

# CONFIDENCE IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE INDEX



The Centre for Policy Alternatives  
Social Indicator

May 2022

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# INTRODUCTION

The Gotabaya Rajapaksa regime promised wide ranging wins for the country following their presidential victory in November 2019. One of the main features being to strengthen national security - coupled with a wide array of assurances that focused on combatting corruption, an effective governance mechanism that ensured a well- disciplined political setting.

Professing to have a dream team spearheaded by a strong man to lead the nation, the incumbent President and his government reassured not only its constituency, but the citizenry as a whole, that challenges faced as a result of the pandemic, as well as the growing economic crisis could be surpassed effortlessly considering their past record of winning nearly a three decade long civil war.

Despite its promised grandeur came a magnitude of challenges that were met with sheer carelessness and poor management. Resisting seeking financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund to tax cuts, to dwindling foreign currency reserves, to import bans and a complete ban on chemical fertiliser, led to island wide shortages in power and energy, and basic essential items such as food and medicine etc. Whilst a majority of Sri Lankans have had to stand in long queues for many hours to obtain basic commodities given the shortage of essential items, there are a considerable proportion of the population that find it hard to meet their daily needs. This resulted in non-violent protests across the country that demanded

the resignation of the Rajapaksa government which has led to an ongoing political crisis in the country.

This survey report is the second wave of the Confidence in Democratic Governance Index, a scientific opinion poll that assessed public experiences as a result of the crisis, the causes for it, as well as the solutions to it from the lenses of the Sri Lankan public. As such, this study not only enhances ongoing political debate, but also provides data driven research to policy makers, academics and various local and international stakeholders. This in turn supports a better understanding into the different dynamics prevalent among various social groups in society, which could help advocate for more sustainable policy interventions.

The research study was conducted by Social Indicator (SI) the survey research arm of the Centre for Policy Alternatives. Since its inception in 1999, SI has employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of research that focus on a wide range of socio- political issues in Sri Lanka. The survey research team consisted of Dr.Pradeep Peiris, Sakina Moinudeen, M.Krishnamoorthy and Ishara Jayarathne. We sincerely thank Dr.Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu for his support in making this study a success. We appreciate Kaushini Dammalage for her invaluable research assistance and support. The cover photographs are courtesy of Selvaraja Rajasegar, Editor of Maatram (<https://maatram.org>) and Nazly Ahmed.

# METHODOLOGY

The Confidence in Democratic Governance Index (Wave 2) was carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire with 1200 sample respondents from the four main ethnic communities (Sinhala, Tamil, Up Country Tamil and Muslim). Face to face interviews in the first language of both the respondents and field enumerators were conducted across the 25 districts of the country. The sample distribution captured men and women from both urban and rural localities in all districts. A multi-staged random stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample locations, and the respondents were selected using the snowball sampling technique within sample locations. Prior to commencing field work the field enumerators were given an

extensive training on the survey research tool and field techniques. The field briefings were conducted in the first language of the field enumerators.

Field work for the national poll was conducted during 19th to 25th April 2022. A total of 76 field enumerators both males and females from the four main ethnic communities, participated in the study. A little more than 10 % of the total sample was quality checked in order to ensure the quality of the data collected. 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 PUBLIC EXPERIENCES

- Nationally, 88% of respondents claim that either they or a member of their immediate family had to stand in queues during the past one month to obtain essential commodities such as, gas, fuel, milk powder, fertiliser etc. This sentiment is shared across both urban and rural localities, as well as across all ethnic communities.
- An overwhelming majority (90%) of respondents claim that their income or the income of an immediate family member has been affected as a result of the economic crisis.
- Nearly half of the respondents (48.5%) claim that either they or a member of their immediate family participated in the protests organised against those responsible for the current economic crisis.

## PERCEPTION ON ACCOUNTABILITY

- A majority of respondents (62%) indicate that the economic mismanagement of Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government led the country to the current crisis situation. From an ethnic perspective, a majority across all ethnic communities claim that the current government's economic mismanagement is to be blamed for the crisis situation in the country.

## CONFIDENCE IN REACHING NORMALCY

- The public appear to be sceptical about the country's future with nearly 60% of the respondents stating that it will take a long time, for the country to return to normalcy. One fourth of the respondents claim that they did not know as to when the country would reach normalcy.

## PERCEPTION ON PROPOSED DEMANDS

- A significant majority (87.3%) are of the opinion that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa should resign.
- Nearly 90% of the respondents are of the opinion that Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa should resign.
- Nine out of ten respondents believe that the Rajapaksa family should leave Sri Lankan politics. This sentiment is shared across ethnic communities, age categories and locality.
- Nearly 74% are of the view that an interim government comprising of all parties in Parliament should be established until the country overcomes the current crisis, nearly one fifth of the respondents oppose this.
- On all 225 Members of Parliament resigning, nearly 60% of the respondents agree to this demand, nearly 34% oppose this. From those who are sceptical it is mostly respondents from the Muslim community who hold this view.
- A significant majority (74%) of respondents claim that the executive presidential system should be abolished.
- Nearly 74% of the respondents agree that the 20th amendment to the Constitution should be repealed, and that an amendment similar to the 19th Amendment should be introduced.
- A significant majority of respondents are of the opinion that the country should be governed by a council of experts until it overcomes the current crisis.
- An overwhelming majority (96.2%) of respondents are of the opinion that politicians should be audited and all their unaccounted wealth should be confiscated by the State. There appears to be significant support towards this across ethnic communities, age categories and locality.

**PUBLIC EXPERIENCES**

## CONSEQUENCES FACED DUE TO SHORTAGES IN ESSENTIAL ITEMS

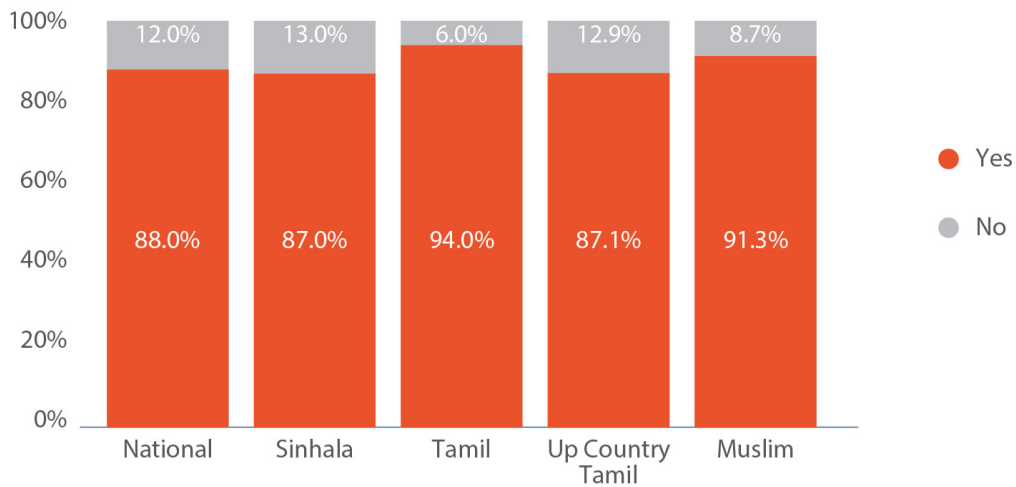
Considering the rise in shortages for essential items such as food, medicine and fuel etc. the respondents were asked to indicate as to whether they had to stand in a queue to obtain essential items such as milk powder, gas, fertiliser or any such vital commodity during the past one month.

Nationally, 88% of the respondents claim that either they or a member of their immediate family had to stand in queues to obtain these commodities - this sentiment is shared across

both urban and rural localities, as well as across all ethnic communities. A mere 12 % indicate that they did not have to do so.

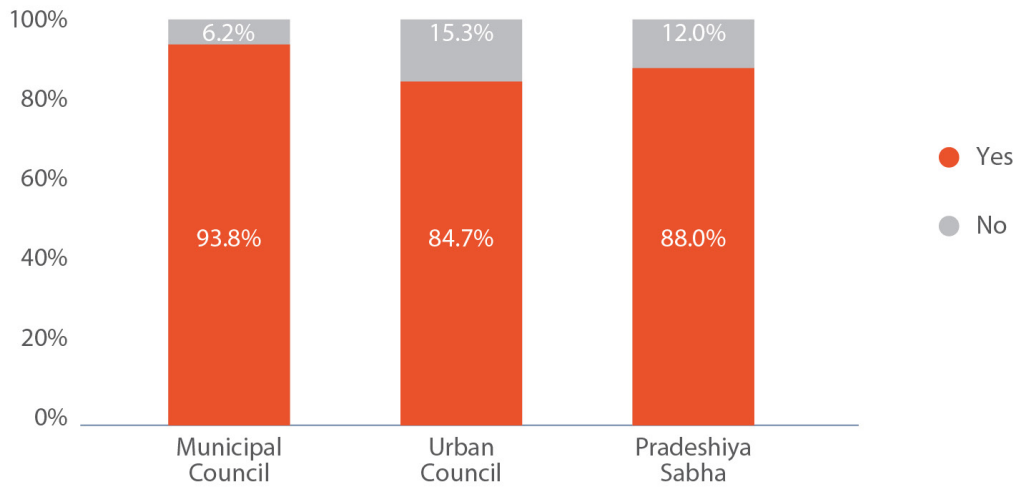
In terms of locality, although a majority across Municipal, Urban and Pradeshiya Sabha areas state that they had to stand in queues to obtain essential items, it is evident that an overwhelming percentage of respondents from Municipal Council areas seem to have been mostly affected.

