

Background Guide

*The 13th
Sri Lankan
Parliament, 2004*



GatorMUN XVII

Dear Delegates,

Hello! My name is Renee Hancock and I am your director for the Sri Lanka: 2004 specialized committee for GatorMUN XVII. I am a third-year at the University of Florida, pursuing a dual-degree in public relations and political science. This is my third year participating in Model United Nations, and, although I have only known this organization while in college, this organization has become my second home.

As a competitive travel delegate and a member of our organization's executive board, I spend nearly every day in the world of Model United Nations. If you have competed at GatorMUN before, then I may look familiar to you. Last year, I was the director for the dual-delegate United Nations Environmental Programme General Assembly and the assistant director for the UN-HRC General Assembly the year prior. In my free time, I work as a server at Cracker Barrel, enjoy watching Criminal Minds, and plan out future trips to music festivals.

Since this committee is a specialized committee, there will be a different flow of the debate than a traditional crisis or general assembly. Delegates will be tasked with writing resolution papers for the weekend. Additionally, instead of solely relying on research and the background guide, my staff and I will be providing updates relating to the progress of the committee. These updates will be based on the historical progression of the international community responding to the disaster, as well as updates based off of the debate and working papers in committee.

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is a South Asian island in the Indian Ocean. In April of 2004, Sri Lanka's 13th Parliament elections took place. This election resulted in a change of the majority party, with the United People's Freedom Alliance winning 105 seats. This electoral shift was a sign of significant political and social change within Sri Lanka as the country was still undergoing their 26-year civil war. Unfortunately, one of the greatest challenges that the country has faced was just eight months down the road. On December 26th, 2004, a 9.3 earthquake hit just off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. Less than a few hours later, a series of tsunami waves hit the east and southern coast of Sri Lanka. This tsunami was the third largest ever recorded in human history. Sri Lanka had the second highest death toll, with over 30,000 confirmed deaths and over 600,000 displaced or injured.

For this committee, which will begin the day before the natural disaster, delegates are posed with the task of tackling this crisis to rebuild its country. Delegates should focus their research on community building, national crisis management, disease outbreak strategies, and how to successfully utilize international aid. This research can be found in the proven methods of other countries' responses to disasters, and in the resources provided on the United Nations website.

Position papers will be due at the beginning of the first session from each delegate. The papers should be a maximum of one page per topic, and should include outside resources to ensure thorough research has been done. Your position papers should be written under the political ideologies of the person and party that you are representing in committee. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at GatorMUN@gmail.com. I am so excited to meet all of you and be a part of your GatorMUN XVII experience. Best of luck in your research!

Sincerely,

Renee Hancock

The 13th Sri Lankan Parliament, 2004; Director

Quorum

A majority of voting members answering to the roll at each session shall constitute a quorum for that session. This means that half plus one of all voting members are present. Quorum will be assumed consistent unless questioned through a Point of Order. Delegates may request to be noted as "Present" or "Present and Voting."

Motion to Open Debate

This opens the floor for debate, allowing other points or motions.

Motion to Set the Agenda

This motion determines the order in which the topics of a committee will be debated. Permission to speak will be accorded to one speaker for and one speaker against, and a two-thirds majority is required for the motion to pass.

Motion to Open the Speaker's List

Opening the Speaker's List requires a simple majority to pass. A delegate may only be present on the Speaker's List once, but may re-enter after he/she has spoken. If the Speaker's List expires, debate then closes.

Motion to Set Speaking Time

Speaking Time must be indicated by this motion from the floor before any members of the body may speak on the Speaker's List. This motion must also accompany any motion for a Moderated Caucus. In a Motion to Set Speaking Time for the formal Speaker's List, a delegate may also specify a number of questions or comments to automatically affix to the Speaking Time. These designated questions or comments may also have Speaking Time or Response Time (in the case of a question) limits, but these are not required. The Director may rule any Motion to Set Speaking Time dilatory. This motion requires a simple majority. Any delegate may make this motion between formal speakers in an effort to change the Speaking Time.

Motion to Close the Speaker's List

The Speaker's List may be closed upon a motion from the floor. Permission to speak will be accorded to one speaker for and one speaker against, and a two-thirds majority is required for the motion to pass.

Motion to Suspend the Rules for the Purpose of a Moderated Caucus

This motion must include three specifications:

- a. Length of the Caucus
- b. Speaking time, and
- c. Reason for the Caucus.

During a moderated caucus, delegates will be called on to speak by the Committee Director. Delegates will raise their placards to be recognized. Delegates must maintain the same degree of decorum throughout a Moderated Caucus as in formal debate. This motion requires a simple majority to pass.

Motion to Suspend the Rules for the Purpose of an Unmoderated Caucus

This motion must include the length of the Caucus. During an unmoderated caucus, delegates may get up from their seats and talk amongst themselves. This motion requires a simple majority to pass. The length of an unmoderated caucus should never exceed twenty minutes.

Motion to Suspend the Meeting

This motion is in order if there is a scheduled break in debate to be observed. (ie. Lunch!) This motion requires a simple majority vote. The Committee Director may refuse to entertain this motion at their discretion.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

This motion is in order at the end of the last committee session. It signifies the closing of the committee until next year's conference.

