



Summary of Policy Proposals by Candidates for the 2024 Presidential Election

Sri Lanka's presidential election is scheduled for Saturday, 21 September 2024. In anticipation of the election, many of the candidates have published manifestos detailing their visions for Sri Lanka. In the interest of comparing these visions for the country, the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) has prepared this document which categorises the policy proposals of the candidates in their manifestos. It was practically impossible to include the policy proposals made by all Presidential candidates in this document; as such, CPA had to limit itself to the manifestos of Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Mr. Sajith Premadasa, Mr. Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Mr. Namal Rajapaksa.

CPA divided the candidates' policy proposals into the categories of economic governance, constitutional reforms, rights and related issues, infrastructure and accountability, truth, and reconciliation. The table on Accountability, Truth, and Reconciliation contains policy proposals made by the candidates on accountability for serious human rights violations, the implementation of a public prosecutor's office, reconciliation, the support and protection of minority rights and national security.

The content of each column for candidates are direct quotations from their individual manifestos on specific issues. Though CPA recognises the intersectionality of issues of many of the policy proposals made by candidates, the quotations inserted have been categorised based on the strength of relevance to the issue and ease of reference for the reader. CPA hopes that this document will be a useful tool for all citizens interested in learning more about the candidates and for anyone who is interested in engaging in a deeper analysis of the key policy proposals put forward by the candidates.

Accountability, Truth, and Reconciliation

Issue	Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe	Mr. Sajith Premadasa	Mr. Anura Kumara Dissanayake	Mr. Namal Rajapaksa
Accountability	<p>“Implementing the Anti-corruption Agenda to make our country the least corrupt State in South Asia”</p> <p>“Anti-Corruption Act No. 09 of 2023 will be fully enforced.”</p> <p>“A National Anti-Corruption Plan will be formulated and implemented from 2025 to 2029.”</p> <p>“The National Audit Act will be revised to strengthen audit functions.”</p> <p>“Asset, liability, and interest disclosures will be made transparent and efficient.”</p> <p>“Financial crime and money laundering regulations will be tightened.”</p>	<p>“Corruption in any form is deemed to be a violation of the Constitution and the Constitutional reform process will ensure that anti-corruption will be entrenched in the Constitution.”</p> <p>“The corrupt “VFS visa agreement” signed by the current government will be annulled, and a new modern system will be established to allow foreign tourists to obtain visas easily at a lower cost”</p> <p>“The regulations of micro credit institutions will be strengthened. Unauthorized micro finance businesses will be shut down and punitive action on those responsible will be expedited.”</p> <p>“The post-cremation policy of the former regime will be</p>	<p>“Appointment of a permanent bench of three Judges of the High Court to streamline cases of financial crimes, bribery, and corruption.”</p> <p>‘Establishment of Anti-Corruption Commission Office in every district”</p> <p>“Re-visiting the cases withdrawn by the Bribery Commission and the Attorney General and resubmit appropriate cases”</p> <p>“Establishment of a stolen public asset recovery agency with the technical and advisory support of international organizations such as Stolen Asset Recovery (STAR) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to recover the stolen state assets.”</p> <p>“Facilitate the Director General of the Bribery Commission with</p>	

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	<p>“The list of organizations receiving tax relief will be published.”</p>	<p>investigated, and those responsible will be held liable”</p> <p>“The 150-year-old Police Ordinance will be updated to provide for prompt and fair recruitment, promotions, and transfers of police officers, while providing adequate facilities to modernize the police service to international standards.”</p> <p>“The Stolen Assets Recovery Bill, already presented to Parliament, will be passed within a month of the election of a new government.”</p> <p>“The existing Anti-Corruption High Court at Bar will be re-empowered”</p> <p>“Lessons learnt in using digital technology in ‘1990 Suwa Seriya’ being classified one of the world’s most advanced and fastest ambulance services, will be incorporated into enhancing quality and efficiency.”</p>	<p>necessary authority to give effect to the International Convention on the Prevention of Corruption and Coordinating the Recovery of Stolen Assets.”</p> <p>“The right of people to access truthful and accurate information”</p> <p>“Investigating corruption and malpractice allegations within Sri Lanka Cricket and other sports administrative bodies.”</p>	