**Figure 1: Have you or any member of your immediate family had to stand in a queue to obtain any essential items such as fertiliser, gas, fuel, milk powder or any such item during the past one month? by National and Ethnicity**

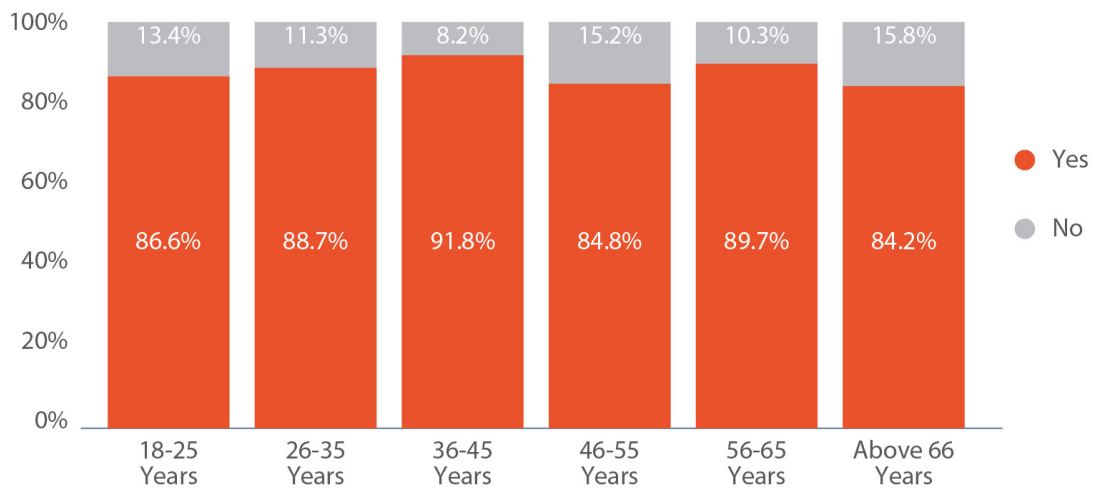




**Figure 2: Have you or any member of your immediate family had to stand in a queue to obtain any essential items such as fertiliser, gas, fuel, milk powder or any such item during the past one month? by Locality**



**Figure 3: Have you or any member of your immediate family had to stand in a queue to obtain any essential items such as fertiliser, gas, fuel, milk powder or any such item during the past one month? by Age**

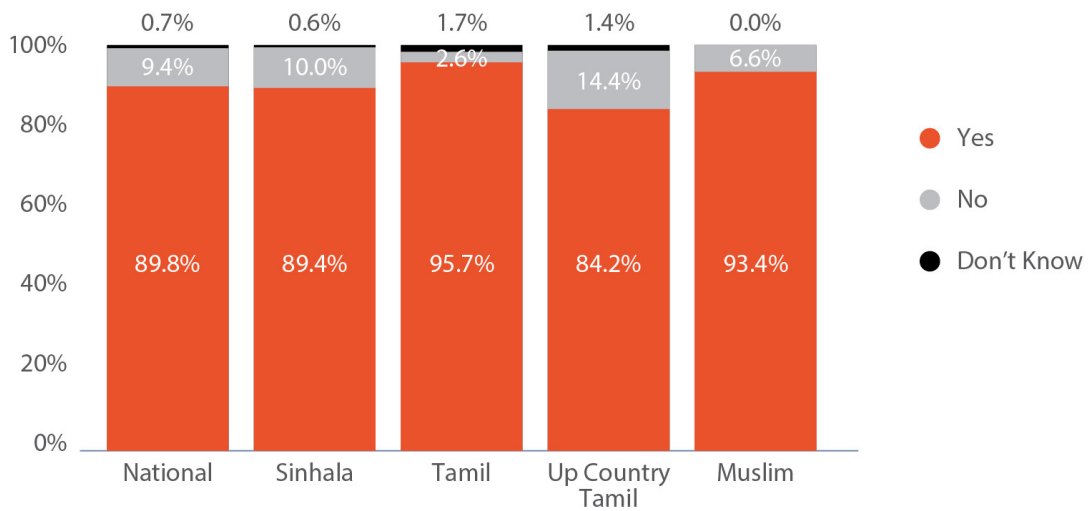


## IMPACT ON PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

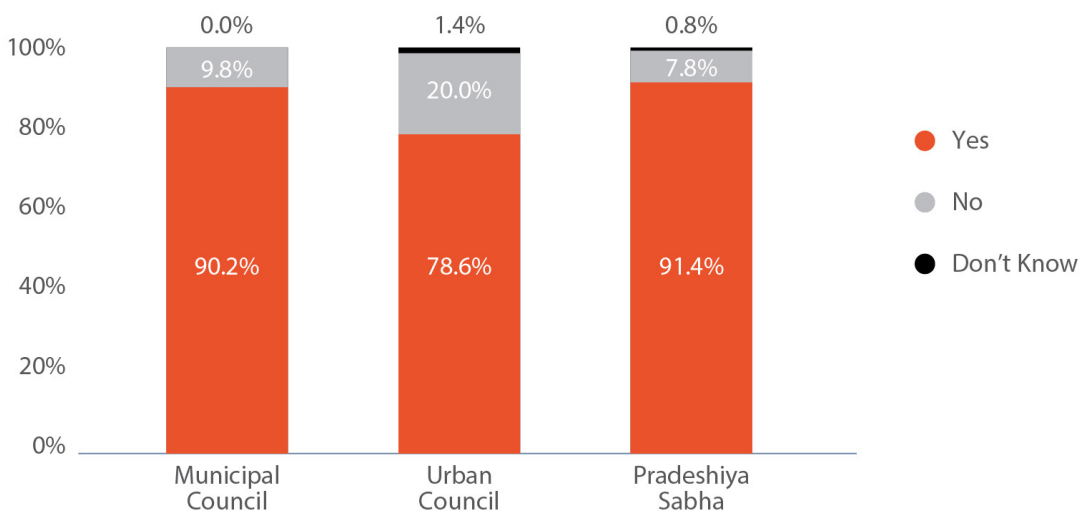
An overwhelming majority (nearly 90%) of respondents claim that their income or the income of someone from their immediate family has been affected as a result of the

economic crisis. A higher proportion of those who hold this sentiment are from both the Municipal (90.2%) and Pradeshiya Sabha (91.4%) areas.

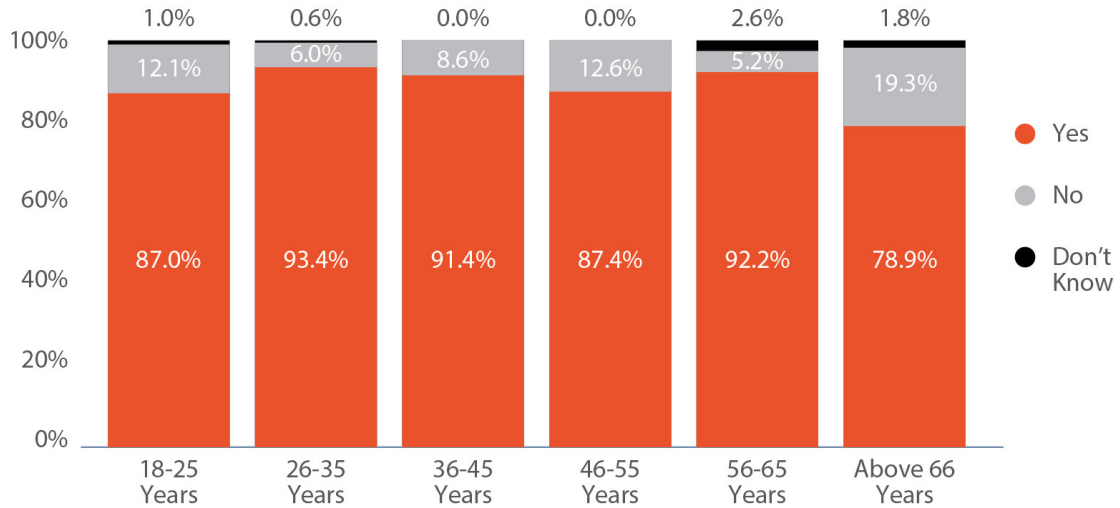
**Figure 4: Has your income or someone from your immediate family’s income been affected as a result of the economic crisis? by National and Ethnicity**



**Figure 5: Has your income or someone from your immediate family’s income been affected as a result of the economic crisis? by Locality**



**Figure 6: Has your income or someone from your immediate family’s income been affected as a result of the economic crisis? by Age**

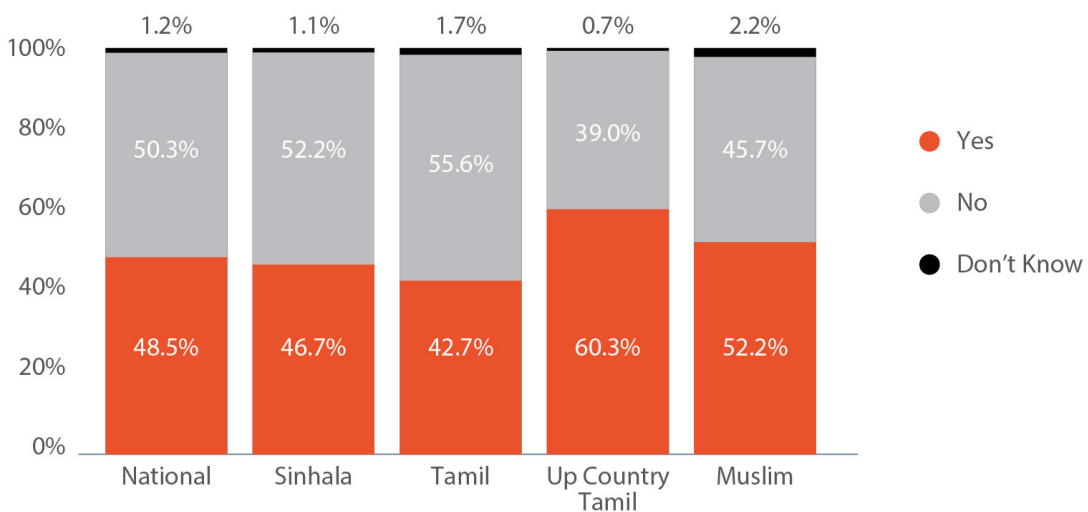


## VIBRANT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

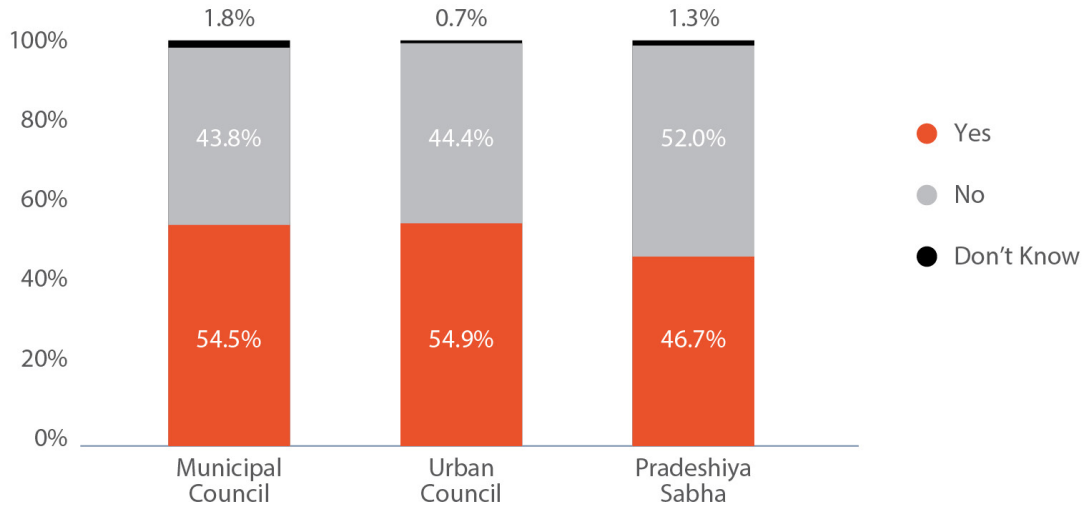
Non-violent protests against the current regime and its system of governance commenced in March and are ongoing across various parts of the country. Considering that these protests are only gaining more momentum by the day, the survey aimed to assess the level of overall civic participation prevalent within society. As such, the survey

revealed that nearly half of the respondents (48.5%) claim that either they or a member of their immediate family have participated in the protests organised against those responsible for the current economic crisis. There appears to be a high level of participation across all ethnic communities, age categories and locality.