Motion to Table the Topic

If a delegate believes that the flow of debate has become stagnant, he/she may make this motion. To Table the Topic is to halt debate on the present Topic, save the speakers' list and all draft resolutions, and move on to the next Topic on the Agenda. The delegate making this motion may also choose to specify a previously tabled Topic. This motion requires a two-thirds vote to pass. The Topic may be returned to at any time by tabling the present Topic and adding the phrase "for the purpose of returning to Tabled Topic _____," to this motion. If no Topics have been previously tabled, debate must follow the established Agenda. This motion is to be used sparingly.

Points of Order

Points of Order will only be recognized for the following items:

- a) To recognize errors in voting, tabulation, or procedure,
- b) To question relevance of debate to the current Topic or
- c) To question a quorum.

A Point of Order may interrupt a speaker if necessary and it is to be used sparingly.

Points of Inquiry

When there is no discussion on the floor, a delegate may direct a question to the Committee Director. Any question directed to another delegate may only be asked immediately after the delegate has finished speaking on a substantive matter. A delegate that declines to respond to a question after a formal speech forfeits any further questioning time. The question must conform to the following format:

Delegate from Country A raises placard to be recognized by the Committee Director.

Committee Director: "To what point do you rise?"

Country A: "Point of Inquiry."

Committee Director: "State your Point."

Country A: "Will the delegate from Country B (who must have just concluded a substantive speech) yield to a question?"

Committee Director: "Will the Delegate Yield?"

Country B: "I will" or "I will not" (if not, return to the next business item)

Country A asks their question (it must not be a rhetorical question.)

Country B may choose to respond or to decline. If the Delegate from Country B does not yield to or chooses not to answer a question from Country A, then he/she yields all remaining questioning time to the Committee Director.

Points of Personal Privilege

Points of personal privilege are used to request information or clarification and conduct all other business of the body except Motions or Points specifically mentioned in the Rules of Procedure.

Please note: The Director may refuse to recognize Points of Order, Points of Inquiry or Points of Personal Privilege if the Committee Director believes the decorum and restraint inherent in the exercise has been violated, or if the point is deemed dilatory in nature.

Rights of Reply

At the Committee Director's discretion, any member nation or observer may be granted a Right of Reply to answer serious insults directed at the dignity of the delegate present. The Director has the ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY to accept or reject Rights of Reply, and the decision IS NOT SUBJECT TO APPEAL. Delegates who feel they are being treated unfairly may take their complaint to any member of the Secretariat.

Working Papers and Draft Resolutions

Once a Working Paper has been submitted, approved, distributed, and formally introduced to the body, it can and will be referred to as a "Draft Resolution." In order for a Working Paper to be submitted to the Committee Director, it must be in correct format and bear the names of a combination of a number of Sponsors and Signatories necessary to introduce, as determined by the Committee Director.

Sponsors are the writers of the Working Paper, and agree with it in its entirety. They should be able to vote 'yes' for the paper during voting procedure. Signatories are those delegates interested in bringing the Working Paper to the floor for debate, but do not necessarily agree with its contents.

A delegate can motion to discuss the working paper during a moderated caucus or unmoderated caucus. A delegate can also motion for an author's panel, which is essentially a moderated caucus moderated by the authors. It is the chair's discretion on the maximum amount of authors allowed on the author's panel.

Friendly Amendments

Friendly Amendments are any changes to a formally introduced Directive that *all* Sponsors agree to in writing. The Committee Director must approve the Friendly Amendment and confirm each Sponsor's agreement both verbally and in writing.

Unfriendly Amendments

Unfriendly Amendments are any substantive changes to a formally introduced Directive that are not agreed to by all of the Sponsors of the Directive. In order to introduce an Unfriendly Amendment, the Unfriendly Amendment must have the number equivalent to 1/3 of Quorum confirmed signatories. The Committee Director has the authority to discern between substantive and nonsubstantive Unfriendly amendment proposals.

Plagiarism

GatorMUN maintains a zero-tolerance policy in regards to plagiarism. Delegates found to have used the ideas of others without properly citing those individuals, organizations, or documents will have their credentials revoked for the duration of the GatorMUN conference. This is a very serious offense.

Motion to Close Debate and Voting Procedures

A motion to close debate may only pass with a two-thirds majority. Once this motion passes, and the committee enters Voting Procedure, no occupants of the committee room may exit the Committee Room, and no individual may enter the Committee Room from the outside. A member of the Dias will secure all doors.

Once moving into voting procedures chair can only accept these motions:

- A point of order to correct an error in procedure
- An appeal of the decision of the chair
- A motion for division
- A motion for roll call vote
- A motion for adoption by acclamation
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No talking, passing notes, or communicating of any kind will be tolerated during voting procedures.

Each Draft Resolution will be read to the body and voted upon in the order which they were introduced. Any Proposed Unfriendly Amendments to each Draft Resolution will be read to the body and voted upon before the main body of the Draft Resolution as a whole is put to a vote. The Committee will adopt Directives and Unfriendly Amendments to Directives if these documents pass with a simple majority. Specialized committees should refer to their background guides or Committee Directors for information concerning specific voting procedures. Unless otherwise specified by the Secretariat, each Committee may pass as many resolutions as it agrees are necessary to efficiently address the Topic

Delegates who requested to be noted as "Present and Voting" are unable to abstain during voting procedure. Abstentions will not be counted in the tallying of a majority. For example, 5 yes votes, 4 no votes, and 7 abstentions means that the Directive passes.

