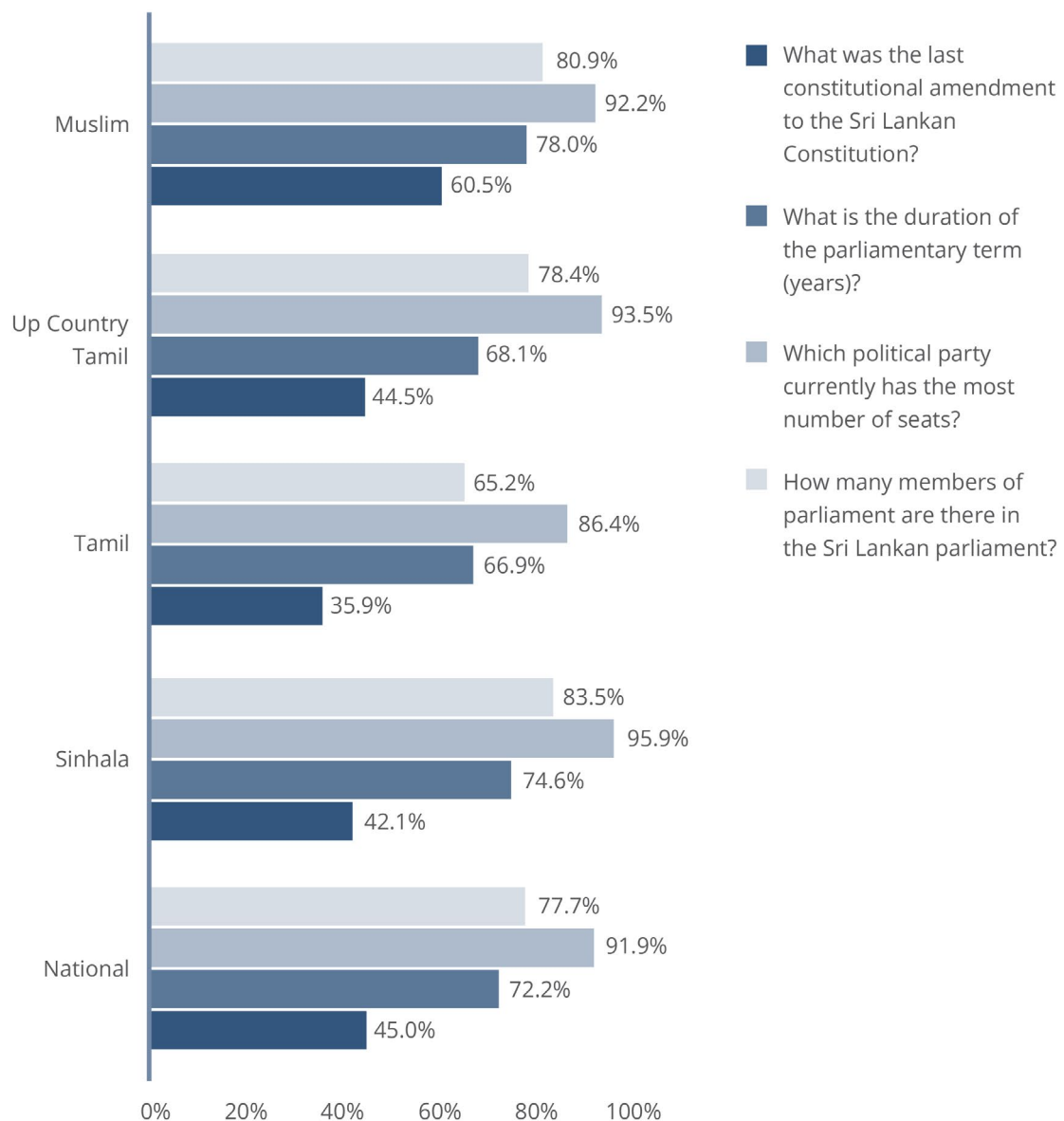


## How much do people really know about politics, public affairs and the Constitution?

To assess the extent to which respondents were aware of politics, public affairs and the constitution, they were asked a range of questions pertaining to the number of members in Parliament, the political party that currently has the most seats in Parliament, duration of the Parliamentary term and the most recent constitutional amendment.

Whilst a majority of respondents claim to be aware of the number of members in Parliament (77.7 %), the political party that has the most number of seats in Parliament (91.9 %) and the parliamentary term (72.2 %) – there appears to be a comparatively low level of awareness amongst respondents in relation to the last amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution (45 %). (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Respondents who knew the correct answer to the questions pertaining to the number of members in Parliament, the political party that has the most number of seats in Parliament, Parliamentary term and the last amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, by ethnicity





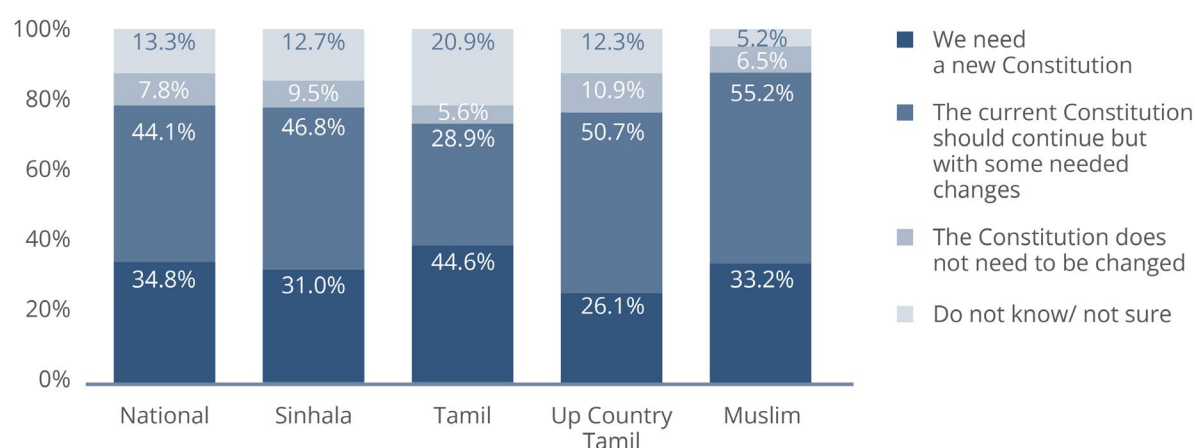
## Support for change

### Do we need a new constitution?

There appears to be a slight divide in opinion amongst those who claim to want a new Constitution and those who claim that the current Constitution should continue, but with some needed changes. Whilst around 44% of respondents indicate that the current Constitution should continue with some needed changes, approximately 35 % of respondents indicate that a new Constitution is needed.

From an ethnic perspective, it is mostly the Tamil community (nearly 45 %) who indicate that a new Constitution is needed, whilst mostly those among the Muslim community (approximately 55 %) indicate that the current Constitution should continue with some needed changes. (Figure 3)

Figure 3: Nature of constitutional reform, by ethnicity



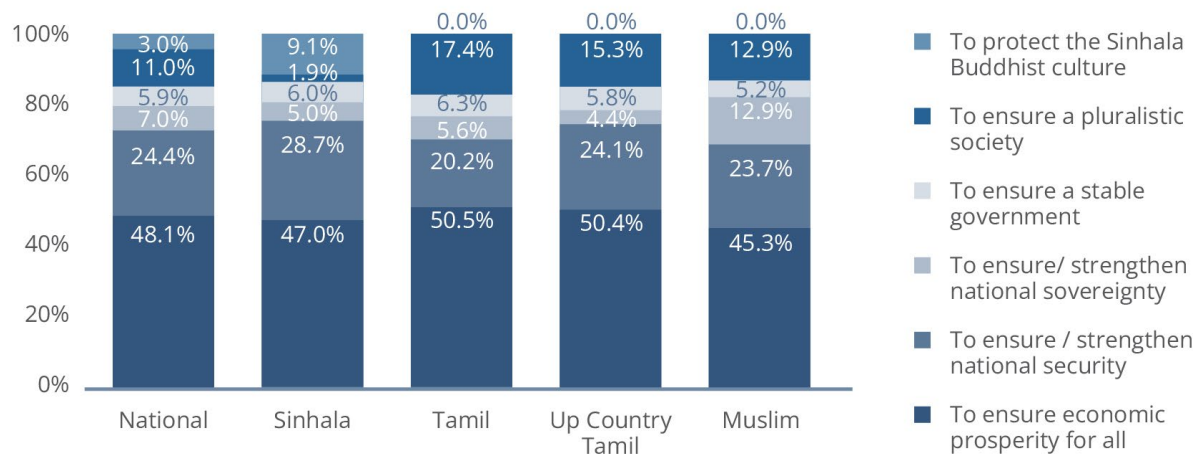
### Why do we need a new constitution?

Overall the top three factors that the respondents look forward to in either a new constitution or in the outcome of the constitutional reformation process is that it ensures economic prosperity for all (48.1%), it ensures/ strengthens national security (24.4%) and it ensures a pluralistic society (11%).

From an ethnic perspective, it is interesting to note that across all ethnic communities, the top two factors that respondents claim should be addressed, either in a new constitution or in any future constitutional reformation process is the same – i.e. it should ensure economic prosperity and ensure/strengthen national security for all. However, when taking a closer look at the third most important factor that each ethnic group looks forward to being addressed differs across the various ethnic communities. As such, the Sinhala community indicates that the new constitution or any future constitutional reformation process should protect the Sinhala Buddhist culture (9.1%), whilst the Tamil (17.4%) and the Up Country

Tamil (15.3%) communities believe that it should ensure a pluralistic society. As for the Muslim community, it is a combination of ensuring a pluralistic society (12.9%) and ensuring/ strengthening national sovereignty (12.9%). (Figure 4)

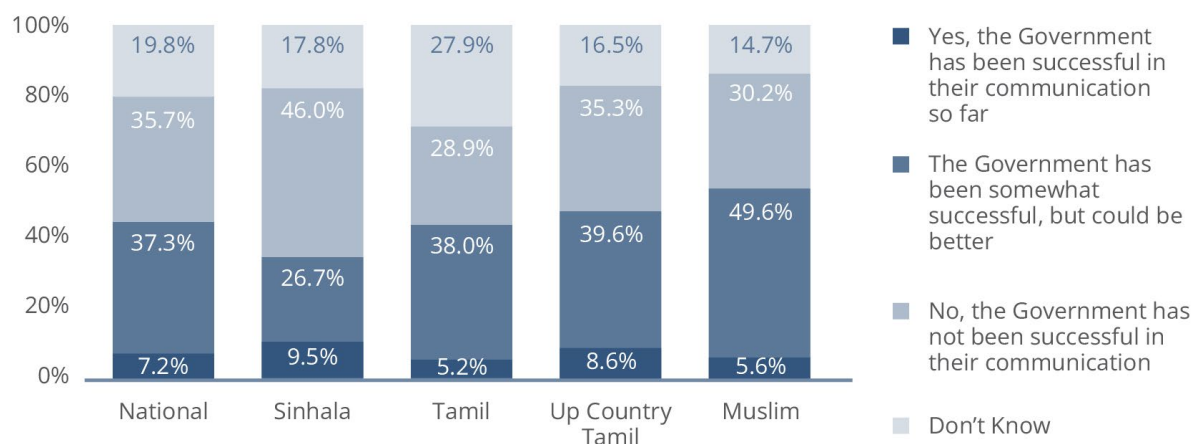
Figure 4: The purpose of a new constitution, by ethnicity



## Reform

There appears to be a divide in opinion on the government's success in communicating its plans on the proposed new Constitution. Whilst 37.3% of the respondents claim that the government has been somewhat successful – nearly 36% claim that the government has not been successful in communicating information about the drafting of a new Constitution. Only 7.2% believe that the government has been successful in their communication so far. (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Perception on communicating information on the proposed new constitution, by ethnicity