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		<p>“Ministers will not be allowed, in making appointments, to recruit their family members to government and semi government institutions falling under the purview of their ministries.”</p>		
<p>Public Prosecutor’s Office</p>		<p>“Establishing an independent Public Prosecutor’s Office free of political interference to bring to justice corrupt individuals will be done on an urgent basis by a simple amendment to legislation.”</p>	<p>“Introducing a Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP) as a mechanism to eliminate delays within the judicial system and establishing a main DPP office and sub offices in the provinces which will remain independent of the Attorney General’s Department to conduct cases on behalf of the government.”</p>	
<p>Reconciliation</p>	<p>“Building a society where no citizen is discriminated against or disadvantaged based on religion, language, caste, gender, political opinion, or place of birth.”</p> <p>“Protecting and respecting all religions, places of worship, and</p>	<p>“The Office of National Unity and Reconciliation, the Office on Missing Persons and the Office for Reparations will be strengthened to effectively and efficiently implement their objectives. We will facilitate resettlement of those affected by</p>	<p>“Abolition of all oppressive acts including the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and ensuring civil rights of people in all parts of the country”</p> <p>“Expanding the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate acts of violence</p>	<p>“Any attempt by any foreign state to intervene in our internal affairs will be promptly prevented thereby preserving our independence.”</p>

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	<p>cultural identities in our multicultural society.”</p> <p>“Give prominence to reconciliation and creating prosperous lives for all citizens.”</p> <p>“Recently there have been unscientific and anti-religious incidents such as the forced cremation of the dead despite them being Muslims. Necessary measures will be taken to compensate all families who had to undergo this tragedy.”</p> <p>“Taking further steps, new laws will be enacted in 2025 to prevent such incidents in the future.”</p>	<p>displacement. All lands not required for security purposes will be returned to their owners without further delay. The policy of no state sponsored demography changes will be maintained. Furthermore, specific concessions and incentives will be provided for investment in the reconstruction and development of conflict-affected areas.”</p>	<p>caused by racism and religious extremism”</p> <p>“Addressing unresolved and unprosecuted cases related to the 2022 protests and expedite legal proceedings with proper protocols.”</p>	
<p>Support for Religious, Ethnic Minorities, and Specific Communities</p>	<p>“Steps will be taken to transfer the freehold ownerships of the houses and land to the plantation community, in order to transform their current lives in line rooms to better standards of living.”</p>	<p>“The SJB / SJB Alliance firmly believes that the Indigenous Adiwasi community should be treated with dignity, enjoying full entitlement to all rights and privileges without any discrimination. Providing feasible and sustainable solutions</p>	<p>“Providing financial and infrastructural support to enhance housing, water and sanitation facilities for Malayagam communities”</p>	<p>“Whether you are a Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, Malay, Burger or Vadi, every citizen of the republic shares equal ownership and right to rule this state.”</p> <p>“Strictly prohibited any form of suppression, humiliation, or</p>

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<p>(Affirmative Action, etc.)</p>	<p>“New villages will be established for the plantation workers and those living in line rooms will be granted the right to own a plot of land.”</p> <p>“Aswesuma will be provided to low-income families in the plantation sector.”</p> <p>“Viable solutions will be provided for the social, economic, political, cultural and educational issues of the Northern and Eastern provinces.”</p> <p>“Koneshwarama temple will be upgraded as the main Hindu temple of this pilgrimage.”</p> <p>“We will provide facilities to teach Christian and Catholic children in Christian/Catholic settings.</p> <p>“The government will provide funds and support for seminaries and other centres that provide Christian and Catholic</p>	<p>for hardships faced by them due to the diminishing of forest lands, and the scarcity of water will be a priority in the future governance. A speedy solution will be provided for the micro-finance credit crisis faced by the Indigenous Adiwasi community which has become a serious problem for the community.”</p> <p>“We will ensure that the religious, cultural, social, and economic rights of the Indigenous Adiwasi communities will be protected.”</p> <p>“Given the structural exclusion [the Malaiyaha Tamil community] suffered we recognize the need for affirmative action to improve their wellbeing. We will work towards that by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the educational attainment of Malaiyaha students at all levels through 	<p>“Allocating lands for Malayagam communities to construct permanent homes.”</p> <p>“Providing financial and infrastructural support to enhance housing, water and sanitation facilities for Malayagam communities.”</p> <p>“Develop special programs targeting nutrition, oral health, tuberculosis control, and the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other substance abuse, along with health promotion for youth in plantation communities.”</p> <p>“Taking steps to develop facilities such as land, housing, education, and health of the upcountry Tamil community by recognizing their identity and rights, as mentioned in the Haton Declaration made on 2023.10.15 by the National People’s Power.”</p> <p>“Providing officials, employees and translators who can work in Tamil to civil services such as</p>	<p>violence against any ethnic, religious or political groups.”</p> <p>“To protect and nurture the Buddha Sasana, we plan to enrich the young monks with Buddha Philosophy and proficiency in English, French, German, Korean and Italian languages in addition to the oriental languages as well as with Information and Communication Technology. We believe that this is the key way to take the Buddha Dharma to the future world. We plan to train 5,000 monks in the first phase.”</p> <p>“Efforts will be made to control the threats to the Thripitaka Dharma and protect the scripture of Sri Saddharma for future generations.”</p>