Roll Call Voting

A counted placard vote will be considered sufficient unless any delegate to the committee motions for a Roll Call Vote. If a Roll Call Vote is requested, the committee must comply. All delegates must vote: "For," "Against," "Abstain," or "Pass."

During a Roll Call vote, any delegate who answers, "Pass," reserves his/her vote until the Committee Director has exhausted the Roll. However, once the Committee Director returns to "Passing" Delegates, they must vote: "For" or "Against."

Voting with Rights

During a Roll Call vote delegates may vote "For with Rights" or "Against with Rights." Delegates will be granted 30 seconds to explain their reasons for voting for or against a draft resolution. This time will come after the tabulation of votes.

Delegates should use this option sparingly. It is meant for delegates who feel that their vote may seem off policy, despite it being correct. The acceptance of rights is up to the director's discretion. If a speaker goes off topic during their allotted time the director will rule their speech dilatory and move to the next motion in order.

Accepting by Acclamation

This motion may be stated when the Committee Director asks for points or motions. If a Roll Call Vote is requested, the motion to Accept by Acclamation is voided. If a delegate believes a Directive will pass without opposition, he or she may move to accept the Directive by acclamation. The motion passes unless a single delegate shows opposition. An abstention is not considered opposition. Should the motion fail, the committee will move directly into a Roll Call Vote.

Special Procedures

The parliamentary mechanics of the 13th Sri Lankan Parliament, 2004 specialized committee will follow the GatorMUN procedures for a traditional general assembly with the addition of historically relevant **crisis updates**. These crisis updates should be utilized by the delegates in the writing of their overall draft resolutions and working papers. There are no other changes in parliamentary procedure for this committee.

This committee requires you to do outside research from the background guide. This guide provides essential information for the committee, but does not provide information that would need to be written in the working papers. In order to draft detailed working papers to address the disaster and Civil War, delegates must do their own research into how countries can successfully use international aid to rebuild from crisis, considering their position's political alignment.

United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA)

Abeygunawardena, Rohitha

Abeygunawardena was elected from the Kalutara District. He was elected under the Sri Lanka Freedom Party which was one of the main parties within the coalition party of the UPFA. During his time in the Parliament, he served as the Deputy Minister of Post, Telecommunications & Udarata Development. In 2007, he became the Non-Cabinet member of Nation Building.

Abeywardena, Mahinda Yapa

Abeywardena was elected from the Matara District. He was elected under the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. While serving in Parliament, he served as the Deputy Minister of Healthcare and Nutrition. He later served as the Minister of Cultural Affairs.

Aluthgamage, Mahindananda

Aluthgamage was elected to represent the Kandy (Mahanuwara) District. He was elected under the Sri Lanka Freedom Party within the UPFA. While representing the Kandy District, he served as the Deputy Minister of Power & Energy, the Non-Cabinet Minister of Power in 2007, and later the Minister of Sports.

Dassanayake, D. M.

Dassanayake was elected from the Puttalam District. He served representing the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. While in office, served as the Deputy Minister of Livestock Development. In his later term, he served as the Non-Cabinet Minister of Nation Building.

Dissanayake, Duminda

Dissanayake was elected from the Anuradhapura District. He was elected as a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. During his time in Parliament, he served as the Deputy Minister of Skills Development, Vocational & Technical Education until 2007 when he was reelected as the Non-Cabinet Minister of Petroleum Resources. He is still currently serving in Parliament as the Minister of Irrigation.

Dissanayake, Rohana

Dissanayake was elected to represent the Matale District. He was elected as a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party within the UPFA. He served as the Deputy Minister of Samurdhi & Poverty Alleviation.

Fernandopulle, Jeyaraj

Fernandopulle was elected to represent the Gampaha District as a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. He was a Roman Catholic who was a part of the minority group Colombo Chetties. While in office, he served as the Chief Government Whip and the Minister of Trade, Commerce & Consumer Affairs. In 2007, he was reelected as the Minister of Highways & Road Development and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.



Herath, Jayarathna

Herath was elected from the Kurunegala District. He served under the Sri Lanka Freedom Party within the UPFA coalition. During his time in office, he served as the Deputy Minister of Public Security, Law & Order. In 2007, he served as the Non-Cabinet Minister of Health Promotion & Disease Prevention.

Jayaratne, D. M.

Jayaratne was elected to represent the Kandy (Mahanuwara) District. Jayaratne was a founding member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, representing it under the UPFA in all his years in office. While in the 13th Parliament, he served as the Minister of Posts, Telecommunications & Upcountry Development.

Jayasena, Sumedha G.

Dr. Jayasena was elected to serve the Monaragala District. She is one of the few women to have ever served in the Sri Lankan Parliament. During her time in the 13th Parliament, representing the Sri Lanka Freedom Party under the UPFA, she served as the Minister of Women Affairs & Social Welfare. She also served as the Minister of Child Development & Women's Empowerment.