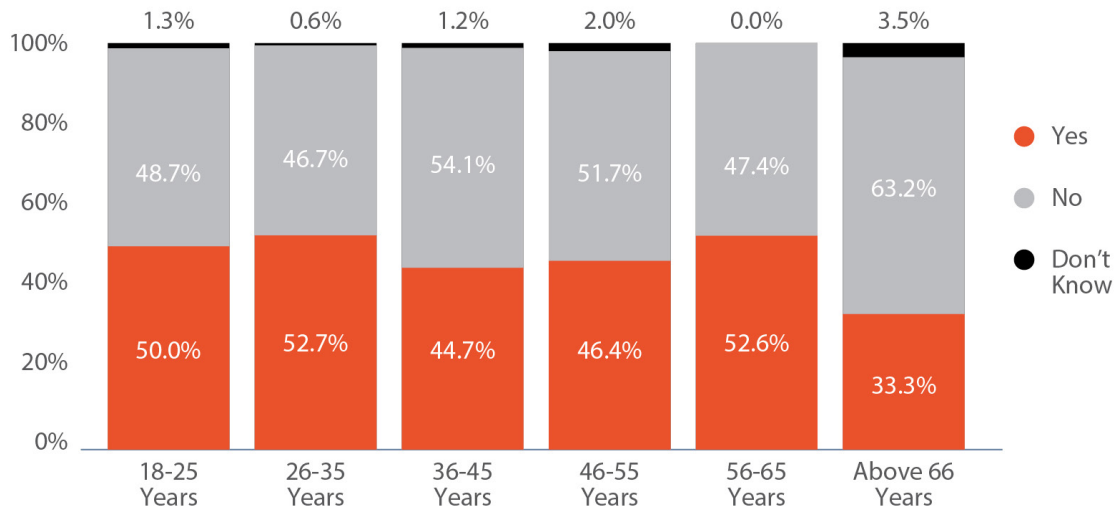
**Figure 7: Have you or any member of your immediate family participated in any of the protests organised against those who are responsible for the current economic crisis? by National and Ethnicity**



**Figure 8: Have you or any member of your immediate family participated in any of the protests organised against those who are responsible for the current economic crisis? by Locality**



**Figure 9: Have you or any member of your immediate family participated in any of the protests organised against those who are responsible for the current economic crisis? by Age**



# PERCEPTION ON ACCOUNTABILITY

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT CRISIS IN SRI LANKA?

When asked as to who they thought was responsible for the current crisis situation in the country, a majority of respondents (62%) indicate that the economic mismanagement of Gotabaya Rajapaksa’s government led the country to the current crisis situation.

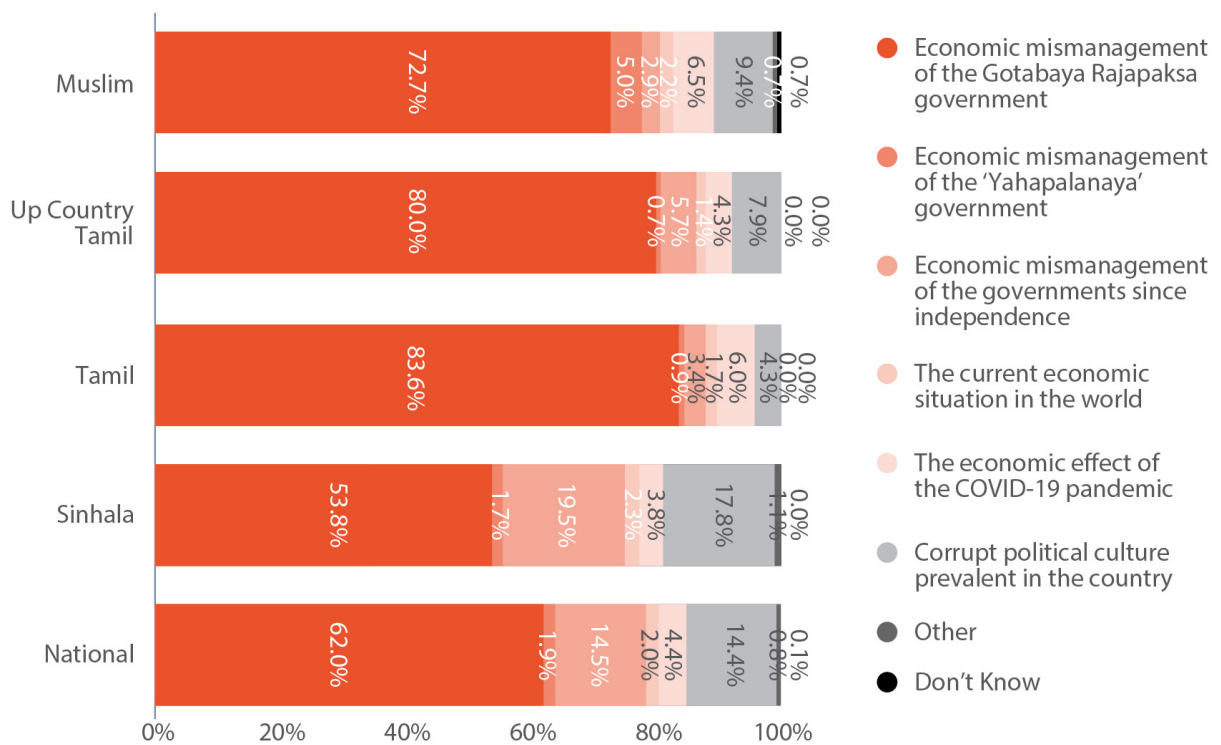
Nearly 15% of the respondents are of the opinion that it is due to the economic mismanagement of successive governments since Sri Lanka’s independence. A further 14.4% are of the opinion that it is due to the corrupt political culture prevalent in the country.

From an ethnic perspective, a majority across all ethnic communities claim that the current

government’s economic mismanagement is to be blamed for the crisis situation in the country. There’s a considerable higher percentage amongst the ethnic minority communities who feel this way, in comparison to the respondents from the Sinhala community.

On the other hand, in comparison to the ethnic minority communities, it is mostly respondents from the Sinhala community who believe that economic mismanagement of successive governments, as well as the corrupt political culture in the country are to be blamed for the current crisis situation.

Figure 10: Who is responsible for the current economic crisis? by National and Ethnicity



**Table 1: Who is responsible for the current economic crisis? by Locality**

	<b>Municipal Council</b>	<b>Urban Council</b>	<b>Pradeshiya Sabha</b>
Economic mismanagement of the Gotabaya Rajapaksa government	69.6%	71.5%	59.7%
Economic mismanagement of the 'Yahapalanaya' government	6.3%	2.1%	1.3%
Economic mismanagement of the governments since independence	10.7%	6.9%	16.0%
The current economic situation in the world	0.0%	1.4%	2.4%
The economic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic	5.4%	0.7%	4.8%
Corrupt political culture prevalent in the country	8.0%	15.3%	15.0%
Other	0.0%	2.1%	0.7%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
<b>Base</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>952</b>

**Table 2: Who is responsible for the current economic crisis? by Age**

	<b>18 -25 Years</b>	<b>26 – 35 Years</b>	<b>36 – 45 Years</b>	<b>46 – 55 Years</b>	<b>56 – 65 Years</b>	<b>Above 66 Years</b>
Economic mismanagement of the Gotabaya Rajapaksa government	57.7%	64.8%	64.2%	58.9%	66.7%	55.9%
Economic mismanagement of the 'Yahapalanaya' government	1.3%	1.6%	2.7%	2.6%	0.9%	3.4%
Economic mismanagement of the governments since independence	21.0%	14.8%	13.6%	7.9%	7.7%	11.9%
The current economic situation in the world	0.7%	2.8%	1.2%	4.6%	2.6%	1.7%
The economic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic	4.3%	2.5%	3.5%	4.0%	6.8%	16.9%
Corrupt political culture prevalent in the country	14.8%	13.2%	14.8%	20.5%	13.7%	3.4%
Other	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	1.3%	1.7%	6.8%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Base</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>59</b>

**CONFIDENCE IN  
REACHING NORMALCY**



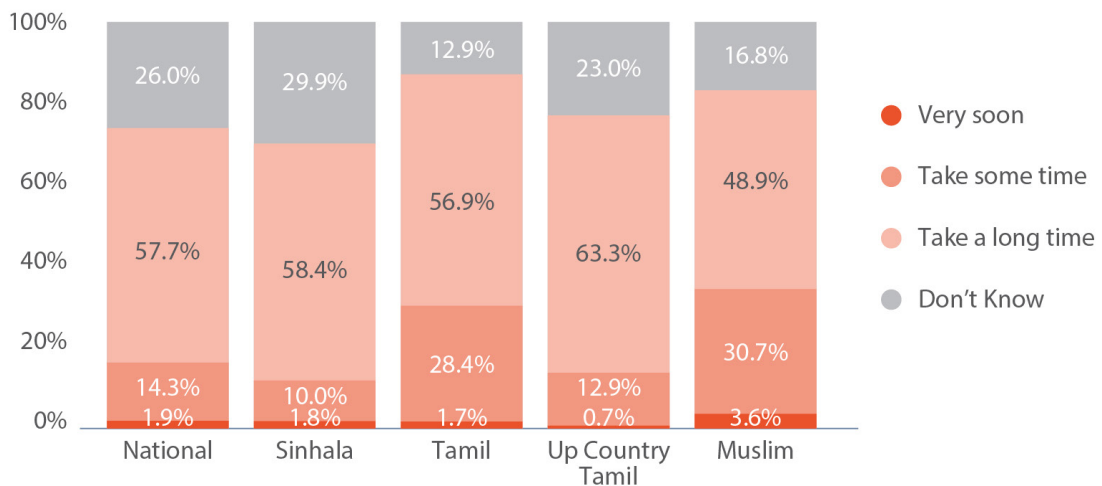
## HOW SOON DO YOU THINK THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY WILL RETURN TO ITS NORMAL STATUS?