When asked as to where they would obtain reliable information and who they would most likely approach to obtain particulars about the Constitution - the top three sources of information selected by the respondents were television news and debates (nearly 45%), speaking with their educated friends and neighbours (11.6%) and reading the newspapers (8.4%). (Table 1)

Table 1: Sources of information on constitutional reform, by ethnicity

	National	Sinhala	Tamil	Up Country Tamil	Muslim
Talk to the elders in my family	8.1%	5.7%	10.8%	11.5%	6.1%
Talk to my educated friends and neighbours	11.6%	9.5%	12.9%	15.1%	10.8%
Listen to the opinion of the party leaders who I feel are close to my ideas	4.2%	6.0%	3.5%	2.9%	3.5%
Listen to the opinion voiced by the leaders of my religion	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Watch TV news and debates	44.9%	38.7%	47.7%	53.2%	44.6%
Read newspapers	8.4%	7.0%	10.1%	9.4%	7.8%
Read reports and other sources	4.9%	9.8%	1.4%	2.2%	4.3%
Log in to the parliamentary website	7.9%	10.8%	4.5%	0.7%	12.6%
I do not find the need to seek information about the constitution	2.6%	3.5%	2.8%	3.6%	0.4%
Don't know	1.2%	2.5%	1.0%	0.7%	0.0%
<b>Base</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>231</b>

# NATURE OF THE POLITICAL ORDER

## Leadership

There appears to be overwhelming support for an elective principle with 97.6% of the respondents indicating that the country should be governed by those chosen by the people in a free and fair election. This sentiment is similarly shared across all ethnic communities. However, interestingly there is also some substantial support towards an executive form of governance with a majority of respondents supporting leadership that can govern and make decisions without having to consult the Parliament or having to be concerned about elections. Although having the military govern the country is not a popular sentiment that is shared on a national level, it is interesting to note that a significant proportion of respondents among the Sinhala community (63.4%) are in favour of that form of governance. (Table 2)

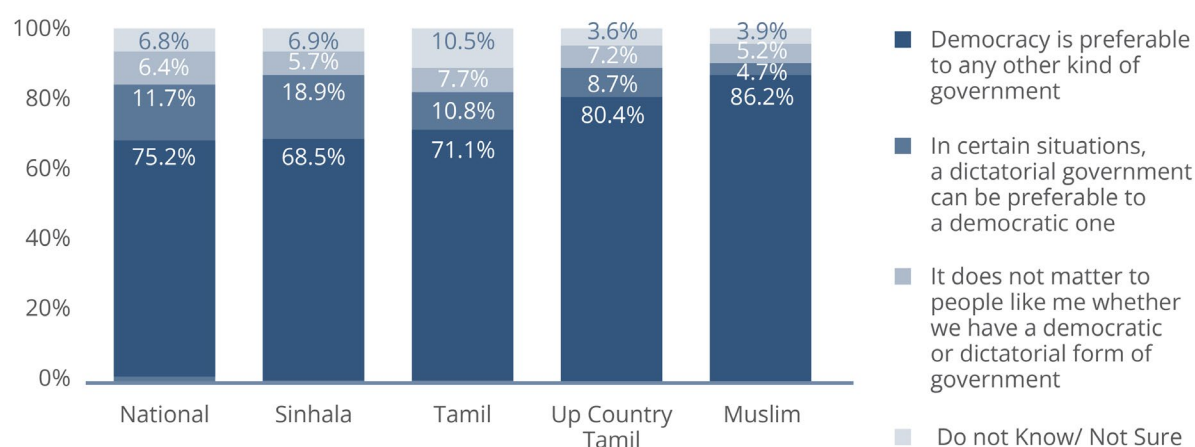
Table 2: Forms of leadership, by ethnicity

	AGREE				
	National	Sinhala	Tamil	Up Country Tamil	Muslim
Having a strong leader who can make decisions without having to worry about the parliament and elections	75.3%	75.1%	83.2%	75.0%	65.9%
Base	934	305	274	132	223
Having an expert to make decisions according to what she/ he believes is best for the country, without worrying about the parliament and elections	80.2%	73.3%	88.0%	78.3%	81.2%
Base	921	296	267	129	229
The military should come in to govern the country	39.9%	63.4%	33.5%	34.3%	19.1%
Base	934	306	269	134	225
The country should be governed by those who are chosen by the people, in a free and fair election	97.6%	97.4%	96.8%	98.5%	98.3%
Base	962	309	285	135	233
All major decisions about the country should be taken by religious leaders, rather than politicians.	25.2%	32.6%	19.3%	21.5%	24.0%
Base	914	304	259	130	221

## Democracy

A majority of respondents indicate that democracy is preferable when compared with any other form of governance. This sentiment is stronger among the minority community. (Figure 6)

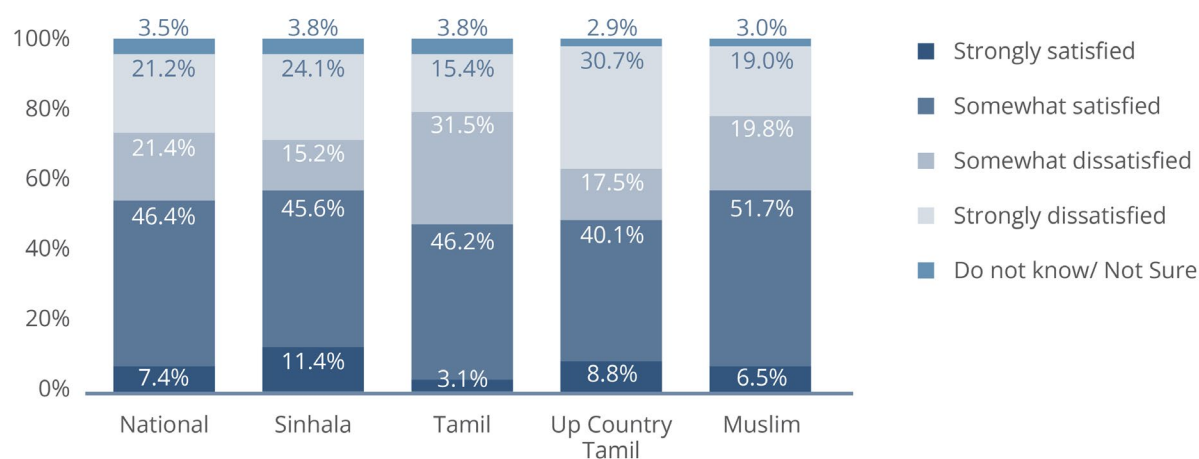
Figure 6: Support for democracy, by ethnicity



## Satisfaction towards the functions of democracy

A slight majority (53.9%) indicate that they are satisfied with the way in which democracy functions in Sri Lanka. However, it is important to note that a considerable proportion of respondents (42.6%) indicate that they are dissatisfied. One fifth of the respondents (21.2%) claim that they are strongly dissatisfied with the way in which democracy functions in the country. (Figure7)

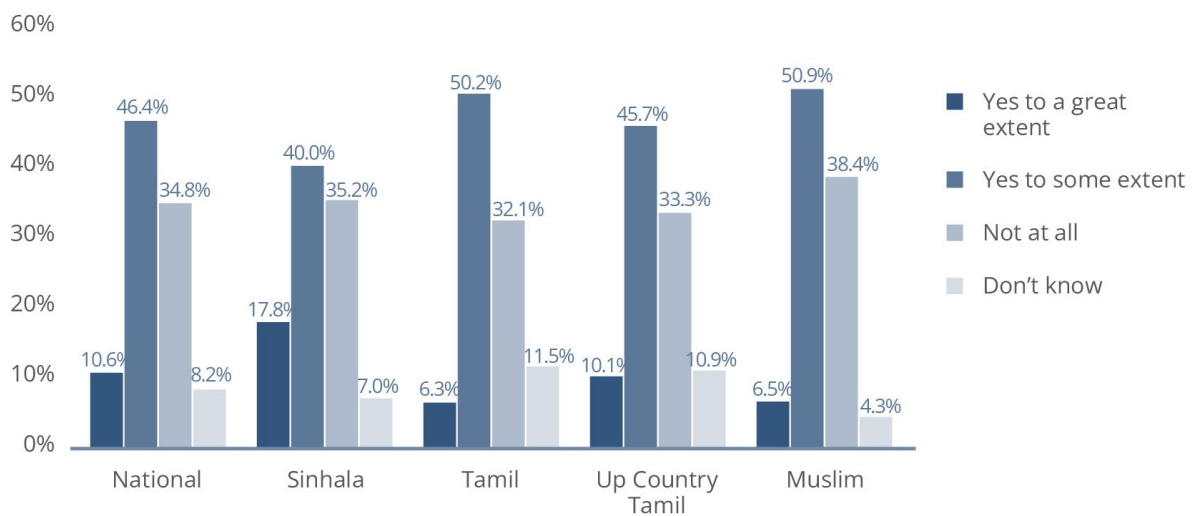
Figure 7: Satisfaction with the way democracy functions in Sri Lanka, by ethnicity



## Efficacy

Although a majority of respondents (57%) believe that they could influence the way in which the country is governed – a little more than one third of the respondents (34.8%) indicate that they have no influence at all. From those who feel that they have no influence at all, it is mostly respondents from the Muslim community (38.4%) who feel this way. (Figure 8)

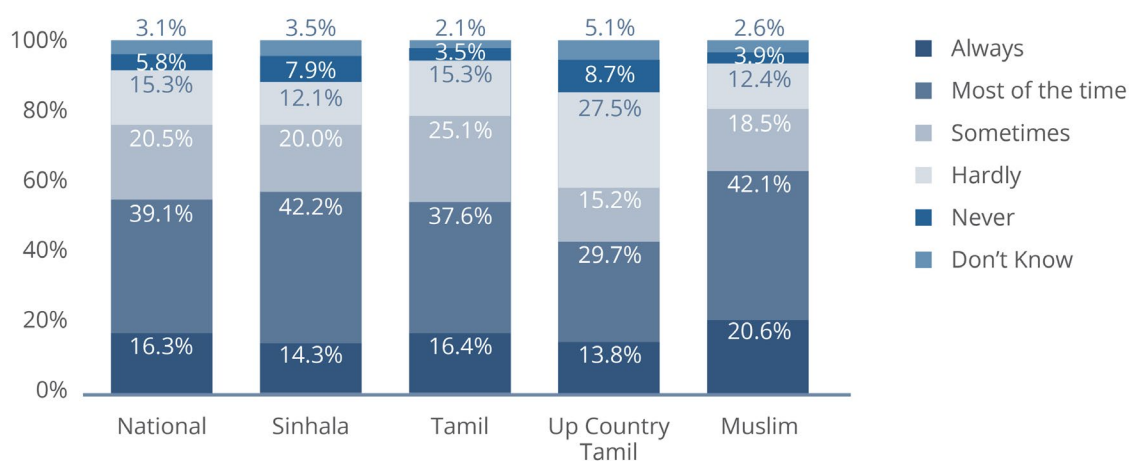
Figure 8: Political efficacy, by ethnicity



## Elections

Approximately 40% of respondents indicate that most of the time, elections are conducted in a free and fair manner – with 15.3% of the respondents indicating that elections are hardly free and fair. (Figure 9)