Kadirgamar, Lakshman

Kadirgamar was a member of the 13th Parliament under the National List of Member Parliament. This means he was a non-elected member of Parliament chosen by his respective party - the Sri Lanka Freedom Party with the UPFA. During his time in Parliament, he served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs until his assassination in August of 2005.

Nawinne, S. B.

Nawinne was elected to represent the Kurunegala District. During his time in office, he served as the Minister of Regional Infrastructure Development for the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. He also served as the Minister of Rural Industries & Self-Employment Promotion. In the 2015 General Election, Nawinne switched party alignment to the United National Party.

Perera, Dilan

Perera was elected to represent the Badulla District for the 13th Parliament. The former lawyer represented his district under the Sri Lanka Freedom Party under the UPFA. While in office, he served as the Deputy Minister of Ports & Aviation. He later served as a Non-Cabinet Minister of Justice.

Pushpakumara, A. P. Jagath

Pushpakumara was elected to represent the Monaragala District. He served as a representative for the Sri Lanka Freedom Party under the UPFA. During his time in office, he served as the Deputy Minister of Samurdhi & Poverty Alleviation. Beginning in 2007, he served as the Non-Cabinet Minister of Nation Building.

Rajapaksa, Chamal

Rajapaksa was elected from the Hambantota District. Rajapaksa comes from a politically active family, as his father was a long-standing political leader in Sri Lanka. During his time as a representative for the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, he served as the Deputy Minister of Plantation Industries, and the Minister of Irrigation & Water Management.

Senewiratne, Athauda

Senewiratne was elected from the Kegalle District. He served as a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party within the UPFA. While serving in the 13th Parliament, he served as the Minister of Labour Relations & Foreign Employment. Additionally, he served as the Minister of Labour Relations & Manpower.

Siyambalapitiya, Ranjith

Siyambalapitiya was elected from the Kegalle District. He was elected to be a representative under the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. While serving in office, he was the Deputy Minister of Finance until 2007. In 2007, he then became the Non-Cabinet Minister of State Revenue & Finance.

Weerakoon, Gunaratna

Weerakoon was elected from the Galle District. While serving in the 13th Parliament, he served as the Deputy Minister of Regional Infrastructure Development until 2007. In 2007, he became one of the Non-Cabinet Members of Nation Building.

Yapa, Anura Priyadarshana

Yapa was elected to serve the Kurunegala District as a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party within the UPFA. While in office, he served as the Minister of Plantation Industries and the Minister of Mass Media & Information. He later went on to become the General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 2015.

United National Party (UNP)

Atukorale, Thalatha

Atukorale was elected to represent the Ratnapura District. She is one of the few female lawyers to be elected to office. She first ran for political office in 2004, winning her first election, after her brother died in a suspicious incident.

Bandara, R. M. Ranjith Madduma

Bandara was elected in the Monaragala District. He is a long standing politician in Sri Lanka, having held a multitude of positions in the UNP relating to law and order, and including serving as the Minister of Public Transportation.

Bogollagama, Rohitha

Bogollagama was elected for the Kurunegala District. He first began his time in the Sri Lankan Parliament in 2000, serving as the Parliamentary Consultative Committees on Finance, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Industrial Development & Investment Promotion, and Power & Energy. In 2001, he was appointed the Minister of Industries. On November 18th, 2004, Bogollagama switched political parties and transitioned to the UPFA but he maintained alliances with those in the UNP.

Fernando, Johnston

Fernando was elected to serve the Kurunegala District. Fernando is a businessman who entered the political field in 2001. He served as the Project Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports until 2004. His aggressive tendencies in his career and cabinet positions followed him until his arrest in 2015.

Lokuge, Gamini

Lokuge served in office representing the Colombo District, the capital. Lokuge has been in politics since the 1960s, seeing the drastic changes that Sri Lanka has undergone through the years. It is unclear if Lokuge had any criminal activity during the ethnic conflicts. While in office, he served as the Minister of Tourism in 1989 and from 2002-2004.

Jayasuriya, Karu

Jayasuriya was elected for the Gampaha District. He served as the Mayor of Colombo from 1997-1999. From 2001-2004, he served as the Minister of Power and Energy. Jayasuriya had nearly a decade in the Sri Lankan military, serving in both the Ceylon Army Volunteer Force and the Ceylon National Guard during the 1960s and 1970s.

Moragoda, Milinda

Moragoda was elected to represent the Colombo District in the 13th Parliament. The businessman served as the Minister for Economic Reform, Science and Technology and Deputy Minister for Plan Implementation and Development through 2004. Before his political career, he was the Founder Chairman of Mercantile Merchant Bank Ltd (MMBL) - a private investment bank and equity company.

Nanayakkara, Hemakumara

Nanayakkara served as the representative for the Galle District. He played an active role in the campaigning process for the 2001 Parliament election on behalf of the UNP. As a result, he was appointed to be a Minister of the party until the next election. He switched political parties in 2007, but eventually left the UFPA to form his own party called the Ruhunu Janatha Party.

Perera, Gamini Jayawickrama

Perera was elected for the Kurunegala District. He served as the former chairman for the UNP and as the Cabinet Minister for Irrigation and Water Management when the UNP had majority control of the Parliament. He also served as the Cabinet Minister of Food Protection. In 2016, he was elected as the chairman of ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific).

