

SPUR (Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights for Sri Lanka Inc)

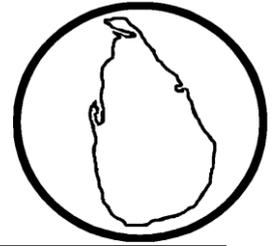
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02 NOV 2018

Hon Scott Morrison

Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister

SRI LANKA'S RECENT POLITICAL CHANGES.

We wish to draw your attention to the recent changes in the Government of Sri Lanka and write to indicate that the appointment of a new Prime Minister by the President of Sri Lanka is in keeping with the Constitution of Republic of Sri Lanka.

The two party National Government of Sri Lanka which came to office in 2015 lost its mandate to rule when the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of President Maithripala Sirisena withdrew from the Coalition. The subsequent appointment of Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa as Prime Minister has led to a stable alliance which includes several lawmakers from the former PM's United National Party.

As per section 42 (4) the Constitution of Sri Lanka, President can appoint a person who according to his belief can win the confidence of the House of Representatives as the Prime Minister. Further, the President can change the Ministers and the subjects handled by them

It has to be mentioned that when Mr Ranil Wickramasinghe was appointed as the Prime Minister in 2015, by the present President of Sri Lanka ,he had only 42 MPs backing him whereas the sitting Prime Minister had the support of over 120 MPs. The former Prime Minister, Mr D. M.Jayaratne left the office accepting the constitutional stand of the President.

As you are aware there was a conspiracy to kill the elected President of Sri Lanka and the investigations are being conducted by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Sri Lanka Police. As alleged by the informant, in public, names of Ranil Wickramasinghe and one of his cabinet colleague were mentioned as possible links to the conspiracy. President addressing the nation, recently, said the plot to assassinate him had prompted him to appoint former President Mahinda Rajapaksa as the PM and confirmed the involvement of a Cabinet Minister too in this plot. You will no doubt agree what could have been the consequences to Sri Lanka, if the President was killed under such circumstances. To avert

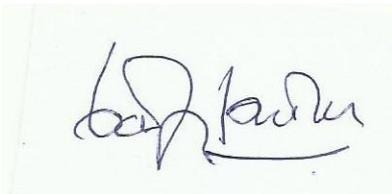
any such danger to the country and the people it was necessary for the President to have taken action using powers bestowed in him by the constitution.

Further, it has to be mentioned as Australia has expressed their wish for Sri Lanka to use democratic means in facing the present issue, that the base of democratic government in Sri Lanka was crushed by Ranil Wickramasinghe's administration when they decided not have Provincial Council elections, after his party's island wide defeat in local government elections conducted early this year. His party, UNP, received only 34% compared to the 48% of the votes received by the party led by the former President Mahinda Rajapaksa . Further, Ranil Wickramasinghe's administration chose to undemocratically appoint the Leader of the Opposition in the country's Parliament, a MP who had only 16 MPs, ignoring the 56 MPs of the Joint Opposition led by the former President. It is unfortunate that Australia opted to ignore so long such basic violations of democratic rights of Sri Lankans without even having a friendly discussion with the former Prime Minister.

While welcoming .Australia's friendly relationship with Sri Lanka, we as Australians of Sri Lankan origin wish to reiterate that Sri Lanka is a sovereign country with a long history of Parliamentary democracy has the wisdom and the right to manage its domestic issues as much as Australian Coalition Government democratically has to seek the support of the cross benchers in the approval of new bills.

We trust that our clarification will assist you with regard to the your evaluation of the appointment of the new Prime Minister in Sri Lanka

Thanking you

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light green background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Ranjith Soysa'.

Ranjith Soysa
SPOKESPERSON

COPY

1 Hon Bill Shorten – The Leader of the Opposition

2 Hon Micheal McCormack- Dy Prime Minister

3 Hon M,Payne – Foreign Minister