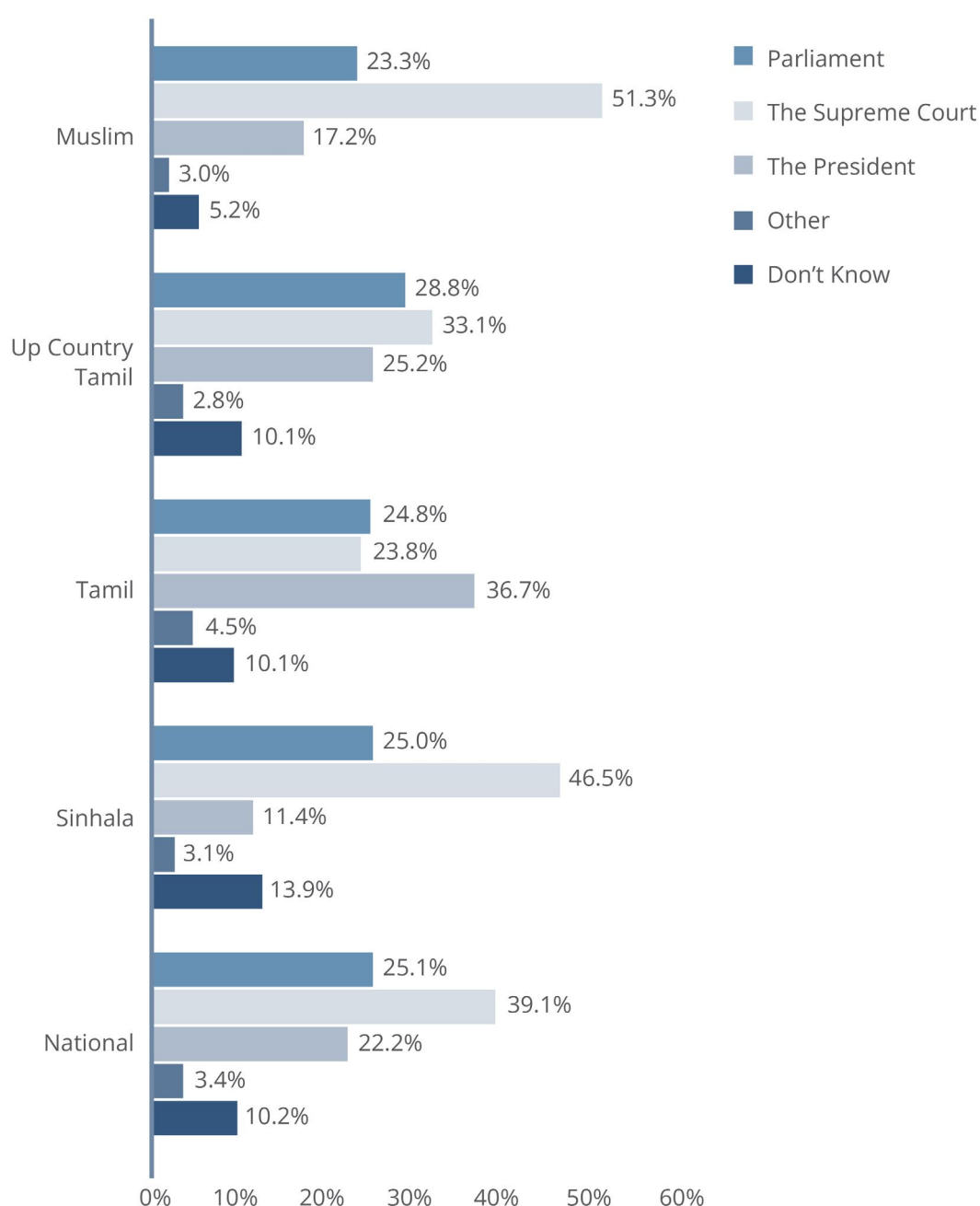
Figure 9: How often are elections conducted in a free and fair manner, by ethnicity



## Interpretation of the Constitution

Nearly 40% of the respondents indicate that the Supreme Court is responsible for interpreting the Constitution during a constitutional crisis, with 25.1% indicating that it is the responsibility of the Parliament to do so. A little more than one fifth of the respondents (22.2%) are of the view that it is the President's responsibility to interpret the Constitution at a time of a constitutional crisis in the country. (Figure 10)

Figure 10: Who is responsible for interpreting the constitution during a constitutional crisis, by ethnicity



# THE PRESIDENCY

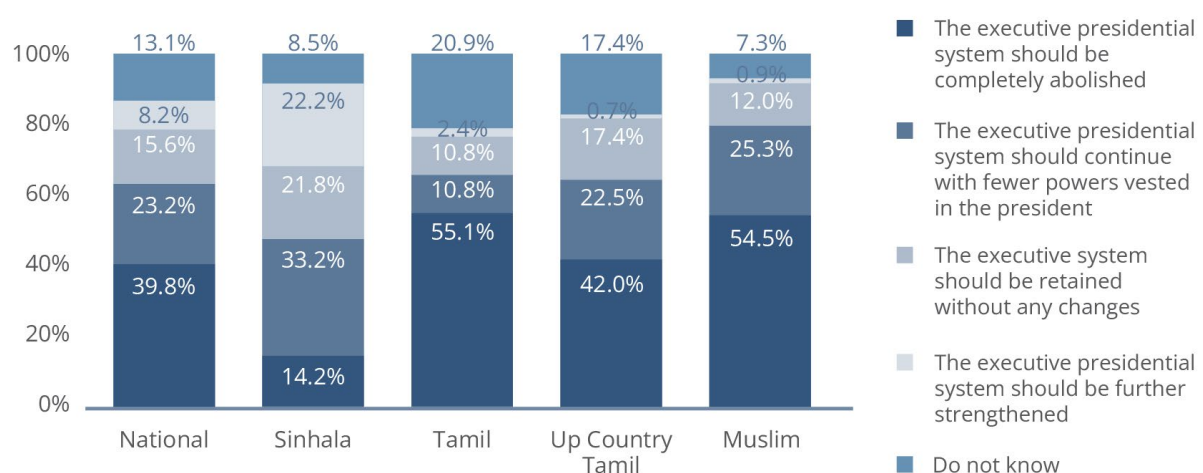
## Powers

There appears to be a clear divide in public perception pertaining to the executive presidential system. Overall, whilst nearly 40% of the respondents claim that the executive presidential system should be completely abolished, around 47 % of the respondents claim that the executive presidential system should be retained in some form.

As such, when taking a closer look at the analysis, it is evident that approximately 16 % of the respondents are of the view that the executive presidential system should continue without any changes to it. Around 8.2 % of the respondents claim to be in favour of further strengthening the current executive presidential system. Around one-fifth of the respondents (23.2%) are of the view that the executive presidential system should continue with fewer powers vested in the President.

From an ethnic perspective, it is predominantly respondents from the minority communities (Muslim 54.5 %, Tamil 55.1% and Up Country Tamil 42%) who claim to be in favour of the executive presidential system being completely abolished. As for those who claim that the executive presidential system should be retained without any changes, it is mostly respondents from the Sinhala community (nearly 22%) and a proportion from the Up Country Tamil (17.4%) community who hold this view. When analysing the data of those who believe that the current presidential system should be further strengthened, it is clear that respondents mostly from the Sinhala community (22.2%) hold this view. (Figure 11)

Figure 11: Executive presidential system, by ethnicity





To obtain a deeper understanding of public perception on the powers entitled to the President, the respondents were asked a range of questions pertaining to the President's absolute power to appoint or remove key persons to public service positions, the President's ability to take on any ministry and any number of ministries that she/ he wishes to possess, and also the President's absolute power to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and any other minister at any given time.

Overall a majority of respondents believe that the President should not have absolute power to appoint and remove persons to key positions in public service and independent commissions without consulting the Prime Minister or the Cabinet of Ministers. This sense of disagreement is evident across all ethnic communities.

Public opinion appears to be divided on the President taking on any ministry that she/he desires. Data indicates that whilst nearly 47% of the respondents disagree with the President being able to take on any ministry that she/ he desires, nearly 40% of the respondents are agreeable to this. From an ethnic perspective, whilst it is mostly those from the Sinhala community (47.6%) who agree, it is mostly respondents from the Up Country Tamil community (62.3%) who disagree with this.

On the President being able to take any number of ministries that she/he desires – there appears to be a clear majority (56%) of respondents who disagree with this. Around 30% of the respondents agree to this.

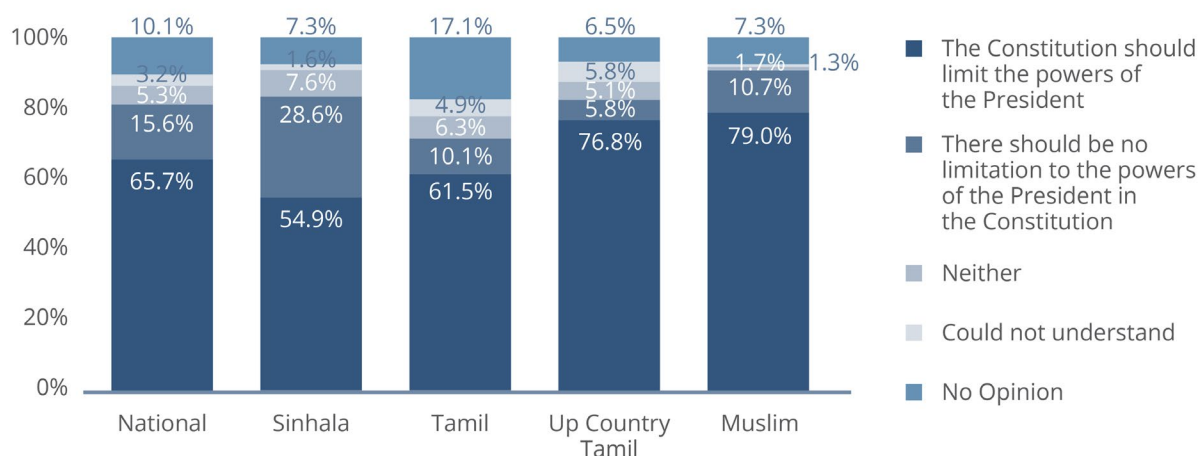
A slight majority (51.8%) of respondents disagree with the President having absolute powers to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and any other minister at any given time, whilst nearly one third of the respondents (33.6%) are agreeable to this. It appears that it is mostly those from the Sinhala community (46.2%) who agree with the President having absolute power to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and any other minister at any given time – in contrary, it is mostly respondents from the Muslim community (66.1%) who disagree with this. (Table 3)

Table 3: Public perception on granting specific powers to the President, by ethnicity

		National	Sinhala	Tamil	Up Country Tamil	Muslim
The President should have the absolute power to make appoint and remove persons to key positions in the public service and independent without having to consult the prime minister or the cabinet of ministers	Agree	31.4%	36.7%	31.9%	28.3%	25.3%
	Disagree	56.1%	51.3%	49.0%	63.8%	67.0%
	Don't know	12.5%	12.0%	19.1%	8.0%	7.7%
	Base	975	316	288	138	233
The President should be able to take on any ministry that she/he wishes	Agree	39.2%	47.6%	34.6%	26.1%	41.2%
	Disagree	46.7%	41.9%	43.0%	62.3%	48.5%
	Don't know	14.1%	10.5%	22.4%	11.6%	10.3%
	Base	972	315	286	138	233
The President should be able to take any number of ministries that he/she wishes	Agree	29.0%	37.3%	26.8%	21.0%	24.9%
	Disagree	56.0%	53.2%	48.4%	64.5%	63.9%
	Don't know	15.1%	9.5%	24.7%	14.5%	11.2%
	Base	974	316	287	138	233
The President should have the absolute power to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and any other minister at any time	Agree	33.6%	46.2%	29.6%	29.0%	24.0%
	Disagree	51.8%	44.9%	45.3%	57.2%	66.1%
	Don't know	14.6%	8.9%	25.1%	13.8%	9.9%
	Base	974	316	287	138	233

A clear majority (65.7%) indicate that the Constitution should limit the powers of the President whilst approximately 16% oppose this. From those who oppose this, it is predominantly respondents from the Sinhala community (nearly 29%) who hold this view. (Figure 12)