Wijesekara, Mahinda

Wijesekara was elected for the Matara District. In 2001, he left the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and aligned with the UNP. Up until the majority party switched in the 2004 elections, Wijeyeratne served as the Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources.

Wijeyeratne, Mano

Wijeyeratna was elected for the Kegalle District. He was born into a political dynasty, son of Dr Nissanka Wijeyeratne. Wijeyeratne served in the Sri Lankan Parliament for 17 years, representing the UNP until his transition to the UPFA in 2007. In 1993, he was the Minister of Plantation Services.

Tamil National Alliance (TNA)

Adaikalanathan, Selvam

Adaikalanathan was elected to represent the Vanni District. Adaikalanathan can be described as a militant turned political leader. After the slaying of Sri Sabaratnam in 1986 by the LTTE, Adaikalanathan took over the presidency of TELO and is still the current president.

Kathiraman, Thangeswary

Kathiraman was elected to serve the Batticaloa District. She is one of the few female Tamil politicians to have served in the Parliament. After the defeat of the Tamil Tigers in the Civil War, she joined the UPFA and failed to get re-elected.

Jeyanandamoorthy, Senathirajah

Jeyanandamoorthy was elected for the Batticaloa District. He was selected to represent in the TNA on behalf of the LTTE. He has been a lead correspondent to both Virakesari and TamilNet - leading news organizations in Sri Lanka. A few years later, he fled to the United Kingdom to escape death threats.

Ponnambalam, Gajendrakumar

Ponnambalam was elected to represent the Jaffna District. In 1999, he was called to the bar to be attorney-at-law under Sri Lankan law after studying law in London for four years. He is the current leader of the ACTC and a member of the TNPF.

Sampanthan, Rajavarothiam

Sampanthan was elected to serve the Trincomalee District. He is a Sri Lankan lawyer who had led the TNA since 2001. He served as the joint treasurer and vice president of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) - a preceding organization to the TNA.

Thurairtnasingam, K.

Thurairtnasingam was elected for the Trincomalee District. After losing in his first election, he was able to get his start in Parliament through his nomination to the National List Member of Parliament. He served as the Divisional Director of Education while in Parliament.

Sri Lankan Muslim Congress

Ameer, Ali

Ameer was elected to represent the Batticaloa District. Ameer is a former teacher and lawyer, and has served in the Sri Lankan Parliament for multiple terms. He served as the Non-Cabinet Minister for Disaster Relief from 2007 until 2010. He later switched to the UPFA in 2012.

Bathiudeen, Rishad

Bathiudeen was elected to serve the Vanni District. He is the current leader of the All Ceylon Makkal Congress. Since 2010, he has served as the Minister of Industry and Commerce. Bathiudeen has had multiple controversies occurring in the later part of his political career, including accusations of promoting deforestation and ties with Islamic extremism.

Hakeem, Rauff

Hakeem was nominated for the National List Member of Parliament. He is the current leader for the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress and a member of the United National Front for Good Governance. He has served as the former Minister for Ports Development and Shipping and Minister of Muslim Religious Affairs. After the UPFA won the majority in 2004, he lost his cabinet positions and remained in the Parliament as a NLM.

Kamardeen, Abdul Baiz

Kamardeen was nominated for the National List Member of Parliament. He is the current Chairman of Puttalam Urban Council. He served as the Deputy Minister of Provincial Councils from 2007-2010.

Island History

Sri Lanka is a southeastern island in the Indian Ocean separated from the Indian peninsula by the Palk Strait. The country, officially known as the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country with a unitary semi-presidential constitutional republic form of government. Formerly a British colony known as Ceylon, the country declared independence in 1948. Sri Lanka is a unitary government with a dual-executive system - where a president exists alongside a prime minister and a cabinet. Currently, Maithripala Sirisena is the President, and Ranil Wickremesinghe is the Prime Minister. The island's population is roughly 21 million, of which 70% adhere to Buddhism, 13% adhere to Hinduism, 9.7% adhere to Islam, and 7.4% adhere to Christianity.

Due to its location, the country has served as a trading and cultural link between West and Southeast Asia. The country, with help from its naturally existing deep harbors, was beneficial to the Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road. After the 4th century, Sri Lanka became the world's leading exporter of cinnamon. Its involvement with trading merchants gave the country exposure to the cultures and religious teachings from all over Europe and Asia.

The history of the island spans nearly 500,000 years back, through the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Iron Ages. Through burial sites and ancient writings, anthropologists have noted that early inhabitants of the island are most likely of the Vedda minority indigenous group. Sinhalese history begins approximately in 543 BC with the arrival of Prince Vijaya. Sinhalese is the Indo-Aryan ethnic group native to Sri Lanka, which is determined by religion, language and historical heritage. Vijaya began the first of 189 monarchs that ruled over Sri Lanka until 1815 when the Kingdom of Kandy fell to British imperialism.

The thousands of years in which monarchs led the island can all be connected through religion. Sri Lanka has the longest continuous history of Buddhism of any predominantly Buddhist nation. After its introduction to the island in 2nd century BC, the island has preserved its ancient teachings through the Theravada school of Buddhism - the oldest extant of Buddhism. Up until 30 BCE, the teachings were passed orally. After 25 BCE, a year of bad harvest led to the Fourth Buddhist Council. This council established that the teachings of Theravada would be written down to be preserved after many Buddhist monks had died of starvation from this bad harvest. Today, Buddhism is given special protections in the country's constitution, stating that Sri Lanka's are to "protect and foster the Buddha Sasana."