In general, there appears to be a high level of scepticism across all ethnic communities, age categories and localities when asked about the country reaching normalcy. In order to assess the public's confidence in relation to this, the respondents were asked to indicate as to how soon they think the economy would return to its normal status. Whilst nearly 60% of the respondents were

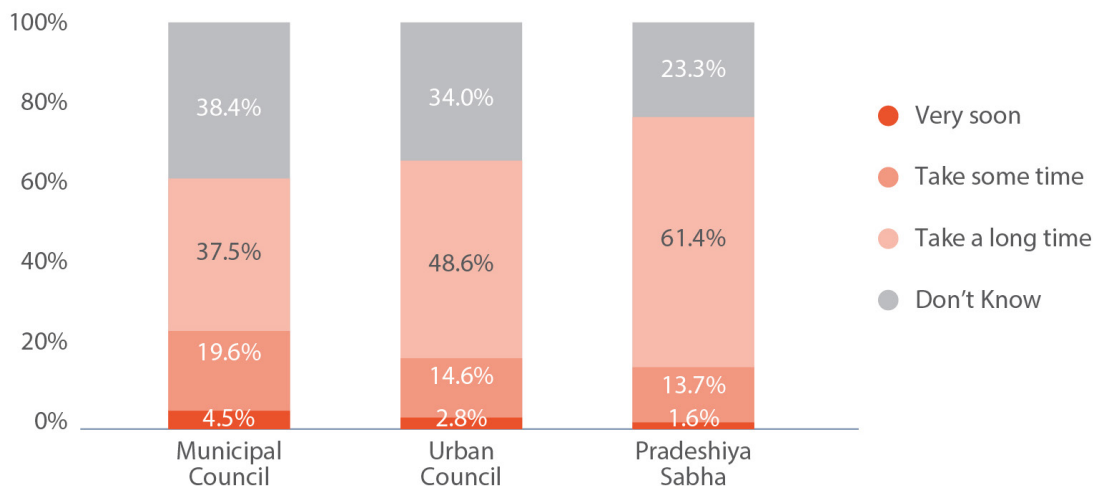
of the opinion that it will take a long time, one fourth of the respondents indicate that they did not know as to when the country would reach normalcy.

In terms of locality, it is mostly respondents from the Urban Council and Pradeshiya Sabha areas who are sceptical about the country's economy reaching normalcy.

**Figure 11: How soon do you think the country's economy will return to its normal status? by National and Ethnicity**



**Figure 12: How soon do you think the country's economy will return to its normal status? by Locality**



**Table 3: How soon do you think the country's economy will return to its normal status? by Age**

	<b>18 -25 Years</b>	<b>26 – 35 Years</b>	<b>36 – 45 Years</b>	<b>46 – 55 Years</b>	<b>56 – 65 Years</b>	<b>Above 66 Years</b>
Very soon	1.6%	0.9%	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%	1.8%
Take some times	15.1%	16.0%	10.1%	18.5%	12.9%	12.5%
Take a long time	59.0%	59.9%	59.9%	44.4%	63.8%	51.8%
Don't Know	24.3%	23.2%	27.2%	34.4%	20.7%	33.9%
Base	305	319	257	151	116	56

# **PERCEPTION ON PROPOSED DEMANDS**

There were multiple public demands that the respondents were provided with and were asked as to what extent they either agree or

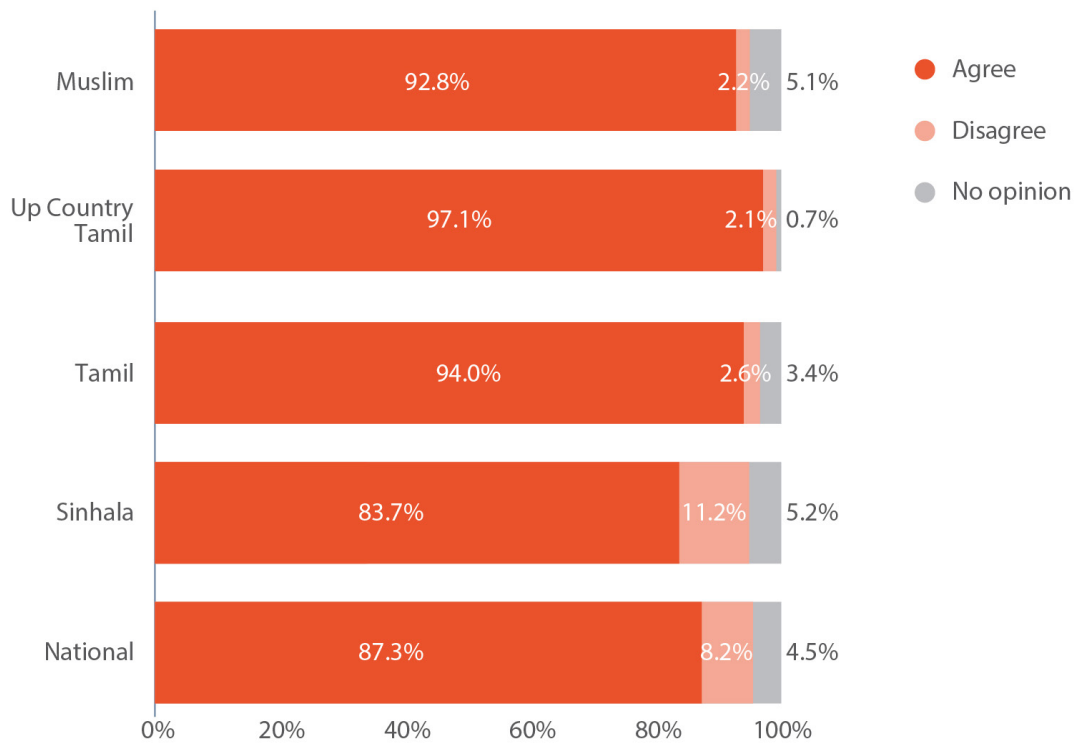
disagree with these proposals as a solution to the current crisis situation in the country.

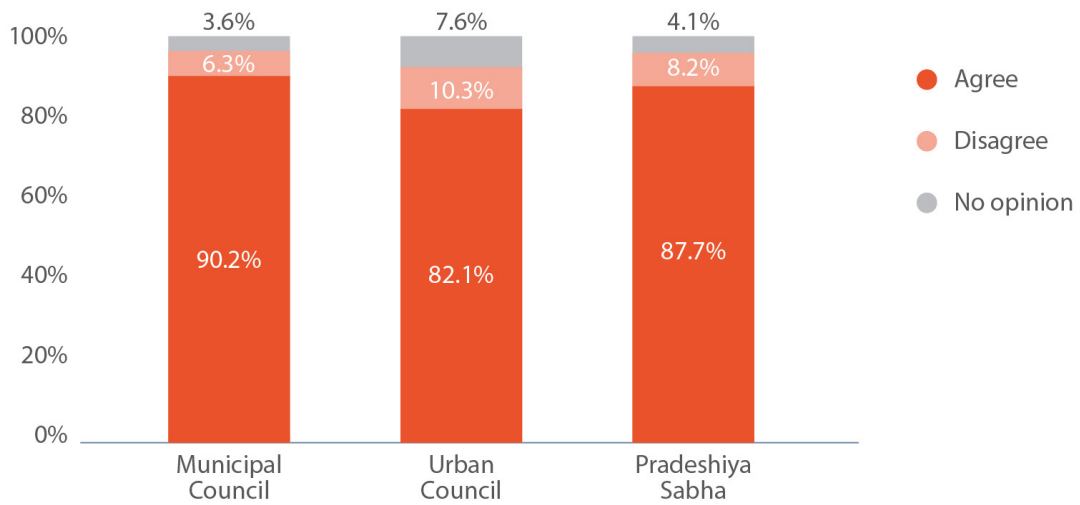
### PRESIDENT GOTABAYA RAJAPAKSA SHOULD RESIGN

A significant majority (87.3%) are of the opinion that Gotabaya Rajapaksa should resign with a mere 8.2% opposing this demand.

An overwhelming majority across all ethnic communities support the resignation of the President.

Figure 13: Perception on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa’s resignation by National and Ethnicity



**Figure 14: Perception on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation by Locality****Table 4: Perception on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation by Age**

	18 -25 Years	26 – 35 Years	36 – 45 Years	46 – 55 Years	56 – 65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	92.8%	88.4%	86.8%	81.5%	82.1%	79.3%
Disagree	3.6%	9.4%	7.8%	9.9%	12.0%	15.5%
No opinion	3.6%	2.2%	5.4%	8.6%	6.0%	5.2%
Base	306	318	258	151	117	58

## PRIME MINISTER MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA SHOULD RESIGN

Similarly, nearly 90% of the respondents are of the opinion that Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa should resign with nearly 7% opposing this view. From those who oppose it, it is mostly respondents from the Sinhala community and those above the age of 66 years who hold this view.