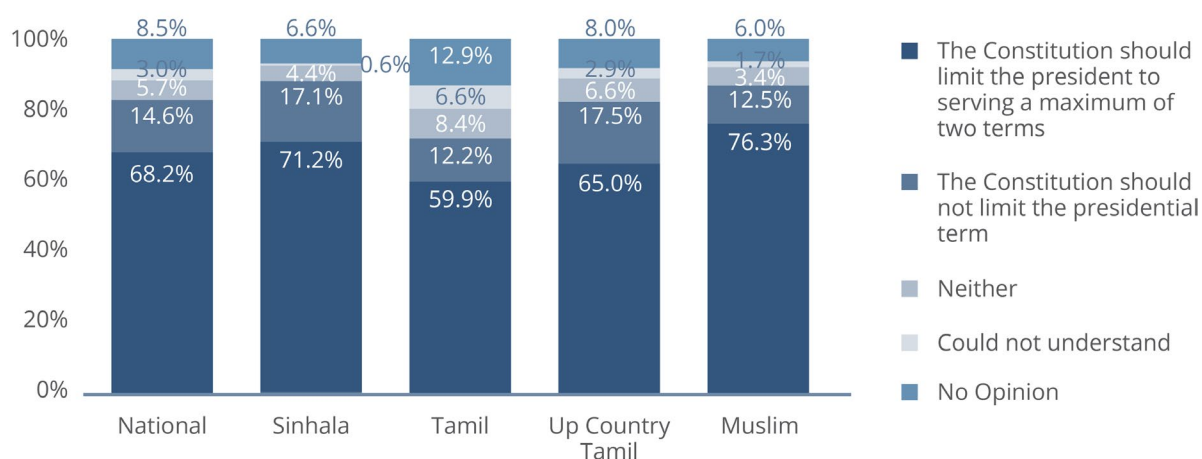
Figure 12: Perceptions of whether the constitution should limit the President's powers, by ethnicity



## Term of office

There is a clear preference towards the Constitution limiting the President serving a maximum of two terms in office - 70% of the respondents hold this view. (Figure 13)

Figure 13: Opinion on the term limit of the President, by ethnicity



## Legitimacy

A majority of respondents (58%) believe that an individual's ethnicity and religion should not be a pre-requisite to being elected as President. This sentiment is particularly evident amongst the minority communities. From those who believe that the president should be a Sinhala-Buddhist, it is mostly respondents from the Sinhala community (69.8%) who hold this view. (Figure 14)

On having prior political experience, a majority of respondents (62%) indicate that the President should have prior experience of at least one term of serving in Parliament, whilst one fifth of the respondents (21%) did not consider this as a precondition. (Figure 15)

An overall majority of respondents (84.4%) indicate that the President is responsible for promoting reconciliation among the country's ethnic and religious groups. This sentiment is shared across the varying ethnic communities. (Figure 16)

Figure 14: Pre-requisite for a President to be a Sinhala Buddhist, by ethnicity

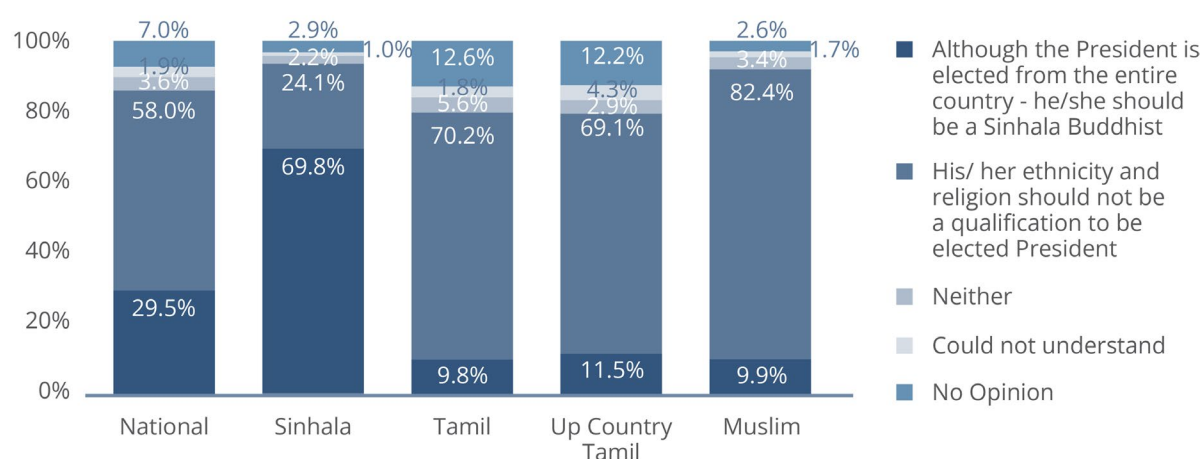


Figure 15: Expectation of prior political experience for Presidents, by ethnicity

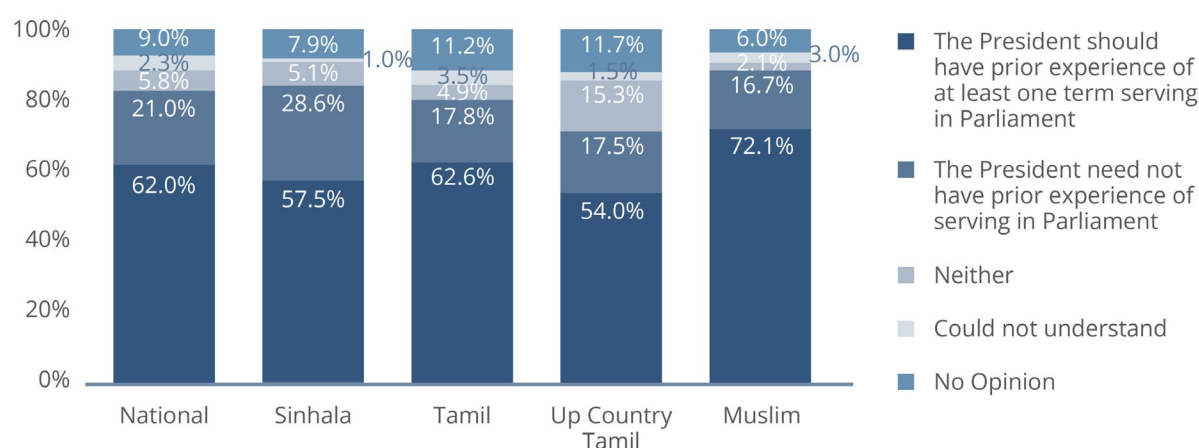
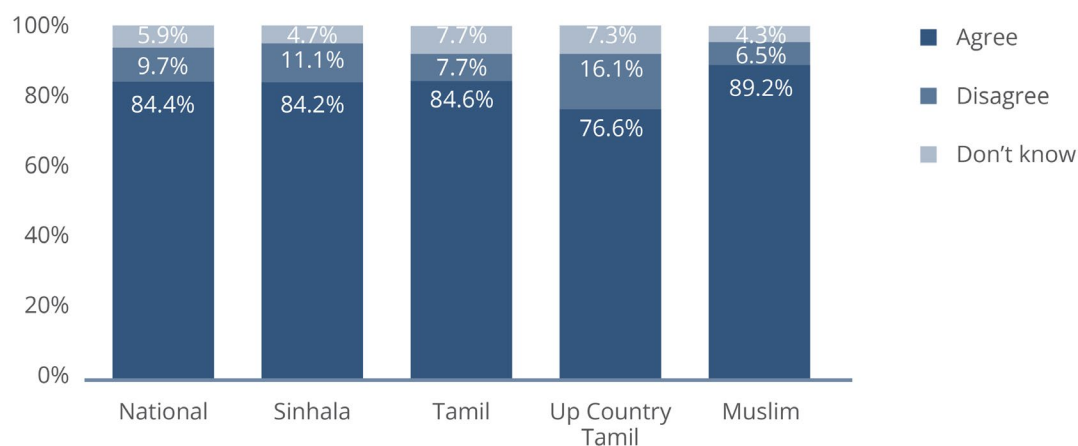


Figure 16: The President is responsible for promoting reconciliation among the country's ethnic and religious groups, by ethnicity



## Immunity

A majority of respondents (66.7%) believe that the President should not have immunity over civil or criminal proceedings. This sentiment is visible across all ethnic communities. Similarly, a majority of respondents (73.7%) believe that citizens should be able to file a fundamental rights application against the President in relation to acts or omissions in an official capacity. (Table 4)

Table 4: Presidential immunity, by ethnicity

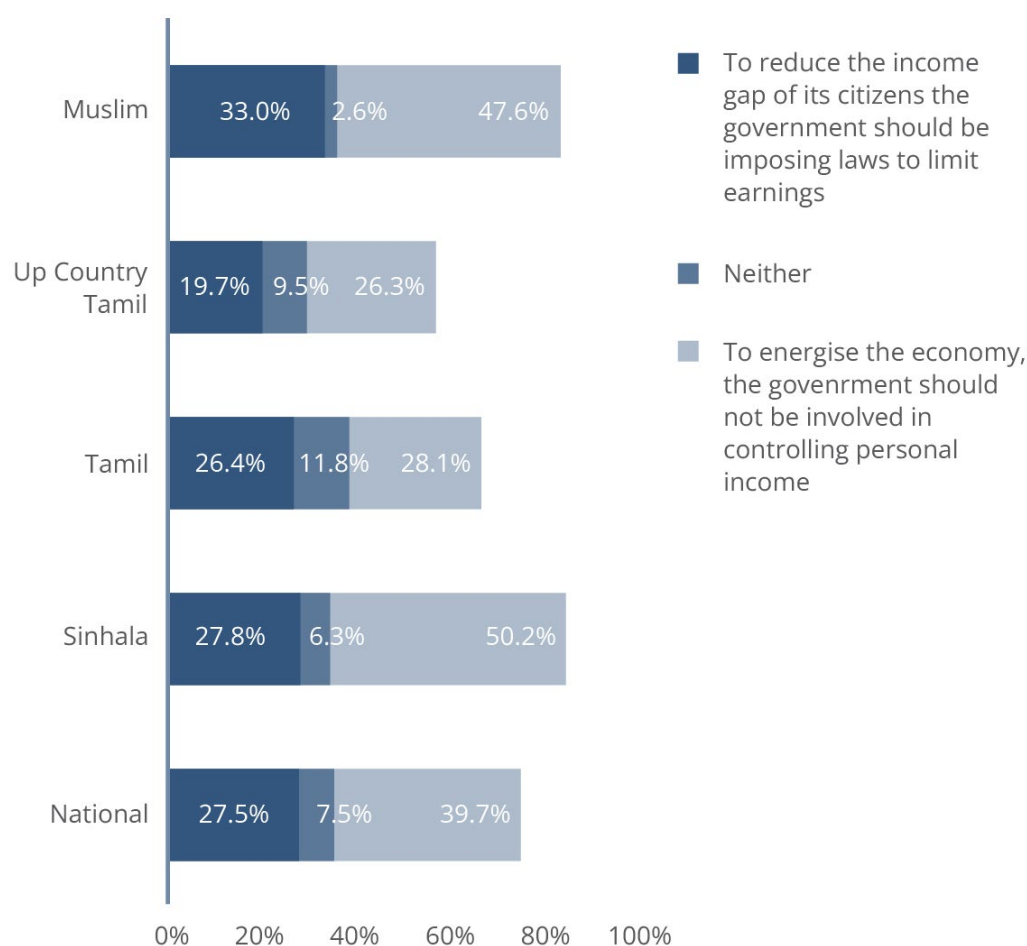
		National	Sinhala	Tamil	Up Country Tamil	Muslim
The President should not face any repercussions from any civil or criminal legal proceedings	Agree	20.6%	20.9%	18.1%	24.5%	21.0%
	Disagree	66.7%	73.4%	59.6%	61.9%	69.1%
	Don't know	12.7%	5.7%	22.3%	13.7%	9.9%
	Base	975	316	287	139	233
To protect their rights, citizens should be able to file a fundamental rights application against the President in relation to anything done, or omitted to be done by the President in his/her official capacity	Agree	73.7%	80.4%	65.5%	74.1%	74.7%
	Disagree	12.2%	11.4%	9.1%	12.9%	16.7%
	Don't know	14.1%	8.2%	25.4%	12.9%	8.6%
	Base	975	316	287	139	233