After British rule took over the island in 1815, with the fall of the last monarchy in Sri Lanka, the country immediately began social and political reform under the British rule of law. In order to profit off the new colony, Britain began coffee plantations that inevitably failed after the depression of 1847. With coffee prices plummeting, the plantations switched to producing tea. Tea production flourished for decades to come, and rubber plantations were implemented into the beginning of the 20th century.

The beginning of the 20th century marks a unique harmony between the Tamil and the Sinhalese - the main two different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. In 1919, the two groups united to create the Ceylon National Congress. The Congress was created to press colonial leaders to add constitu-

tional reform to the government, but the momentum behind the movement diminished shortly into the 1930s.

Transitioning into the start of World War II, the British expanded and mobilized the Ceylon Defence Force and the Ceylon Navy Volunteer Reserve. The island served as an important Allied military base in Southeast Asia. Although many were encouraged to volunteer for the war effort, the British provided little to no rewards or reparations for those served. With war efforts increasing, and Southeast Asia becoming increasingly at the center of WWII, anti-war and independence movements rose simultaneously. After the Japanese attacked Ceylon in 1942 *Easter Sunday Raid*, civilians began fleeing the military bases and uniting for an end to the war.

As World War II was ending, the peaceful Sri Lanka independence movement began. The movement was aimed at achieving independence and self-rule from the British Empire. As Britain transitioned into neo-colonialism, the Sri Lanka independence movement was successful. On February 4th, 1948, the country became the Dominion of Ceylon until 1972.

Modern Sri Lanka and the Civil War

After gaining independence from direct British rule, Sri Lanka unfortunately began experiencing immediate civil unrest within the country between the Sinhalese and the Tamil peoples. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, elected Prime Minister in 1956, had a profound impact on the political culture of the country despite only serving for three years. Bandaranaike claimed himself to be the “defender of the besieged Sinhalese culture,” and introduced the Sinhala Only Act of 1956 that failed to recognize the Tamil language and culture.

The Federal Party, the political party that represented the Tamil ethnic group, launched a non-violent movement against the bill. The movement eventually led Bandaranaike to reach the Bandaranaike–Chelvanayakam Pact. The pact, however, was met with stern opposition from the Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka, leading to Bandaranaike being assassinated in 1959 by a Buddhist monk.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the widow of Bandaranaike, took office after her husband’s assassination. Her government withstood multiple attempts to be overthrown, including the attempted *coup d’état* that was led by multiple senior military and government officials. During her second term as Prime Minister, she implemented multiple socialist economic policies that strengthened Ceylon’s relationship with the Soviet Union and China. In 1971, there was a failed Marxist insurrection. The year after, Ceylon was renamed Sri Lanka and formally became a republic. With the government further enforcing policies of standardization and affirmative action plans targeted at those of Sinhalese heritage, the militancy of the Tamil rose.

In 1976, Velupillai Prabhakaran founded the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE was a militant political group based in Northeast Sri Lanka aimed at securing an independent state of Tamil Eelam. The conflicts between the LTTE and the Sri Lanka government did not reach a full-scale nationalist crisis until the countrywide pogroms - *Black July*.

Black July is known as a series of riots and pogroms that occurred on July 23rd, 1983 following an ambush on Sri Lankan soldiers committed by the LTTE. The following night, July 24th, anti-Tamil riots began in the capital, Colombo, and ensued throughout the country. The death toll of Tamils ranges from 400 - 3,000 people. Over 8,000 homes and 5,000 stores were destroyed.

Over the following years as the Civil War began, hundreds of thousands of Tamils fled Sri Lanka.



The Sri Lankan Civil War can be described as an absolute bloodbath. Over the 26-year period, anywhere from 80,000 to 100,000 people died in the war. According to an expert panel convened by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, at least 40,000 Tamils may have been killed during the final phases of the war. The numbers covering the death toll, displaced, and injured all require further research to confirm, as many of the numbers are only based on hospital records. The war caused major hardships on the economy, environment, international relations and the

population. The LTTE was listed as a terrorist organization in 32 countries, and the Sri Lankan government has been accused of committing human rights abuses and forced disappearances. The Civil War can be broken down into a timeline of events:

- Eelam War (1983-1987)
- Indian Intervention (1987-1990)
- Eelam War II (1990-1995)
- Eelam War III (1995-2002)
- The Peace Process (2002-2006)
- Eelam War IV (2006-2009)

Although this committee takes place during the Peace Process, those years are defined by a loosely followed ceasefire. Acts of violence still occurred during this stage, and the unresolved issues caused by the tsunami only further encouraged radicalization on either side of the war. When the peace efforts eventually failed, Eelam War IV saw a brutal escalation in war crimes. Claymore mines had been introduced and guerrilla warfare continued.

The 13th Parliament

On April 2nd, 2004, the 13th Parliament elections took place. The ruling United National Party (UNP) lost their majority and was replaced by the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA). With the election taking place during the Civil War, campaigns were severely split based on national identity and promises of peace or continued war efforts. The parties within the parliament were incredibly different, with all of them attached to either an ethnic identity or a religious identity.