Figure 15: Perception on Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa’s resignation by National and Ethnicity

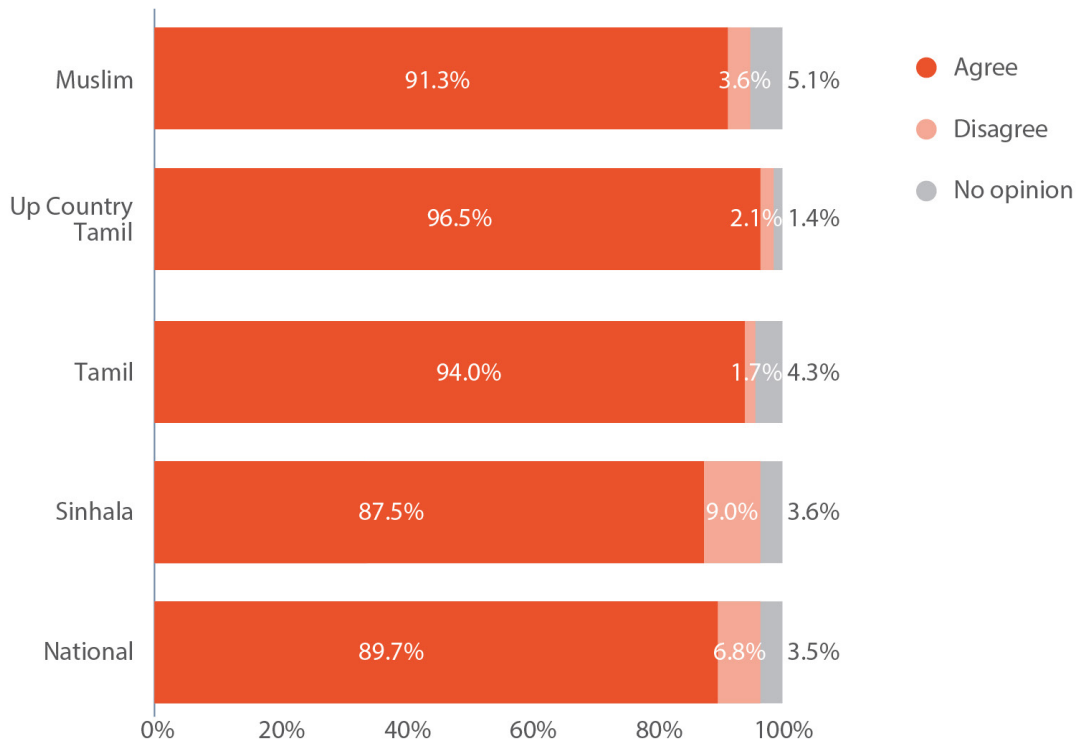
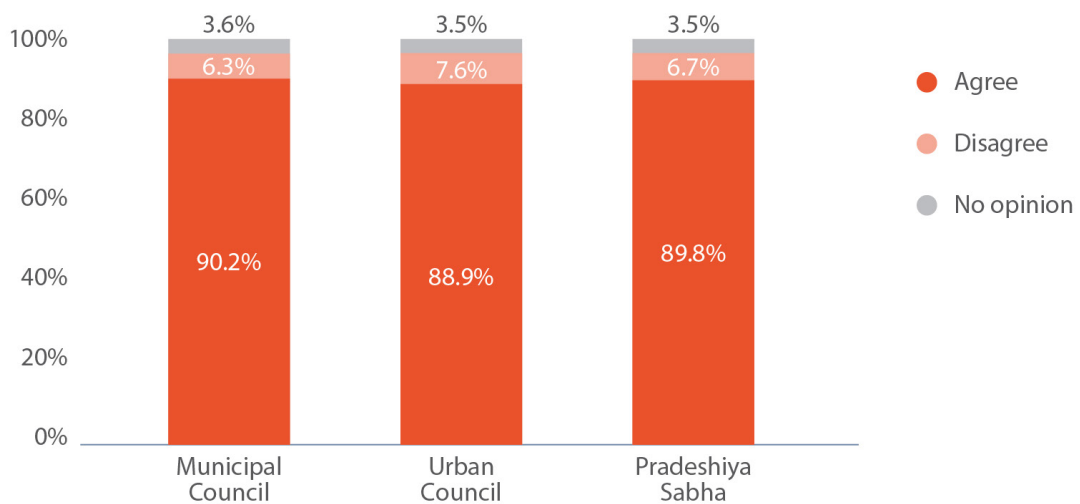


Figure 16: Perception on Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa’s resignation by Locality



**Table 5: Perception on Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa’s resignation by Age**

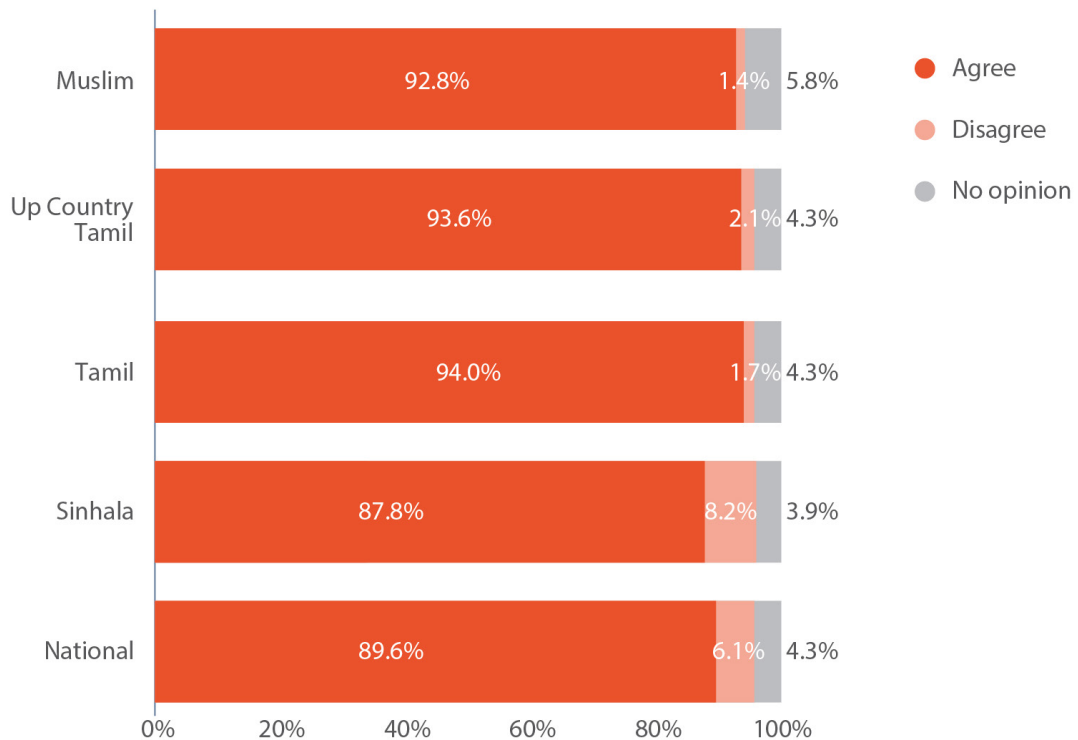
	18-25 Years	26-35 Years	36-45 Years	46-55 Years	56-65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	94.4%	90.6%	89.5%	86.7%	83.6%	80.7%
Disagree	3.3%	7.2%	6.2%	7.3%	12.1%	14.0%
No opinion	2.3%	2.2%	4.3%	6.0%	4.3%	5.3%
Base	306	319	257	150	116	57

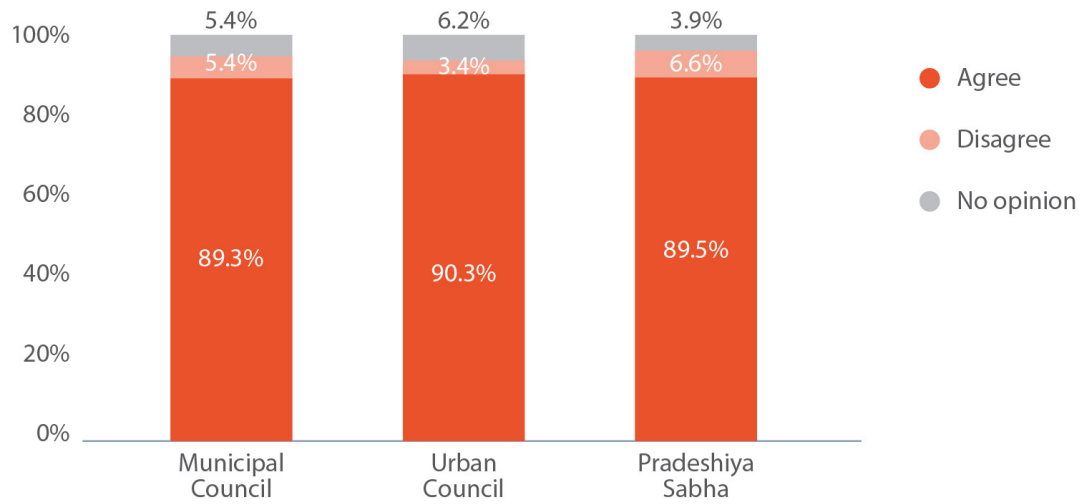
### THE RAJAPAKSA FAMILY SHOULD LEAVE SRI LANKAN POLITICS

Nine in ten respondents believe that the Rajapaksa family should leave Sri Lankan politics. This sentiment is shared across all ethnic communities, age categories and

locality. However, from those who oppose this, it is mostly respondents above the age of 66 years who hold this view.

**Figure 17: Perception on the Rajapaksa family leaving Sri Lankan politics by National and Ethnicity**



**Figure 18: Perception on the Rajapaksa family leaving Sri Lankan politics by Locality****Table 6: Perception on the Rajapaksa family leaving Sri Lankan politics by Age**

	18 -25 Years	26 – 35 Years	36 – 45 Years	46 – 55 Years	56 – 65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	92.8%	93.8%	83.3%	90.7%	86.3%	75.9%
Disagree	3.6%	3.8%	9.3%	4.6%	9.4%	19.0%
No opinion	3.6%	2.5%	7.4%	4.6%	4.3%	5.2%
Base	307	320	257	151	117	58