# NATURE OF THE ECONOMY

## Perceptions on economic policy

Whilst nearly 40% of the respondents are of the view that the government should not control personal income in order to strengthen the country's economy – nearly 28% of the respondents indicate that laws should be implemented by the government to limit earnings, so as to reduce the income gap of its citizens. (Figure 17)

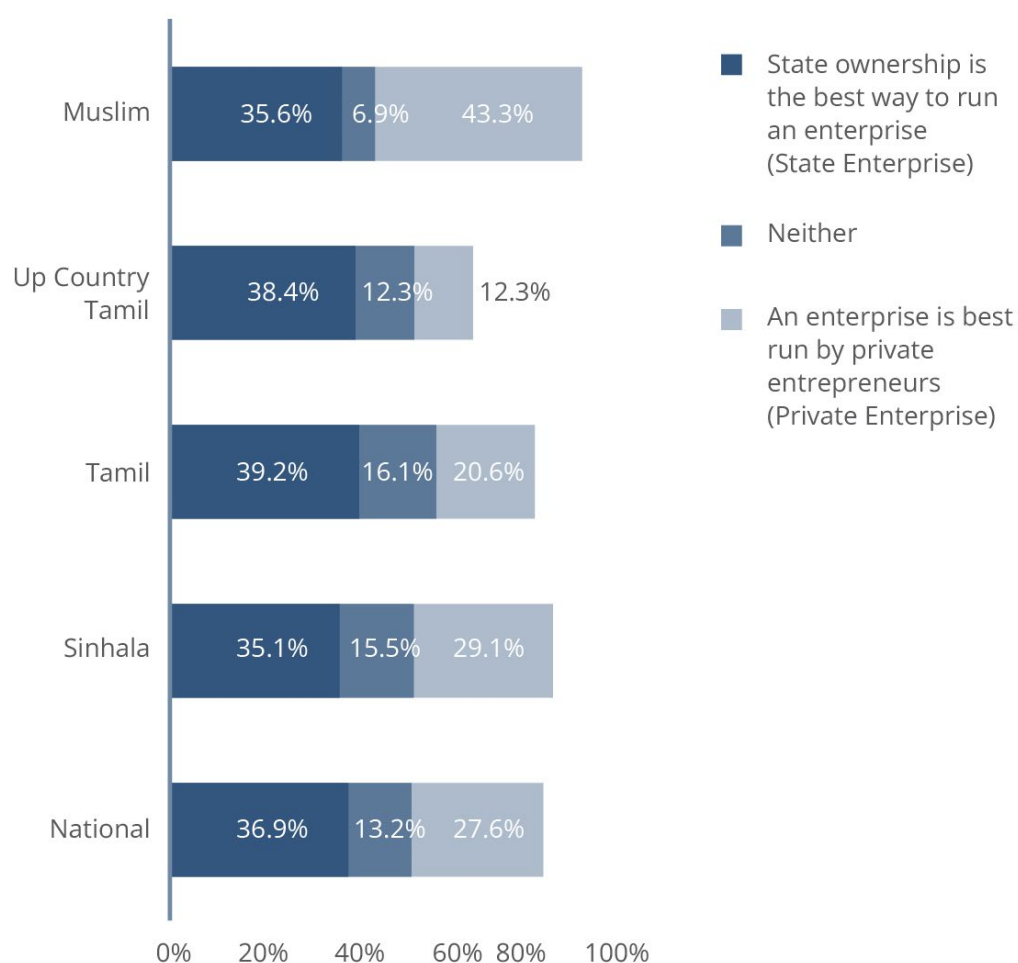
Figure 17: Opinions about controlling personal income, by ethnicity



## Ownership (state vs. private)

On state and private ownership, the data indicates that a slightly higher percentage of respondents support state-owned enterprises (nearly 37%) as opposed to private enterprise (27.6%). (Figure 18)

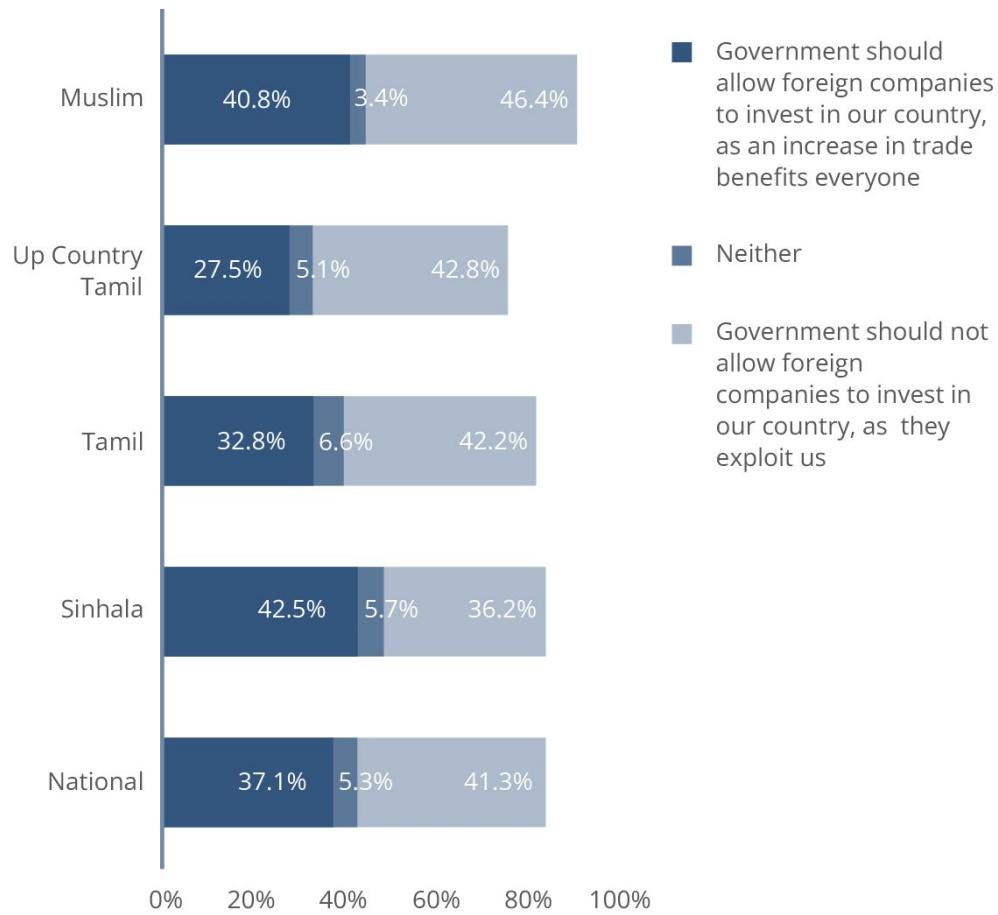
Figure 18: Opinions about enterprise ownership, by ethnicity



## Economic sovereignty

Respondents seem to be divided on foreign investment in the country. Whilst a slightly higher percentage of respondents (41.3%) indicate that the government should not allow foreign companies to invest as they exploit the country, 37.1% of the respondents are of the opinion that the government should allow foreign investment as an increase in trade benefits everyone. (Figure 19)

Figure 19: Perception on foreign investments, by ethnicity



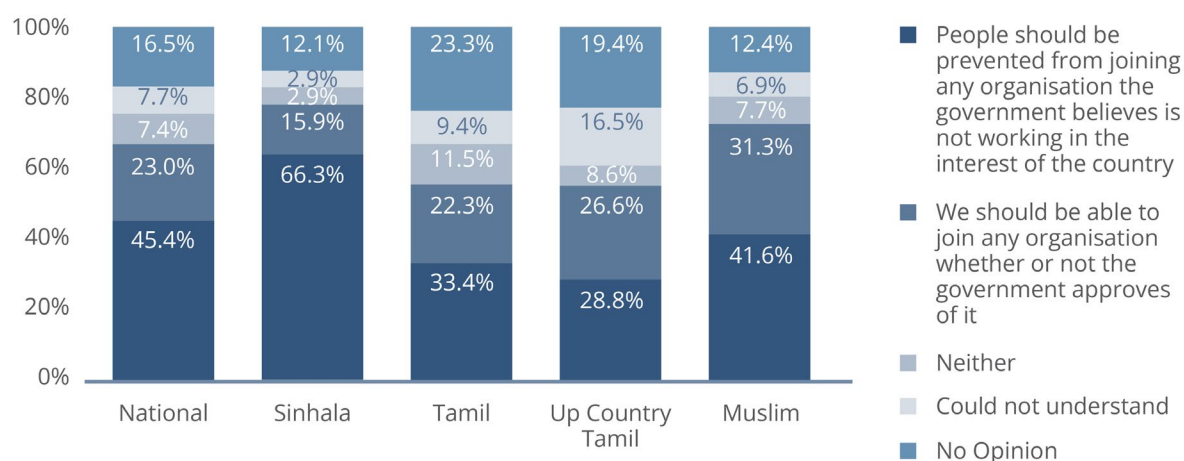


# HUMAN RIGHTS

## Civil and political rights

A considerable percentage of respondents (45.4%) are of the view that people should be prevented from joining any organisation that the government believes is not working in the interest of the country – 23% state the contrary. (Figure 20)

Figure 20: Assessment of freedom of association, by ethnicity



An overall majority of respondents claim that they are free to express their thoughts about politics; irrespective of where they are and who they are with, to protest/ attend a demonstration against social injustice and to practice their religion and its traditional customs/rituals.

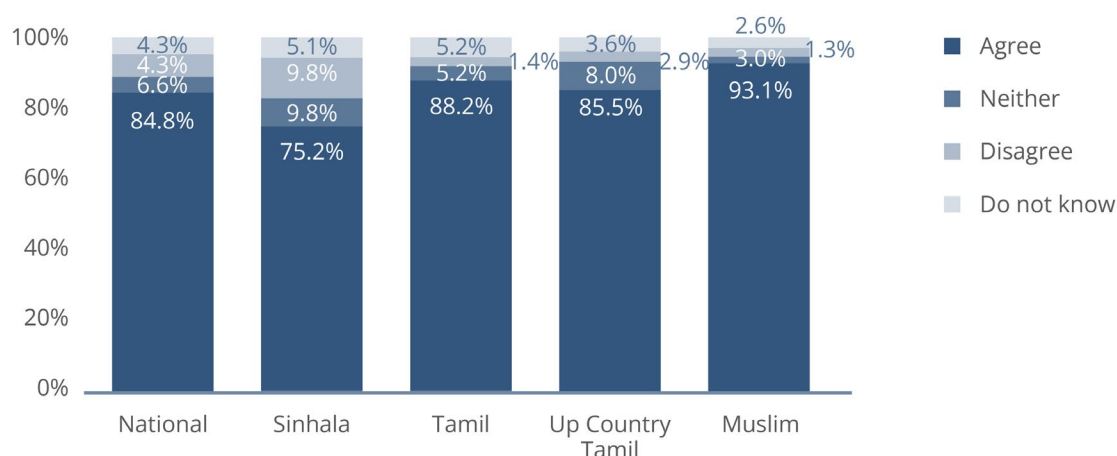
However, from those who claim that they are not at all free to express their thoughts about politics and to protest/ attend a demonstration against social injustice - it is mostly respondents across all ethnic minority communities who feel this way. From those who claim that they are not at all free to practice their religion and its traditional customs/ rituals - it is mostly respondents from the Muslim community who hold this view. (Table 5)

Table 5: Assessment of the current level of freedom of expression/participation, by ethnicity

		National	Sinhala	Tamil	Up Country Tamil	Muslim
To express your thoughts about politics, irrespective of where you are and who you are with	Completely free	26.7%	35.4%	14.7%	21.9%	32.3%
	Somewhat free	49.6%	54.1%	47.2%	49.6%	46.6%
	Not at all free	18.6%	8.5%	29.0%	23.4%	16.8%
	Base	971	316	286	137	232
To protest/ attend a demonstration against social injustice (rising cost of living, increase in bus fares etc.)	Completely free	26.3%	37.0%	14.7%	21.7%	28.9%
	Somewhat free	48.9%	52.5%	49.0%	55.8%	39.7%
	Not at all free	19.7%	8.9%	28.3%	18.8%	24.1%
	Base	972	316	286	138	232
To practice your religion and its traditional customs/rituals	Completely free	54.8%	75.6%	47.7%	47.1%	39.9%
	Somewhat free	36.0%	19.9%	42.2%	44.2%	45.5%
	Not at all free	7.1%	3.5%	7.7%	5.8%	12.0%
	Base	974	316	287	138	233

An overall majority of respondents (84.8%) are of the view that the rights of the minority groups should be protected even if the majority in the area does not agree. This sentiment is shared across all ethnic communities. (Figure 21)

Figure 21: The rights of minority groups should be protected even if the majority does not agree, by ethnicity



## Devolution of power

On devolution of power, nearly a majority (47.3%) indicates that powers of the Provincial Councils should be increased; whilst one fifth of the respondents (21.5%) indicate that the powers of the Provincial Council should not be increased.