United People's Freedom Alliance

The UPFA is a Sri Lanka political alliance created by the former Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga. The alliance party held the majority in the Parliament from 2004-2015. Led by the senior party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the alliance is considered to represent Sinhalese nationality.

The UPFA was created out of an agreement between the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). The Sri Lanka Freedom Party is one of the most well-known histo-

rical Sri Lankan parties, upholding democratic socialist views on economic policies with the Sinhalese national identity. JVP was a communist and Marxist-Leninist political party and movement that saw itself as the betrayal of working class Sri Lankans who sought anti-war and anti-imperial legislative measures. The two parties apparently worked together to create the alliance party in order to overthrow the UNP from power. The alliance party gained more traction after the ending of the Civil War, with many attributing the failures of the Peace Process era to the UNP.

According to its social media pages, the UPFA “stands for Social Justice, Good Governance, Human Rights, Freedom of Education & Expression, Right for Information and above all Freedom on Social Media in Sri Lanka.”

The members of the UPFA are:

- Sri Lanka Freedom Party
- Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya
- Ceylon Workers’ Congress
- Communist Party of Sri Lanka
- Desha Vimukthi Janatha Pakshaya
- Democratic Left Front
- Eelam People’s Democratic Party
- Eelavar Democratic Front
- Mahajana Eksath Peramuna
- National Freedom Front
- Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal

United National Party

The UNP is a Sri Lanka political party created in 1946 by Don Stephen Senanayake. The party was founded through pro-independence movements from three right-wing dominion groups. After years of transitioning policies and influence from the Tamil-Sinhalese conflicts, the modern party is considered to be right-leaning, pro-capitalist, pro-market economy and is a member of the International Democrat Union.

Tamil National Alliance

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) is an alliance party formed in 2001 by Tamil nationalists moderates and former militant groups. After supporting negotiations from the LTTE to end the Civil War, the TNA became known as a proxy for the LTTE in the Sri Lankan government. During the Civil War, the TNA stood for an independent state and supported the separationist movement of the Tamils. After the defeat of the LTTE in 2009, the TNA has denounced its former positions and would rather accept a regional self-rule. The TNA party is based on the four demands of the Thimphu Declaration - the declaration created at the first peace talks with Indian influence in the 1980s. The four demands are as follows:

- Recognition of the Tamils of Ceylon as a nation;
- Recognition of the existence of an identified homeland for the Tamils of Ceylon;
- Recognition of the right of self determination of the Tamil nation; and,
- Recognition of the right to citizenship and the fundamental rights of all Tamils of Ceylon.

The TNA consisted of four parties during the 13th Parliament: All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTO), Eelam's People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK), and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO).

Sri Lankan Muslim Congress

The Sri Lankan Muslim Congress is a political party that represents the Muslim community in the country. The party was formed by a group of Eastern Province leaders in 1981. The political party serves to give a voice to Muslims within Sri Lanka who have been victimized from the ongoing radicalization in the Tamil and Sinhalese community. Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, small radical Islamic communities have emerged in Sri Lanka who align themselves with ISIS and identify under the Jhadist movements.

2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami

Early morning on December 26th, 2004, a 9.1 MW hit off the coast of Sumantra, a western island a part of Indonesia. Soon after, a series of tsunami waves hit the surrounding countries coastal borders. The damage from the tsunami waves and the earthquake was unforeseen, with humanitarian donations reaching over 14 billion USD. From the 15 countries affected by the natural disaster, 227,898 people were killed, with millions displaced and missing.



The Indian Ocean earthquake was one of the worst natural disasters ever recorded. It is the third largest earthquake ever observed, with the worst following tsunami since the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa. The undersea megathrust earthquake was caused by a rupture along the fault between the Burma Plate and the Indian Plate. Two years ago, a preceding earthquake off the coast of Sumatra occurred, which has now been deemed a "foreshock" earthquake. In the following days after the Indian Ocean earthquake, there were numerous aftershocks near the Andaman Islands, the Nicobar Islands and surround the islands of Indonesia. These aftershocks reached abnormally high magnitudes, reaching over 6.0-7.0 MW.

The upward motion of the tectonic plate caused the seabed to suddenly rise by nearly 40 meters. This rise triggered the massive tsunami waves that shortly followed. It is important to note that because the earthquake occurred along a north-south fault, the greatest strength - energy - in the tsunami waves occurred in a west-east direction. This explains why the tsunami waves spread out in the direction they did. In Aceh, an area of North Sumatra, the height of the tsunami waves were measured at 80 feet, but shortly rose to 100 feet as the waves moved further inland. The time passed for the waves to reach the coastlines of the countries affected ranged from 15 minutes to 16 hours.

Despite international earthquake and tsunami warning systems having existed in the Pacific since the 1940s, there were no systems or emergency plans in place to effectively respond to the disaster prior to its making landfall. Once the seismic activity was picked up by stations in Australia, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre was notified. However, neither of the offices had contacts for who to notify for countries in the Indian Ocean. While multiple governments had been alerted after the earthquake was registered, there was little urgency for countries (excluding Indonesia) as the severity was not understood. Even if it had been, there were little to no evacuation plans in the works. It wasn't until after this disaster that there was an international call to action to improve and increase the emergency response systems for earthquakes and tsunamis.