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	<p>education. We will develop infrastructure facilities around important shrines such as the Madu Shrine and improve facilities available for devotees.”</p> <p>“We will be taking steps to develop Madrasa education to facilitate Islamic education.”</p>	<p>targeted programme including establishment of national schools with Science, Mathematics and Technology streams and improving infrastructure facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing an additional College of Education to train teachers in Science, Technology, English, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEEAM) in Tamil medium and a Nurses Training Institute. • Initiating a campus in Hatton affiliated to an existing University as a first step towards a full-fledged university with the proposed name of Highland University of Sri Lanka (HUSL) 	<p>police stations and government offices in the Northern and Eastern provinces and Upcountry areas.”</p> <p>“Increase the salaries of the upcountry plantation workers compared to the cost of living.”</p> <p>‘Expanding the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate acts of violence caused by racism and religious extremism.’</p> <p>“Establishing an Inter-Religious Council consisting of all religious leaders and religious scholars to resolve inter-religious issues.”</p>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing targeted and accessible Vocational Training programmes and support for entrepreneurship of Malaiyaha youth • Integrating all health facilities in the estate sector into the national health systems. • Implementing a targeted support programme to address stunting among children, anemia among women of reproductive age, infant & maternal mortality. • Ensuring fair and just implementation of the social protection programme to the plantation community. • Introducing and implementing a government policy to 		

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		<p>transform plantation workers to land owning small holder farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assuring living wage to plantation workers during this transition period. • Distributing abandoned land in estates to the estate residents for livelihood purposes of cultivation, animal husbandry and entrepreneurial activities. Providing titles to the lands already being cultivated by estate residents as per the government policy. • Implementing affirmative action programme, in line with President Ranasinghe Premadasa's policy, in public sector employment in areas 		

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		<p>where representation of Malaiyaha community is woefully inadequate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating the Tamil people migrating to the urban centers into the social safety net programmes including low-income housing programmes and improving resources in schools in the area to accommodate children of these families. • Creating a Non-Territorial Community Council (NTCC) as a governance body, in a constitutional reform process, considering the dispersed population pattern of the Malaiyaha community with advisory and executive capacity to engage in development programme and to 		

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		<p>monitor and scrutinize bills and laws that have an implication for the cultural, social, economic and political lives of Malaiyaha Tamil community.”</p> <p>“While giving Buddhism the foremost place and nurturing and protecting the Buddha Sasana, work to protect the rights of those who follow other religions and ensure the fundamental right to practice and worship the religion of their choice”</p> <p>“Full state patronage will be provided to strengthen Dhamma schools, Pirivenas, and religious education”</p> <p>“Steps will be taken to include interreligious education in the school curriculum to provide children with an adequate understanding of religions other than their own.”</p>		

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<p>Terrorism, Easter Sunday Attack, and National Security</p>	<p>"The Security (Special Provisions) Act has now been drafted to enhance the status of our Tri Forces and stabilize the security of the nation."</p> <p>"We will empower our armed forces with advanced knowledge and technology, ensuring that the nation's security remains safe from the threats that may come from land, sea, air, or cyberspace."</p>	<p>"A Commission of Inquiry with formal authority will be established within 3 months under Section 2(1)(c) of the Commission of Inquiry Act No. 17 of 1948 to deliver justice to the victims of the Easter Sunday bomb attacks. Based on the commission's recommendations, prosecuting those responsible for the Easter attacks through a High Court at Bar with daily hearings will be a priority of the government."</p> <p>"Establishing the National Security Council by a new law and assigning it necessary powers."</p> <p>"We will work more closely with Interpol and other foreign intelligence services to prevent the importation of drugs into Sri Lanka and to disrupt international drug trafficking routes passing through Sri Lanka"</p>	<p>"According to the pledge announced by the National People's Power on 17-04 2023, appropriate legal actions will be taken against the politicians and public officials who were found guilty by the verdicts of the Supreme Court for the Easter Sunday attack."</p> <p>"Taking prompt legal action against the relevant politicians and officials according to the recommendations of the Presidential Commission regarding the Easter Sunday attacks on 2019-04-21."</p> <p>"Strengthening and streamlining the National Security Council, ensuring responsibility and accountability for national security."</p>	<p>"Zero Tolerance Policy will be applied in the issues of terrorism, underworld and narcotics."</p> <p>"All state intelligence and security forces will undergo a complete review, and any weaknesses identified will be promptly resolved. Suitable personnel will be appointed to relevant positions and the safety of the citizens as well as the foreigners in Sri Lanka will be assured."</p> <p>"Protect the state from dangers by implementing all necessary security measures."</p>

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		<p>“The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act will be abolished and a new, anti-terrorism law that protects national security and human rights will be enacted.”</p> <p>“A comprehensive Cyber Security law will be introduced to Sri Lanka within 3 months.”</p>		