From those who indicate that powers of the Provincial Councils should be increased, it is mostly respondents from the minority communities (Tamil 61.7%, Muslim 60.7% and Up Country Tamil 51.8%) who hold this view. From those who believe that the powers of the Provincial Councils should not be increased, it is predominantly respondents from the Sinhala community (40.8%) who hold this view. (Table 6)

Table 6: Devolution of powers by ethnicity

	National	Sinhala	Tamil	Up Country Tamil	Muslim
Powers of the Provincial Councils should be increased.	47.3%	22.5%	61.7%	51.8%	60.7%
Powers of the Provincial Councils should not be increased	21.5%	40.8%	7.3%	7.9%	20.9%
Neither	8.0%	13.3%	7.0%	5.8%	3.4%
Base	976	316	287	139	234

On political representation, a majority (70.4%) of respondents agree that each ethnic group should have the right to elect a certain number of members to Parliament that is proportional to their numbers.

A slight majority of respondents (53.5%) are of the opinion that it is important for public officials to represent their ethnicity or religion. This sentiment is mostly shared amongst respondents from the Muslim (71.2%) and the Tamil (51%) communities.

On political parties based on ethnicity and religion, a slight majority (51%) is of the view that it is problematic for a country like Sri Lanka to have ethnic or religious based political parties. (Table 7)

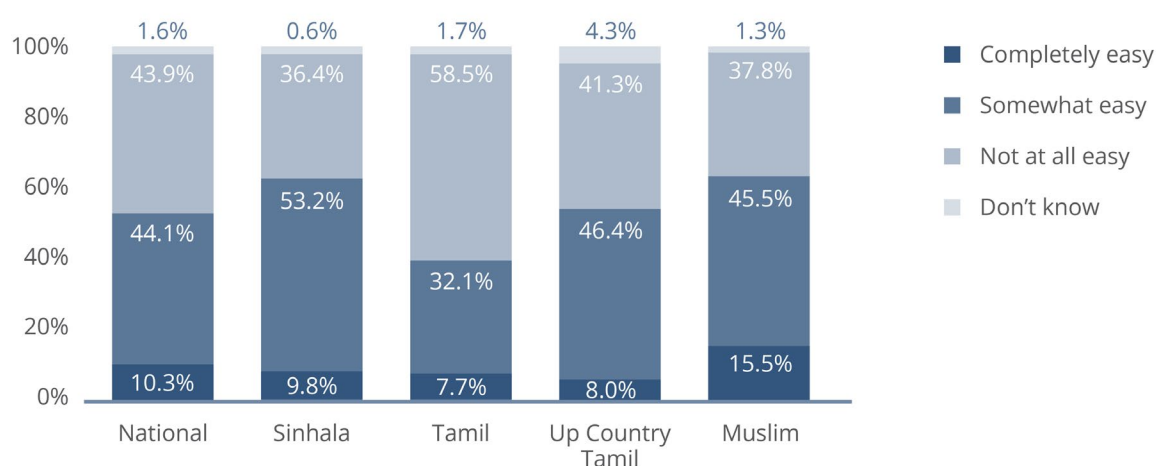
Table 7: Political representation by ethnicity

	AGREE				
	National	Sinhala	Tamil	Up Country Tamil	Muslim
Each ethnic group should have the right elect a certain number of members to the parliament proportionate to the respective ethnic population	70.4%	50.8%	79.4%	72.5%	84.5%
<b>Base</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>233</b>
It is important to me that public officials represent my ethnicity / religion (Note to enumerator: public officials include all elected officials UC/ MC/ PC/ Parliament)	53.5%	46.3%	51.0%	44.9%	71.2%
<b>Base</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>233</b>
I think it is problematic for a country like Sri Lanka to have ethnicity/ religion based political parties	51.0%	51.9%	57.3%	58.4%	37.8%
<b>Base</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>233</b>

## Socio-economic entitlements

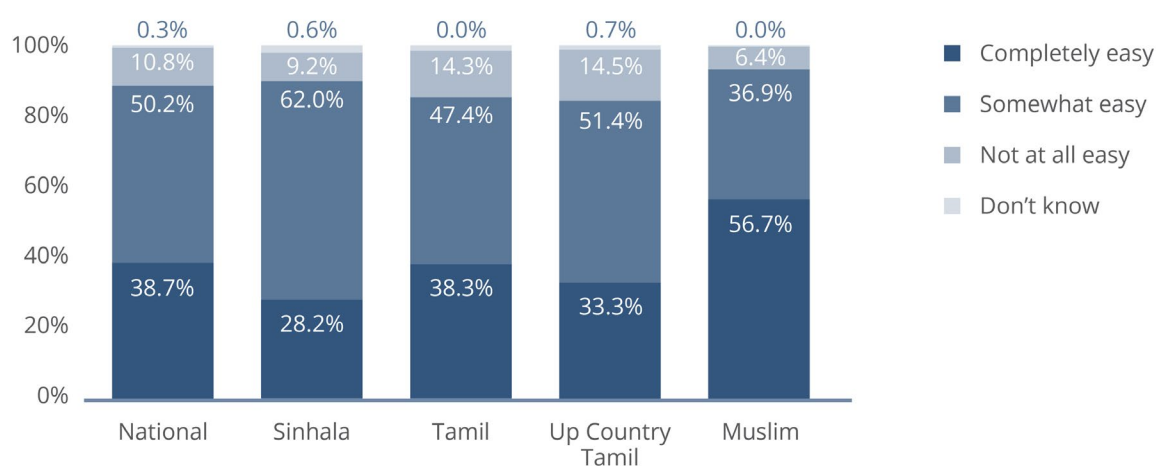
Although nearly 55% of the respondents indicate that they have easy access to employment or economic activities, a significant proportion of respondents (43.9%) claim that access to employment and economic activities is not at all easy. From those who claim that it is not at all easy, it is mostly respondents from the Tamil community (58.5%) who hold this view. (Figure 22)

Figure 22: Access to employment/economic activities, by ethnicity



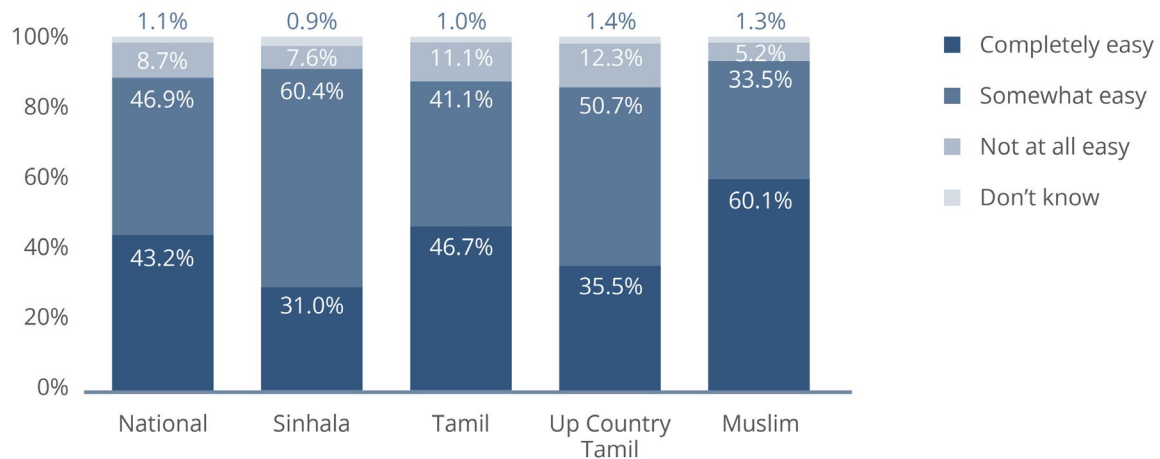
On access to health services, a clear majority of the respondents (nearly 90%) claim that they have easy access to health services with 10.8% claiming that access to health services is not at all easy. From those who indicate that accessing health services is not at all easy, it is mostly respondents from the Up Country Tamil (14.5%) and Tamil (14.3%) communities who hold this view. (Figure 23)

Figure 23: Access to health services, by ethnicity



On access to education, whilst an overall majority (90%) indicates that they have easy access to education, around 9% of respondents claim that it is not at all easy. From those who claim that it is not at all easy, it is mostly respondents from the Up Country Tamil (12.3%) and Tamil (11.1%) communities who hold this view. (Figure 24)

Figure 24: Access to education, by ethnicity

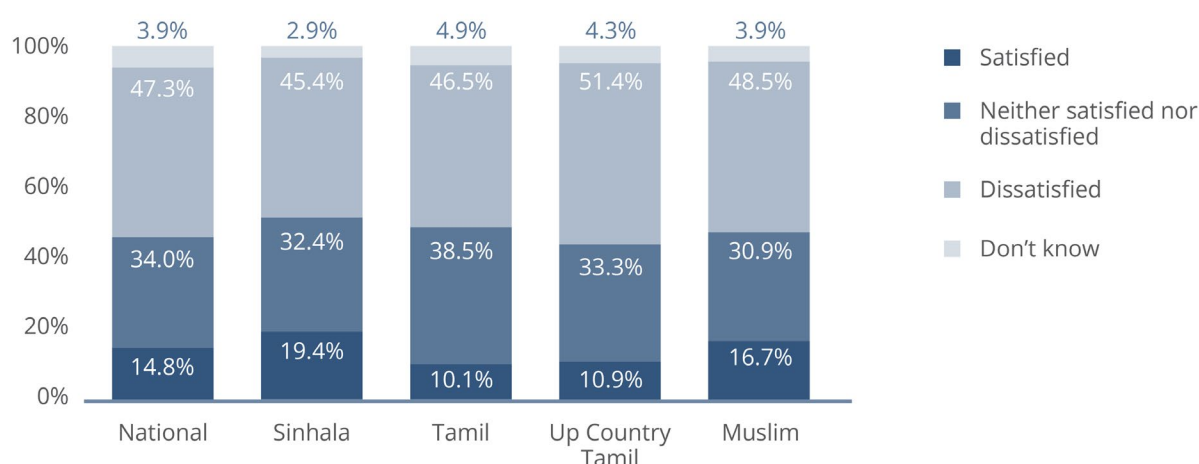


# ON THE JUDICIARY

## Satisfaction towards law and order

A significant proportion of respondents (47.3%) claim that they are dissatisfied with the way in which law and order is maintained in the country. Only 14.8% of respondents indicate that they are satisfied. Another considerable proportion of respondents (34%) claim to be sceptical about it. (Figure 25)

