

Gist of the translation of the declarations made in the 2024 Congress of Social Democratic Party of Tamils – SDPT- Pathmanabha EPRLF



1. Full and proper implementation of the 13th Amendment of the constitution. Appropriate devolution arrangements for the Muslims and upcountry Tamils.
2. The postponement of Provincial Council and Local government elections by the government is anti-democratic and denial of fundamental rights of the people. We demand immediate elections for these institutions. We call upon the government to make appropriate constitutional change that ensures to prevent recurrence of this in the future.
3. Provincial council system, meaningful devolution to provinces, and holding elections regularly according to the constitution are essential to ensure democratic structures in Sri Lanka. It also accelerates the economic development at the periphery. SDPT will endeavour to work with all democratic parties, social and political activists in Sri Lanka to campaign for regular elections for all provinces.
4. SDPT will forge relationships and engage in united actions with all progressive and democratic parties in Srilanka working amongst the Tamil, Sinhala, Muslim, and Upcountry communities with the following objectives. Strengthening the Provincial governance, calling for the social and democratic rights for all communities, and to oppose any efforts that undermines the rights of the minority communities by the government and Sinhala and Tamil chauvinist parties.
5. Prevention of Terrorism act which is in place for the last 46 years and should be abolished forthwith. We will also oppose similar acts in the future. Calling for the immediate release of all the political prisoners.
6. The plantation workers who contributed immensely to the economy for the last two centuries still has no right to lands, economic security or even a postal address. Government should grant lands to these people without delay, so that they can build their lives independently.
7. There should be constitutional guarantees to ensure that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi -cultural and a multi-religious nation. It should not be a threat to any communities.

8. The government's priorities should be to guarantee that the basic need of every citizen is available at affordable prices. Education and health services should remain public service. Privatisation of these essential services will lead to the denial of the fundamental rights of vast majority of the people. There should be adequate welfare provision for the unemployed and the vulnerable sections of the society.
9. The government should make it a priority to provide satisfactory social security to all working people in the agriculture, industrial and fisheries sectors.
10. Government institutions and religious entities are engaged in a drive to acquire vast amounts of lands sometimes using security forces which is threatening the very existence and deprive the local people of economic opportunities. This land grab program particularly in the Northern and Eastern provinces should stop forthwith.
11. Disproportionate presence and appropriation of vast lands by the security forces is a major cause for concern in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. This causes unwarranted suspicions, frustration, and unease amongst the local people. This is also impacting the community relations and a drain in the economy. We urge the government to take necessary measures to reduce the number of personnel.
12. The issue of disappeared persons during the long war continue to cause immense distress to the families of the victims. A closure on this issue is essential for the reconciliation process. We call for appropriate legislative and institutional mechanisms to prevent such violations in the future.
13. Drug abuse is increasing in the recent past and destroying our social fabric. Measures need to be taken to increase the awareness in the community, and special law and order measures needs to be taken to contain the situation.
14. Cast discrimination in our society, particularly in the Northern Province, is a curse and not less than the apartheid practice in causing misery and denial of rights and dignity. Awareness is needed amongst all communities and work towards building a social movement to combat this vestige of feudal societies of yesteryears. There is also a need for stringent legislations in place to punish those who promote such discrimination.

15. Women in our society are subjected to various forms of persecution and discrimination. We need a powerful social movement to combat this. There is a need for strengthening the laws relating to equal opportunities and guarantee equal representation in elected assemblies and in state and private sectors.
16. The increasing number of road accidents and number of deaths are a serious cause for concern. Measures needs to be taken to improve the standards of regulatory arrangements. There is also a need for coordinated actions by the relevant departments, and community organisations.
17. Sri Lankan people were divided by the racist political forces from all communities. The thirty-year civil war further damaged the ethnic harmony. Since the end of the war, there has not been any serious effort made to strengthen understanding amongst the communities or establish equality for all communities. In recent times, there is also an effort by some sections from all communities to instigate religious conflicts. To combat this continuing trend, all progressive forces and those who are committed to social equality should work together unitedly.
18. We acknowledge the aspirations of the people in the “Aragalaya” uprising. It was a movement primarily focussed against the corruption, nepotism in the ruling elite and the economic hardships faced by the people because of these. Despite its limited success, the same corrupt ruling political classes retained the reins of the government. If corruption and misuse of powers of the rulers continue, it will be inevitable that there will be uprising again.
19. In relation to the issue of bottom trawling and other methods of unlawful fishing practices that destroy the fishing stock in that region, should stop forthwith. The disputes between the fishing communities should be addressed through negotiations between all the stakeholders. We urge the Tamil Nadu Government to take necessary steps to amicable settlements between fishing communities from both sides of the border. The issues about violating international waters, and the issue of Katchathievu should not be linked to the fishermen’s day-to-day life issues that will only further complicate the matters.
20. In the present world order, rich gets richer and the vast majority of the population suffer, hunger, poverty, unemployment, trapped in debt, and live in appalling conditions. This world order should be changed, and we aspire to establish a new world order that serves the interests of the suffering majority.

21. It is a fact that the Palestinians are subjected to aggression and genocide by the Zionist regime. Several thousand Palestinians were killed since 1948. This conflict is affecting the whole of West Asian countries. We believe that the immediate halt of military aggression in Gaza and West bank and the recognition of two state solutions to bring permanent peace to the region.

22. The earth is fast becoming uninhabitable because of the irresponsible exploitation of the environment by humans. Urgent measures need to be put in place to protect the environment, and there is a need to intensify awareness programs and collective direct actions.

23. Our party would endeavour to build a strong working relationship and work in solidarity with all the people and organisations in the world which strive to achieve peace, social equality, freedom, liberty, and fraternity, of mankind. We will seek to learn lessons from countries and governments and political parties which have committed to social democratic values and programs.