

Sri Lanka: NLAC demands transparency in IMF deals

Thursday 26 May 2022, by [MOHAN Sulochana Ramiah](#) (Date first published: 25 May 2022).

The National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC), which includes Trade Unions, urged the Government to reveal details of negotiations and agreements with the IMF in the public domain, before they are officially agreed on and signed and present a short-term budget in Parliament within two weeks for the period until the end of December 2022, suspending major infrastructure projects and MP allowances, and reducing the defence budget as well.

They also demanded a short-term relief programme that would provide subsidised fuel, kerosene, LP gas, and most essential consumer goods to underprivileged families.

The NLAC said newly-appointed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe does not have to be briefed about the hardships people go through due to almost daily price hikes and as this is not a government elected by the people and cannot demand legitimacy in any manner and a government considered a temporary government it should conclude its tasks and responsibilities.

The following constitutional and legal provisions are proposed to be adopted to democratise governance and elections should be held to form an elected government when the present temporary government concludes its term on 31 December 2022, they added.

The NLAC also demanded that the Executive Presidency be abolished with the introduction of the 21st Amendment within six weeks, that in essence would be an improved version of the 19th Amendment, and also amend election laws to provide for the election of Members to Parliament in a mixed process of first past the post (FPP) and proportional representation (PR) and would be responsible to the people.

“Amend laws immediately to prevent MPs from crossing over to other political parties disregarding the choice of the people in electing a representative to Parliament and holding them and the Parliament responsible to the people,” NLAC said in the letter sent to the Prime Minister.

They also said the 21st Amendment includes provisions to have the Police Department under the Home Ministry and no other and to create an environment for the Police Department to function as an independent civil department and also to take immediate action to abolish the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and the provisions should be included in the 21st Amendment to hold all employers responsible for the implementation of Fundamental Rights ensured in Article 14(1)(d) of Chapter III of the Constitution.

They also suggested amending Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Law No. 1 of 1975 to make it mandatory for all candidates contesting an election to submit their and their family declarations of assets and liabilities and it should be completed within three months from the date the new Cabinet is sworn in.

They also said when handing over nominations, for elected representatives to hand over same

annually and for the Election Commission to publish them within two weeks and also to amend all election and other relevant laws to make it mandatory for all recognised political parties to furnish annually, all details of their party funds with due sources and also their election funds with details one week before the election day and for the Election Commission to publish them immediately.

The other demands were to amend necessary laws to make it mandatory for Secretaries of all ministries in both central government and provincial councils, chief accountants, professionals employed in the public sector, and principals of all national schools to annually submit their and their family declarations of assets and liabilities and relevant authority to publish them within two weeks.

The letter was undersigned by the Free Trade Zones & General Services Employees Union, Sri Lanka Nidahas Sewaka Sangamaya, Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions, National Union of Seafarers Sri Lanka, Ceylon Mercantile Industrial and General Workers Union, Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya, Ceylon Federation of Labour, and the Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union.

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