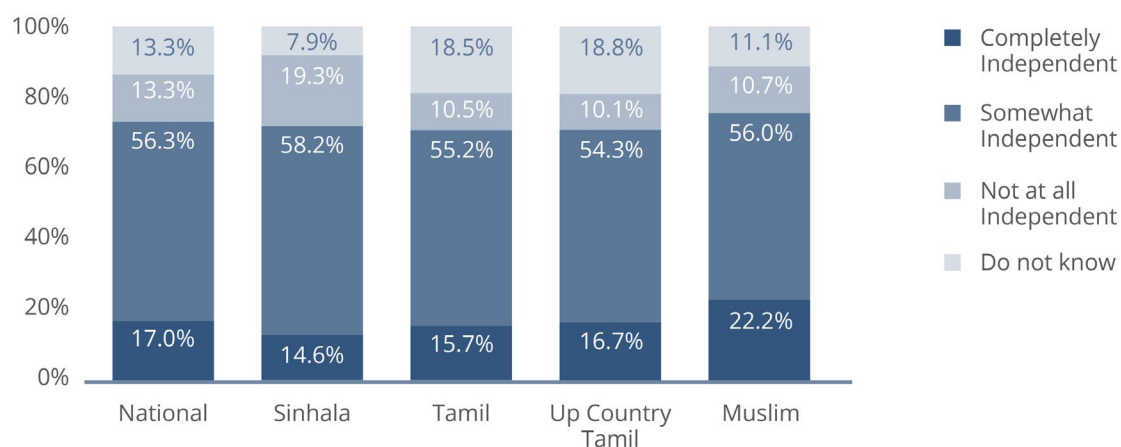
Figure 25: Satisfaction towards law and order, by ethnicity



## Independence of the judiciary

On independence of Sri Lanka's courts and judges – a significant proportion of respondents (73.3%) believe that they are independent. Only 13.3% of respondents are of the view that the judiciary is not at all independent. From those who claim that the judiciary is not at all independent, it is mostly respondents from the minority communities who hold this view. (Figure 26)

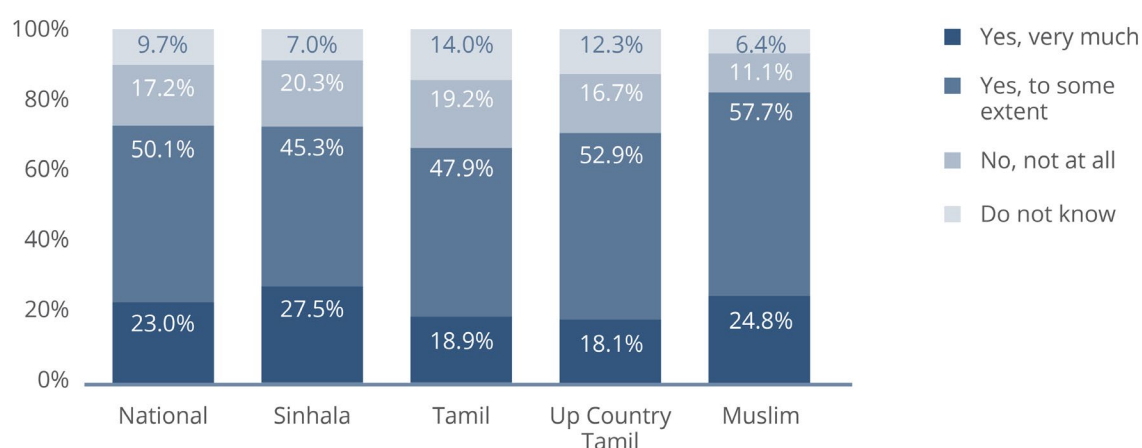
Figure 26: Independence of the judiciary, by ethnicity



## Procedural justice

When the respondents were asked if they thought they would be treated fairly by Sri Lankan legal institutions irrespective of their ethnicity or religion, exactly half of the respondents (50.1%) indicate that they would be treated somewhat fairly. Nearly one-fifth of the respondents (17.2%) indicate that they would not be treated fairly at all due to their ethnic or religious background. (Figure 27)

Figure 27: Fair treatment irrespective of ethnicity or religion, by ethnicity



On procedural justice, a majority of respondents believe that if an individual belonged to an economically poor background (57.4%), a minority religious group (52.4%) or a minority ethnic community (53.6%) they will be unfairly treated by the judicial system, if accused for crime and corruption.

Furthermore, a majority of respondents were of the view that if an individual belonged to the majority ethnic community (56.7%) or was from the ruling party (60.5%) they would be fairly treated by the judicial system, if accused for crime and corruption. (Figures 28-34)



## A Constitutional Performance Assessment: National Poll

Figure 28: Anticipated treatment of those accused of crime and corruption, by National

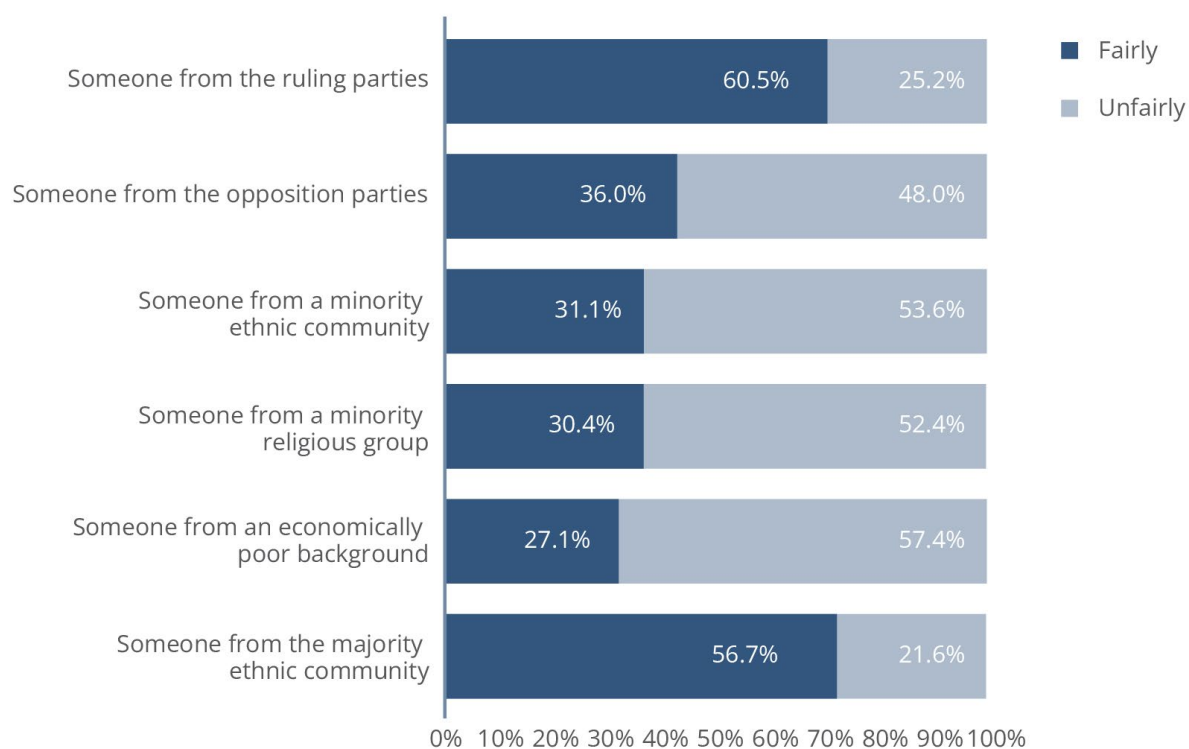


Figure 29: Anticipated treatment of those from ruling parties who are accused of crime and corruption, by ethnicity

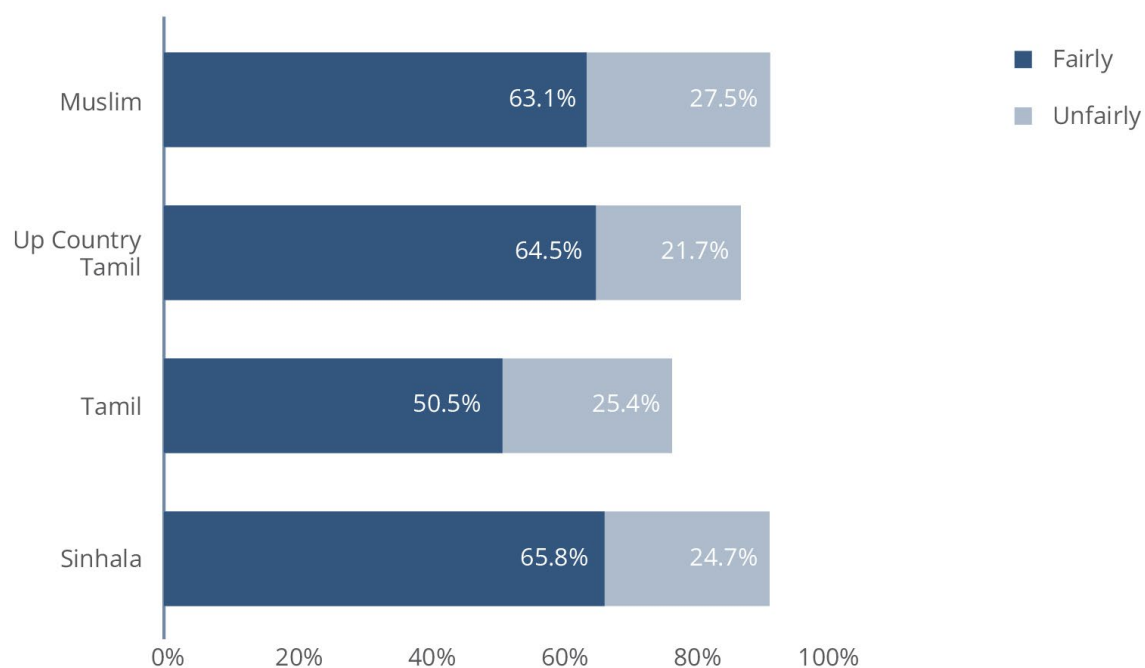


Figure 30: Anticipated treatment of those who are from an opposition political party who are accused of crime and corruption, by ethnicity