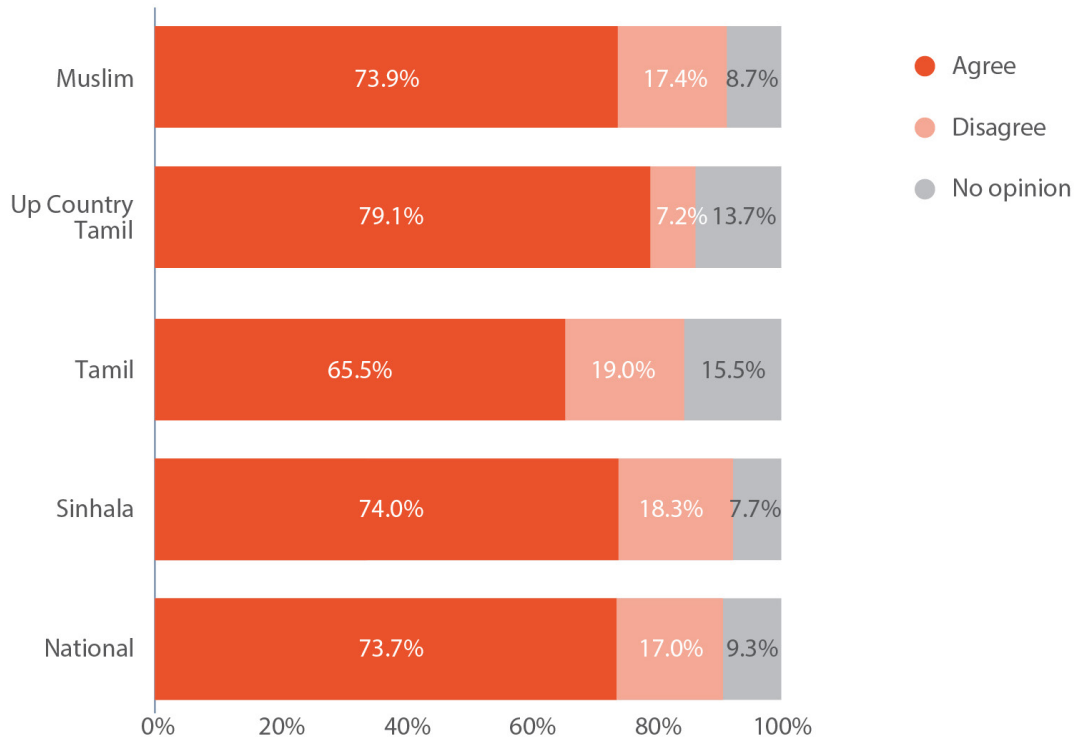


## AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT COMPRISING OF ALL PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED UNTIL THE COUNTRY OVERCOMES THE CURRENT CRISIS

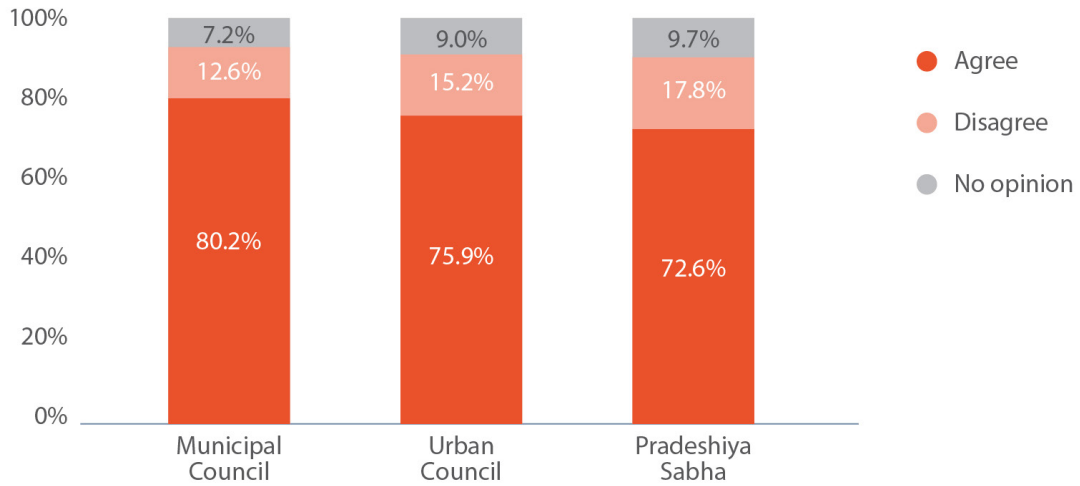
While nearly 74% are of the view that an interim government comprising of all parties in Parliament should be established until the country overcomes the current crisis,

nearly one fifth of the respondents oppose this. From those who disagree, it is mostly respondents from the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities who hold this view.

**Figure 19: Perception on an Interim government comprising of all parties in Parliament being established until the country overcomes the current crisis by National and Ethnicity**



**Figure 20: Perception on an Interim government comprising of all parties in Parliament being established until the country overcomes the current crisis by Locality**



**Table 7: Perception on an Interim government comprising of all parties in Parliament being established until the country overcomes the current crisis by Age**

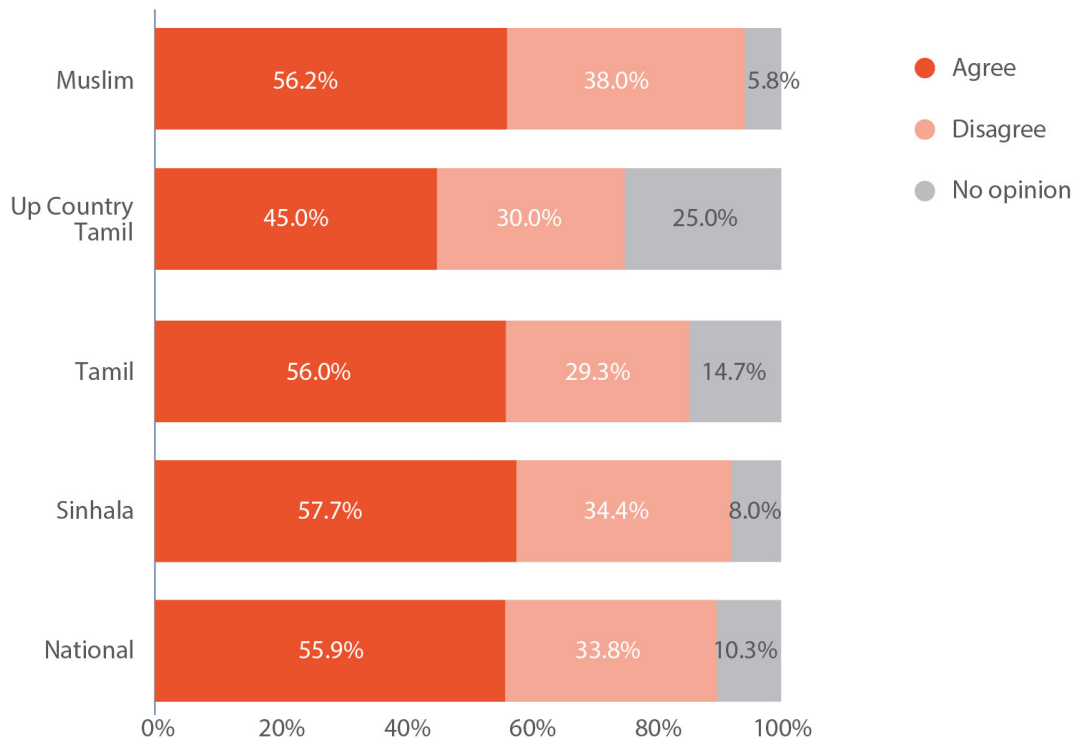
	18-25 Years	26-35 Years	36-45 Years	46-55 Years	56-65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	74.6%	73.0%	77.0%	63.6%	74.4%	79.3%
Disagree	15.6%	20.1%	15.2%	21.9%	14.5%	8.6%
No opinion	9.8%	6.9%	7.8%	14.6%	11.1%	12.1%
Base	307	319	257	151	117	58

## ALL 225 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT SHOULD RESIGN

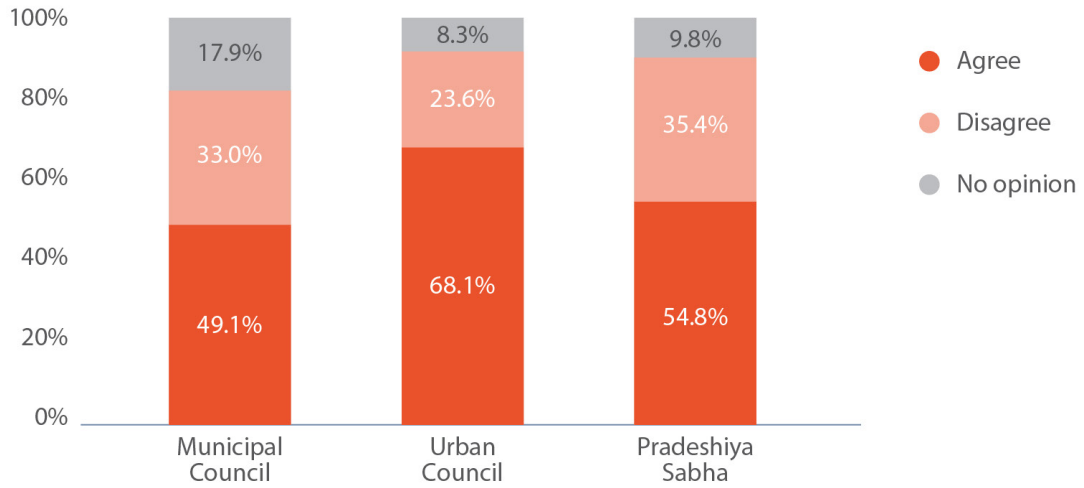
There appears to be some level of scepticism on all 225 Members of Parliament resigning. While nearly 60% of the respondents agree to this demand, nearly 34% oppose this.

From those who are sceptical it is mostly respondents from the Muslim community who hold this view.