Global Impact

The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake is considered to be one of the ten worst earthquakes in recorded history. The effects of the earthquake were felt from Thailand to South Africa, with nearly 300,000 deaths and over a million displaced and missing. According to various relief agencies, it is estimated that one-third of all the deaths were children. Children were more vulnerable to drowning as they were less likely to be able to swim in the harsh conditions. In addition to the deaths of those native to the countries affected, nearly 9,000 tourists were killed by the disaster.

The relief operations funded by the United Nations proved to be the costliest in history. Approximately 14 billion USD was donated from countries all over the world. Additionally, many international companies donated millions in relief and aid. After the disaster, threats of disease became increasingly worrisome. Cholera, dysentery, and hepatitis A and B spread rapidly through contaminated water and exposed corpses. From this threat, initial relief was focused on water sanitation and burial of the dead. However, for a country like Sri Lanka that is in the middle of a Civil War, cultural and political interference became prevalent and prevented thousands from receiving aid.

The Disaster in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka had the second highest death toll from the natural disaster. Excluding the 19,000 people reported missing on behalf of the Tamil Tigers, reports confirmed approximately 35,000 deaths, 20,000 injured, with over 500,000 displaced or missing. The tsunami wave heights ranged from 13ft to 33ft.

The first tsunami wave hit the east coastline of Sri Lanka roughly two hours after the earthquake. The initial wave, known as a positive wave, caused small flooding after it hit the coast. The water then retracted back by as far as a mile, which is known as the occurrence of a negative wave.

This caused a much larger second wave to shortly strike the coastline, breaking through seawalls and destroying infrastructure inland. As discussed earlier, news of the earthquake and tsunami hadn't spread past a handful of government officials prior to Sri Lanka being struck. As a result, many citizens were unaware that the contained flooding and following wave retraction were signs of an approaching tsunami. Some beach goers, which can be seen in the documentaries listed below, went onto the exposed beach as the wave went back and were unfortunately stuck when the second wave crashed back on the coast.

In addition to the destroyed infrastructure, environment and chaos caused by the disaster, the tsunami also caused the infamous 2004 Sri Lankan rail disaster. Near the suburb of Colombo, waves surpassing 25ft crashed over a coastal railway. Around 9:30 AM, the first wave struck the area. As the water surged around the train, the train stopped and passengers rushed to the top of the carts and excited to shield themselves behind the train. Shortly after the train halted, a massive wave struck and quickly swept the train against the trees and buildings behind the railway, killing over 1,700. Despite a seismic monitoring station in Pallekele picking up the earthquake that morning, it was decided that there was no threat of a tsunami. Once the tsunami waves were registered, the main dispatching office was unable to contact any of the train employees to halt the train until it was too late. To date, this event is still the world's worst single railway disaster.

The economy and environment were devastated as a result of the disaster, specifically in the agriculture sector. The waves destroyed the paddy fields in the eastern, southern and western coasts of the country. The flooding of saltwater damaged the soil quality and made the paddy cultivation process impossible for years in some regions. Additionally, in areas hit by the waves, vehicles and equipment were destroyed. The tsunami caused mass water and land pollution, depositing sewage and rubbish everywhere the waves flooded. A part of the "rubbish" that was left behind, mines used throughout the Civil War had been washed up and left in new areas, requiring efforts to be dedicated to minesweepers. On local levels, many businesses lost everything and set the provinces' economies back.

In times of conflict, natural disasters can sometimes bring peace and unite the opposing sides to better distribute aid. Unfortunately, this was not the case for Sri Lanka. Geographically, the Sinhalese and the Tamil were separated. The Tamils were heavily concentrated in the north, with some communities residing on stretches of the eastern coast. The Sinhalese occupied most of the east, south, and western regions of the country. The tsunami dramatically affected Sinhalese communities more than the Tamil, but militant groups within the Tamil population saw the disaster as an opportunity to exploit relief aid funding as a mechanism to begin re-arming their members. Less than two years after the tsunami, the ceasefire would end and the bloodiest era of the Sri Lankan Civil War would begin.

Conclusion

As members of the 13th Sri Lankan Parliament, it is your job to address the disaster and attempt to save your country from entering gruesome future we now consider history. By researching effective means of aid distribution and infrastructure projects, by addressing the needs of the ethnic Civil War, by working together, the fate of thousands can be changed.

Questions to Consider

1. How did the natural disaster further strain the already fragile stability in Sri Lanka during the

Peace Process?

2. How the international community's involvement with the Civil War influence the progression of the war? Was outside involvement more harmful than good?
3. Consider the disparities in how international aid was distributed to affected areas.
4. Beyond the flooding from the tsunami, what other ways was the environment damaged by the event?
5. How did the Civil War affect the redevelopment of regions hit by the tsunami?

Additional Resources

If interested, I highly encourage all of you to watch clips on YouTube further covering the extent of the damage. Please be advised that videos of the event can be emotionally distressing. Listed below are three hyperlinks you can copy to view my recommended clips.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mYWSkePa0c>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUo7TloWISY>
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yFNOuo_Yxl

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