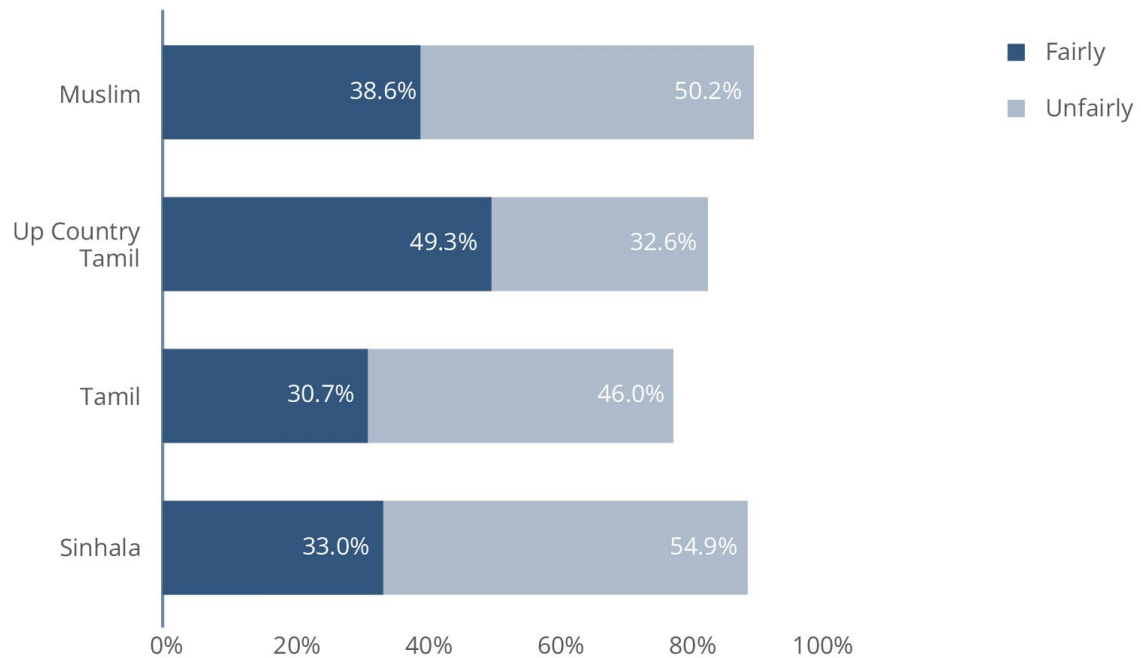
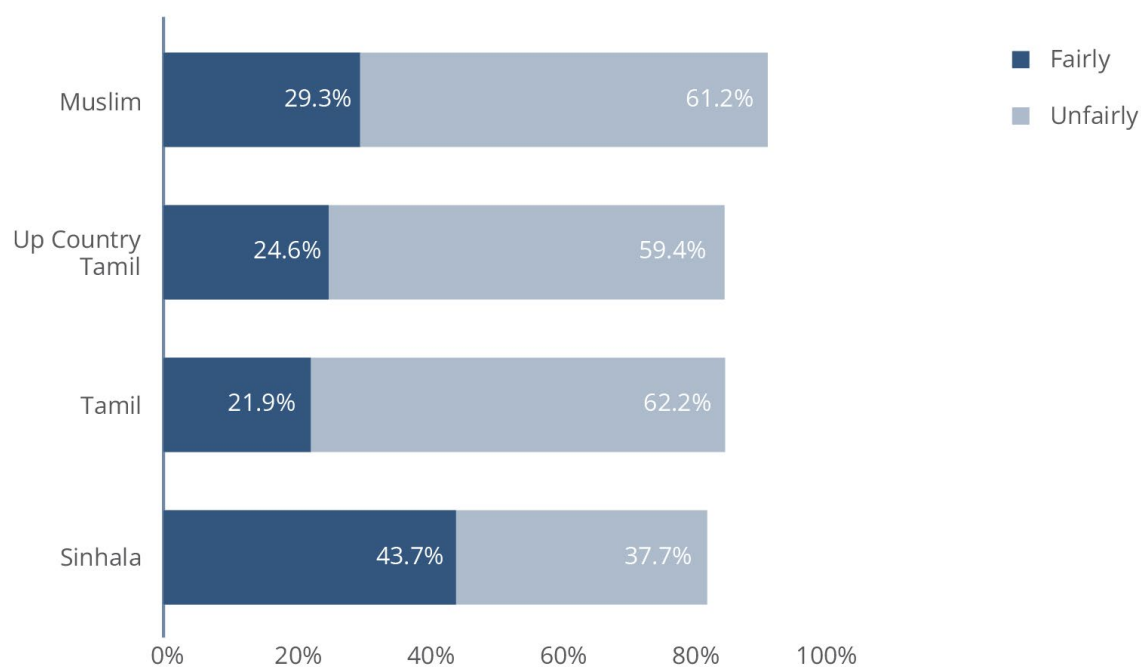


Figure 31: Anticipated treatment of those from an ethnic minority group who are accused of crime and corruption, by ethnicity



## A Constitutional Performance Assessment: National Poll

Figure 32: Anticipated treatment of those from a minority religious group who are accused of crime and corruption, by ethnicity

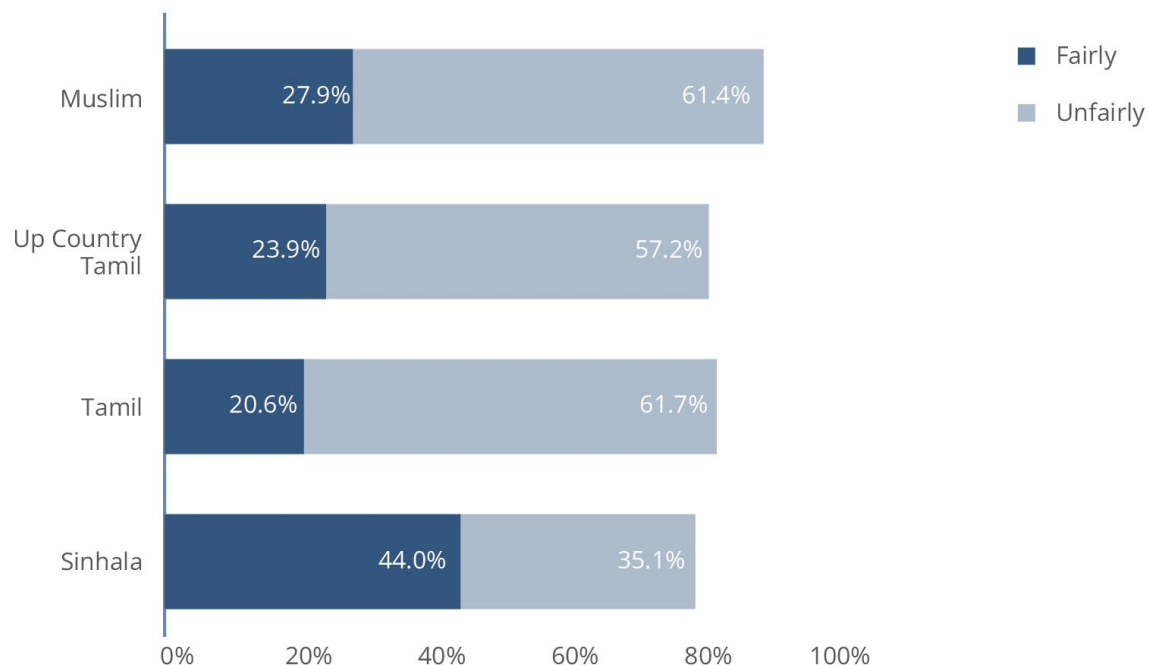


Figure 33: Anticipated treatment of those from an economically poor background who are accused of crime and corruption, by ethnicity

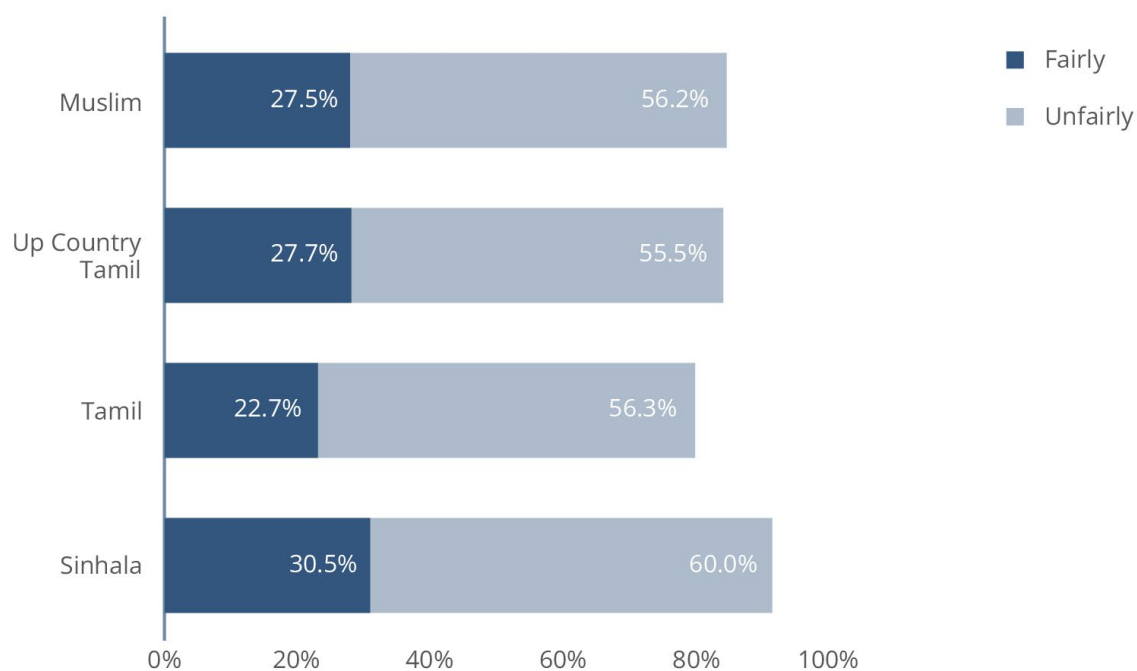
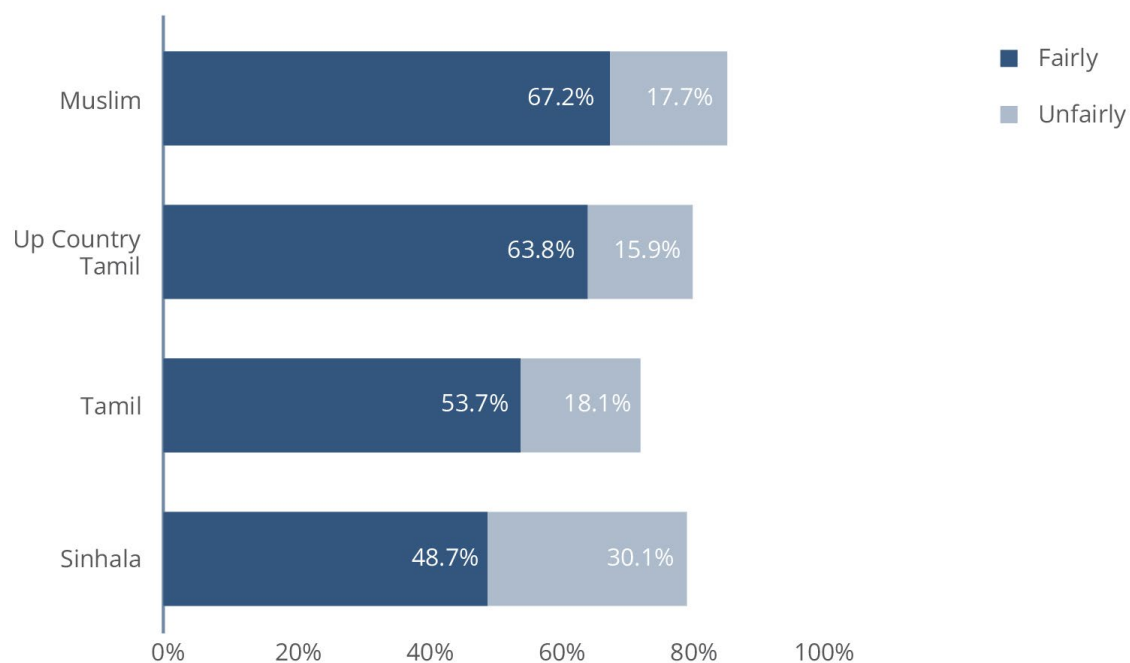


Figure 34: Anticipated treatment of those from the majority community who are accused of crime and corruption, by ethnicity



## ABOUT THE PARTNERS



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN  
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.

Sri Lanka

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom was established in Germany in 1958 by the first president of the Republic of Germany, Theodor Heuss. The Foundation aims to promote the goal of making the principle of freedom valid for the dignity of all people and in all areas of society, both in Germany and abroad.

Our work is funded by the German Parliament through the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, the Foreign Office and, increasingly by the European Union. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom works in over 60 countries worldwide.

In South Asia, FNF has offices in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Additionally FNF works with partners in Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives.

The association of our Foundation for Freedom with Sri Lanka is five decades old. During the period 1968 to 2013, and upon recommencing its work in 2016 the Foundation's work focuses on the core values of freedom and responsibility.



The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) is an independent, non-partisan organization that focuses primarily on issues of governance and conflict resolution. Formed in 1996 in the firm belief that civil society's vital contribution to the public policy debate requires strengthening, CPA is committed to programmes of research and advocacy through which public policy is critiqued, alternatives identified and disseminated.

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Social Indicator (SI) is the survey research unit of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and was established in September 1999, filling a longstanding vacuum for a permanent, professional and independent polling facility in Sri Lanka on social and political issues. Driven by the strong belief that polling is an instrument that empowers democracy, SI has been conducting polls on a large range of socio-economic and political issues since its inception.

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