Figure 21: Perception on the resignation of all 25 Members of Parliament by National and Ethnicity



**Figure 22: Perception on the resignation of all 25 Members of Parliament by Locality**



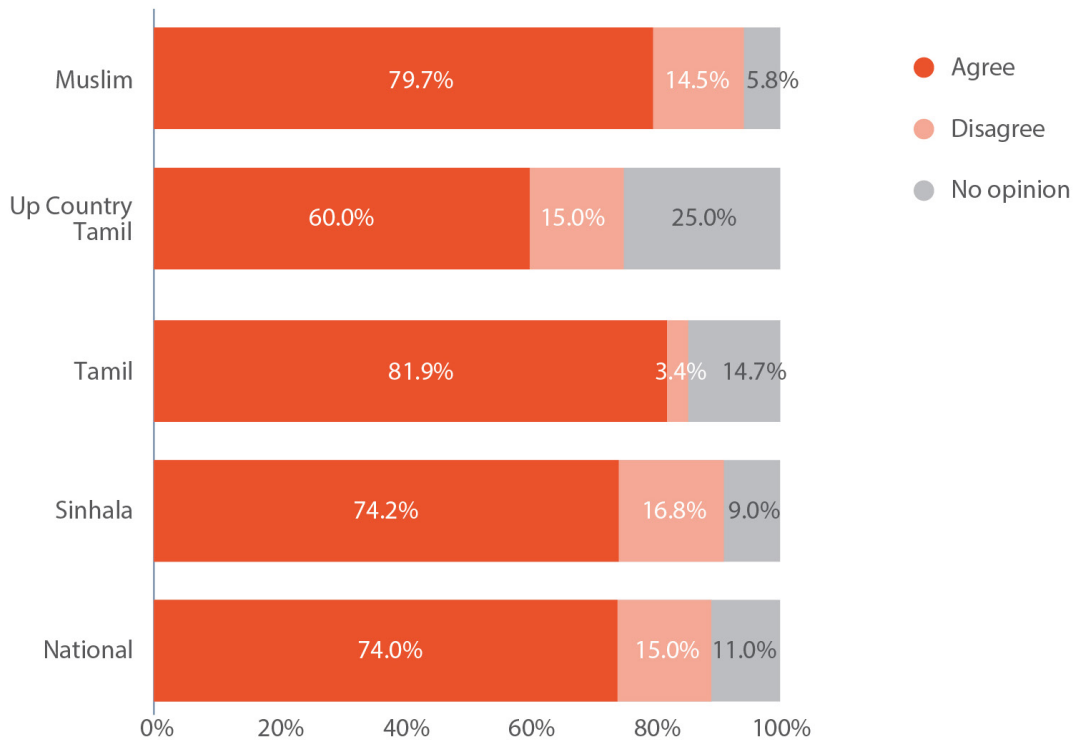
**Table 8: Perception on the resignation of all 25 Members of Parliament by Age**

	18-25 Years	26-35 Years	36-45 Years	46-55 Years	56-65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	62.4%	51.1%	50.6%	54.7%	62.1%	60.3%
Disagree	24.8%	42.3%	37.0%	35.3%	26.7%	31.0%
No opinion	12.7%	6.6%	12.5%	10.0%	11.2%	8.6%
Base	306	319	257	150	116	58

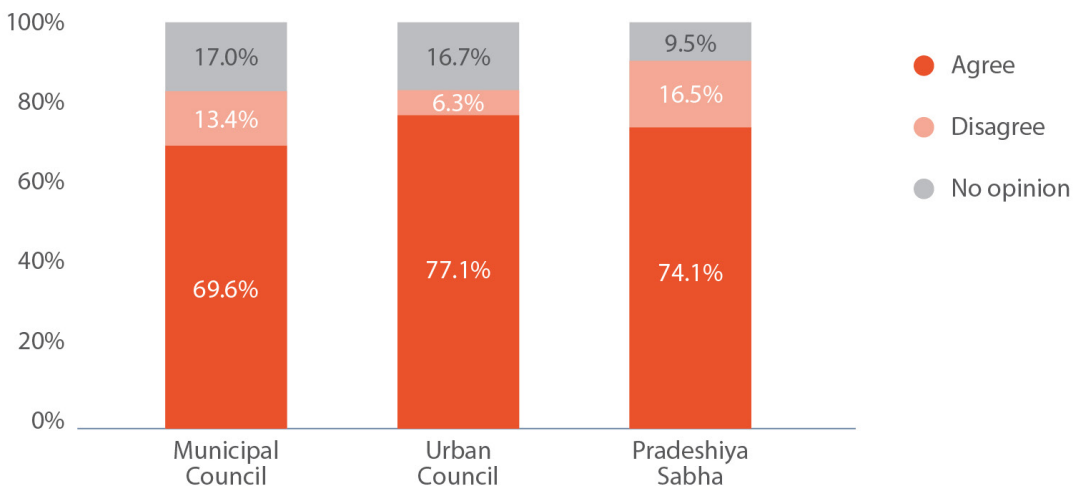
## EXECUTIVE PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM SHOULD BE COMPLETELY ABOLISHED

A significant majority (74%) of respondents claim that the executive presidential system should be abolished. However, nearly 15% disagree with this. From those who disagree, it is mostly respondents from the Sinhala community who hold this view.

**Figure 23: Perception on the complete abolition of the Executive Presidential System by National and Ethnicity**



**Figure 24: Perception on the complete abolition of the Executive Presidential System by Locality**



**Table 9: Perception on the complete abolition of the Executive Presidential System by Age**

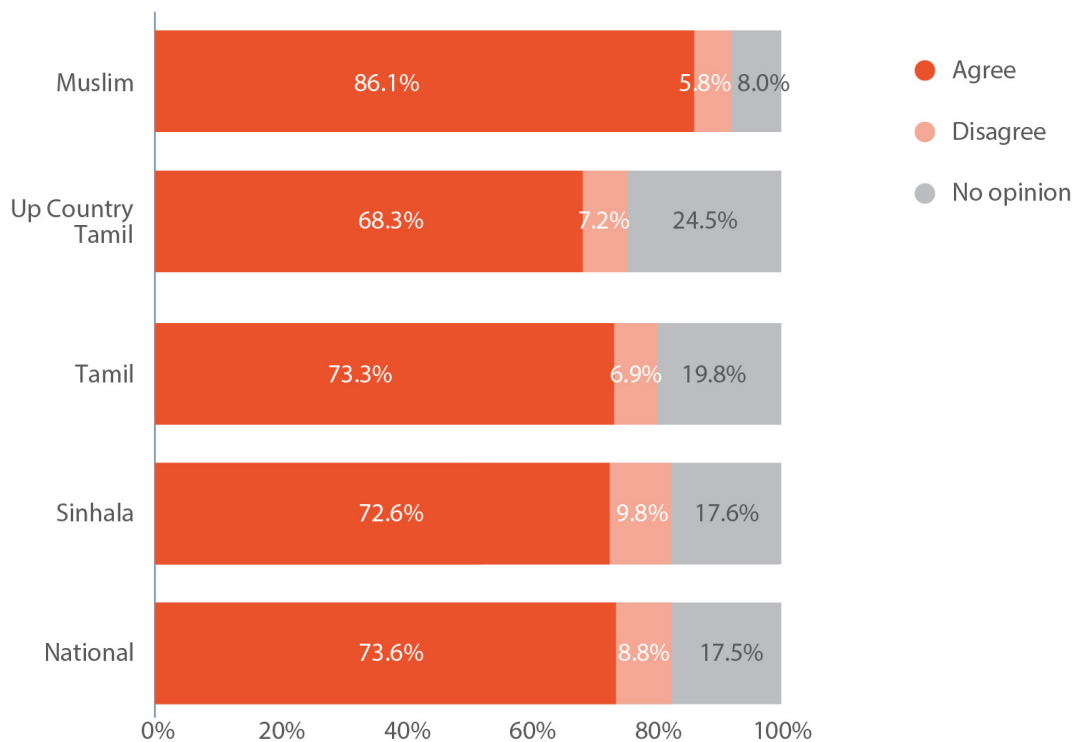
	18 -25 Years	26 – 35 Years	36 – 45 Years	46 – 55 Years	56 – 65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	69.0%	78.9%	73.5%	73.3%	78.4%	71.9%
Disagree	18.6%	13.8%	14.8%	12.0%	10.3%	19.3%
No opinion	12.4%	7.2%	11.7%	14.7%	11.2%	8.8%
Base	306	318	257	150	116	57

**20TH AMENDMENT SHOULD BE REPEALED AND AN AMENDMENT SIMILAR TO THE 19TH AMENDMENT SHOULD BE INTRODUCED**

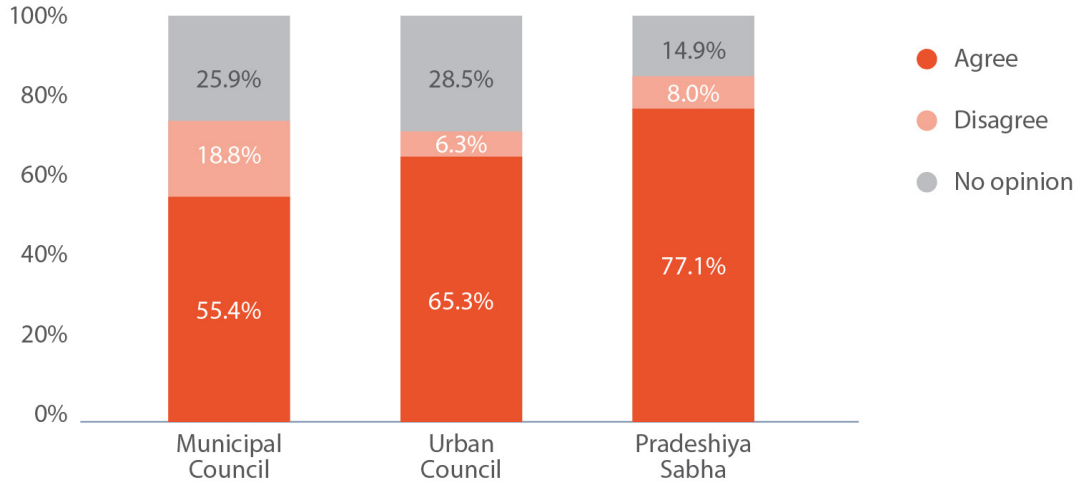
Nearly 74% of the respondents agree that the 20th amendment to the Constitution should be repealed and that an amendment similar to the 19th Amendment should be introduced.

There appears to be a high level of support for this sort of demand from respondents from the Muslim community (86.1%).

**Figure 25: Perception on repealing the 20th Amendment and introducing an amendment similar to the 19th Amendment to the Constitution by National and Ethnicity**



**Figure 26: Perception on repealing the 20th Amendment and introducing an amendment similar to the 19th Amendment to the Constitution by Locality**



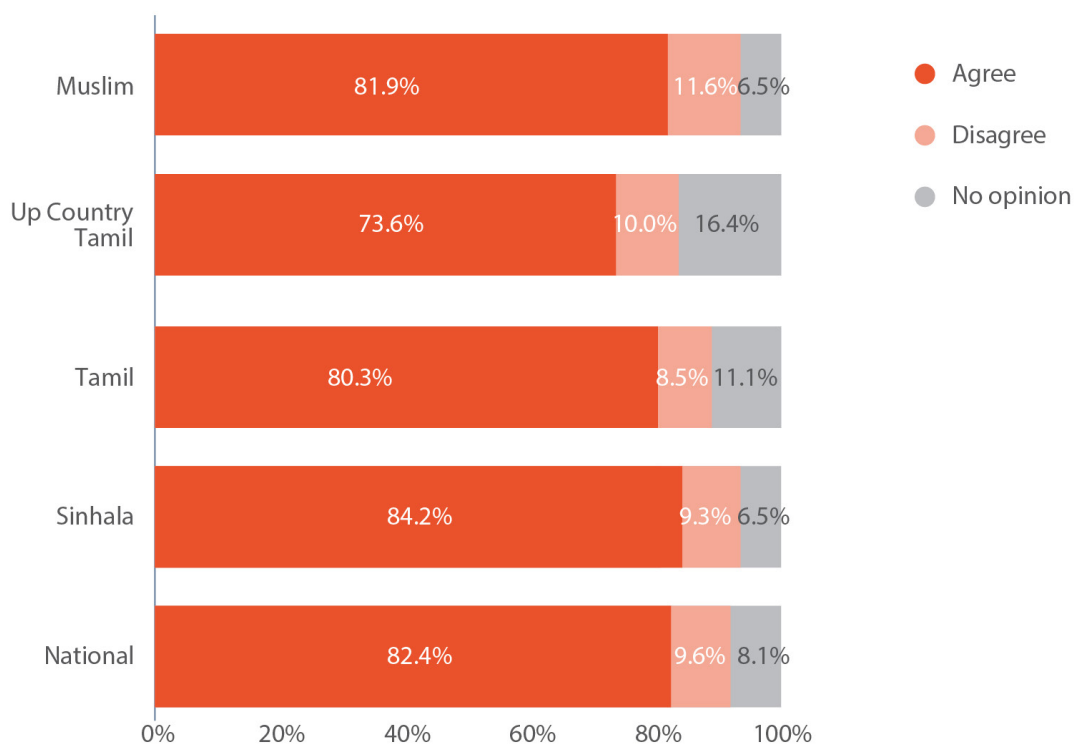
**Table 10: Perception on repealing the 20th Amendment and introducing an amendment similar to the 19th Amendment to the Constitution by Age**

	18-25 Years	26-35 Years	36-45 Years	46-55 Years	56-65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	66.8%	79.3%	74.3%	72.0%	76.1%	74.1%
Disagree	10.1%	7.2%	10.5%	10.0%	7.7%	1.7%
No opinion	23.1%	13.5%	15.2%	18.0%	16.2%	24.1%
Base	307	319	257	150	117	58

## THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE GOVERNED BY A COUNCIL OF EXPERTS UNTIL IT OVERCOMES THE CURRENT CRISIS

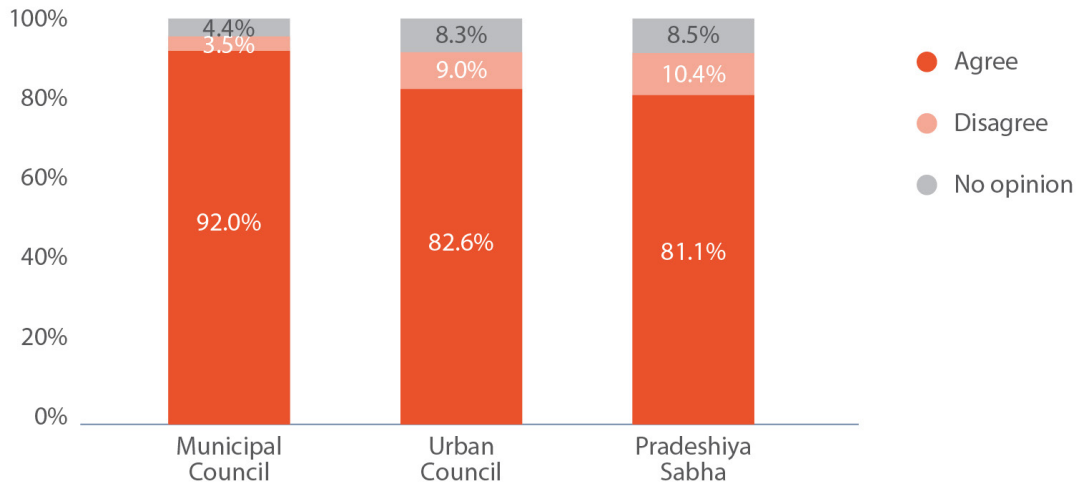
A significant majority (82.4%) of respondents are of the opinion that the country should be governed by a council of experts until it overcomes the current crisis. There appears to be significant support towards this across ethnic communities, age categories and locality.

Figure 27: Perception on the country being governed by a council of experts until it overcomes the current crisis by National and Ethnicity





**Figure 28: Perception on the country being governed by a council of experts until it overcomes the current crisis by Locality**



**Table 11: Perception on the country being governed by a council of experts until it overcomes the current crisis by Age**

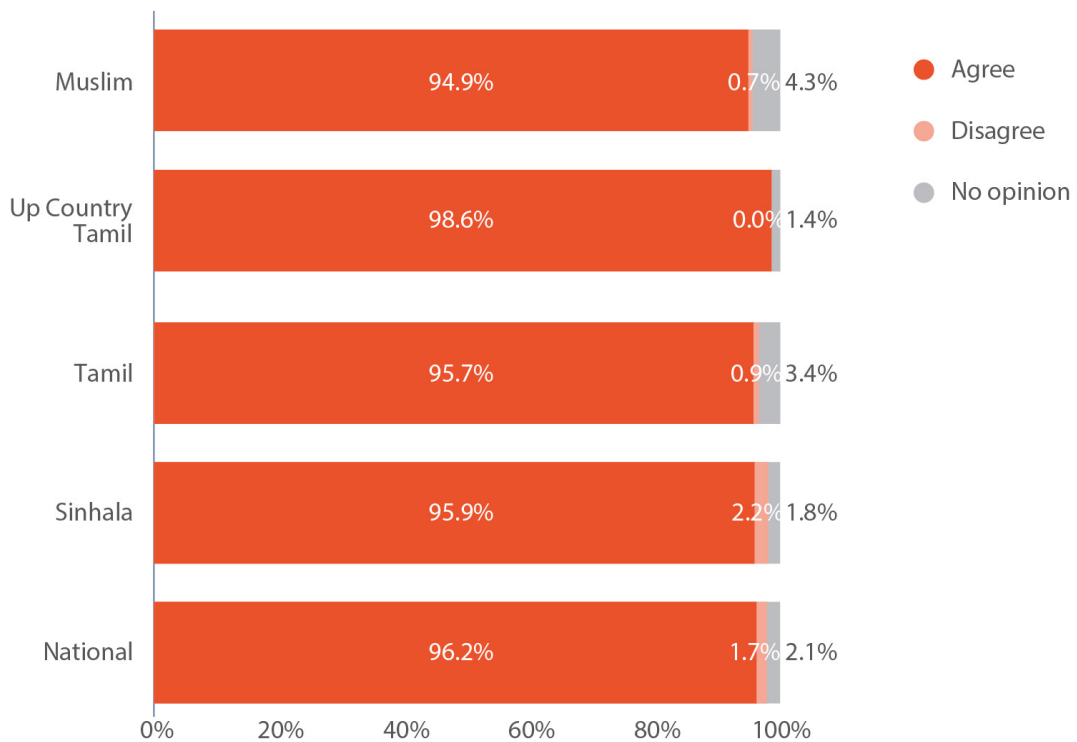
	18-25 Years	26-35 Years	36-45 Years	46-55 Years	56-65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	84.0%	83.1%	81.3%	79.5%	78.6%	91.2%
Disagree	7.8%	10.7%	12.1%	7.3%	11.1%	5.3%
No opinion	8.2%	6.3%	6.6%	13.2%	10.3%	3.5%
Base	306	319	257	151	117	57

## ALL POLITICIANS SHOULD BE AUDITED AND ALL THEIR UNACCOUNTED WEALTH SHOULD BE CONFISCATED BY THE STATE

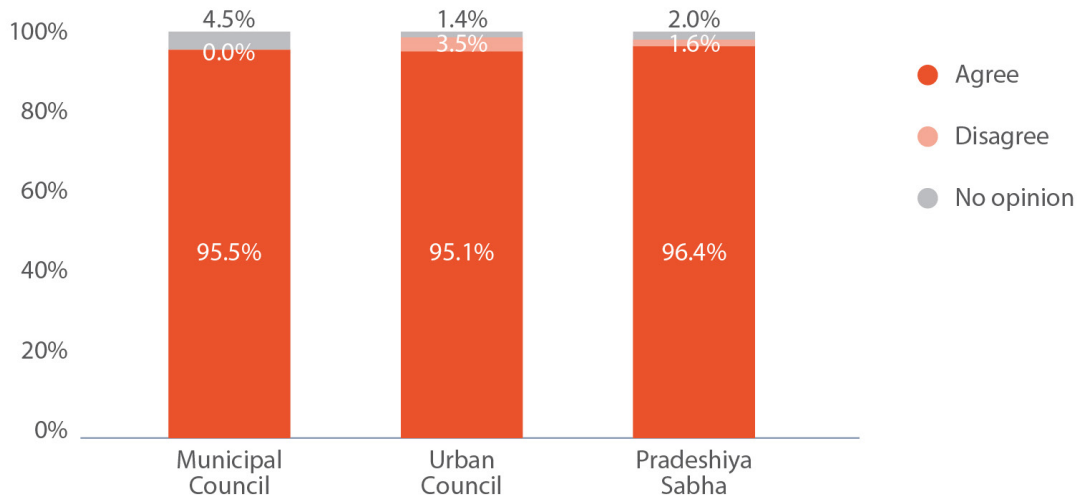
An overwhelming majority (96.2%) of respondents are of the opinion that politicians should be audited and all their unaccounted wealth should be confiscated by the State.

There appears to be significant support towards this across ethnic communities, age categories and locality.

Figure 29: Perception on the country being governed by a council of experts until it overcomes the current crisis by National and Ethnicity



**Figure 30: Perception on the country being governed by a council of experts until it overcomes the current crisis by Locality**



**Table 12: Perception on the country being governed by a council of experts until it overcomes the current crisis by Age**

	18 -25 Years	26 – 35 Years	36 – 45 Years	46 – 55 Years	56 – 65 Years	Above 66 Years
Agree	96.7%	97.5%	95.7%	91.4%	95.7%	100.0%
Disagree	2.0%	0.9%	1.6%	4.6%	0.9%	0.0%
No opinion	1.3%	1.6%	2.7%	4.0%	3.4%	0.0%
Base	306	319	257	151	116	57



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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