

# Sri Lanka

## *Ethnicity in Sri Lanka*

### *Group selection*

Politically relevant ethnic groups in Sri Lanka are the **Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamils, Indian Tamils and Moors (Muslims)**.

Population estimates vary: The CIA World Factbook and the State Department report a total of 21.3 million inhabitants, Freedom House and the Bertelsmann Transformation Index list 20 million, and the Joshua Project only accounts for 19.5 million. In the 1970s many Indian Tamils relocated to India, reducing the population share of that group (see below). Specific ethnic group counts also diverge. Since the vast majority of Moors speak Tamil and live among the Sri Lankan Tamils, population numbers of the latter seem to be overestimated. Information on the 2012 census was published in 2015 on the website of the Sri Lankan Department of Census and Statistics. According to the report, Sri Lanka has a population of 20.4 million inhabitants, 75 per cent of which are Sinhalese, 11 per cent are Tamil, 4 per cent Indian Tamil, and 9 per cent Moor.

### *Power relations*

#### *Sinhalese*

Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected as the first southern President. As all of his predecessors he is an ethnic Sinhalese but in comparison to the previous government he strongly caters to Sinhalese extremist voters. In order to consolidate his power he had to forge several alliances with smaller parties that represent the Muslim and Indian Tamil groups but did not support his campaign or his overall political goals. Moreover, several of the cabinet posts seem to be cosmetic. Out of 108 ministers, there were only three Muslims and only one Indian Tamils. Rajapaksa's power is uncontested as he personally holds several important cabinet positions (defence, finance, infrastructure). Sinhalese are thus dominant. Peebles (<sup>4160</sup>, 177) confirms this assessment stating that "minorities are second-class citizens" in Sri Lanka.

<sup>4160</sup> [Peebles, 2006]

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is of Sinhalese ethnicity, was elected in 2010 for a second 6-year term, as mentioned above. He is also Minister of Defense and Urban Development, Finance and Planning, Ports and Highways, and Law and Order (<sup>4161</sup>), as well as empowered to appoint to the judiciary and key commissions (see above). Regarding this concentration of power at the presidential

<sup>4161</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

level, the Bertelsmann Stiftung (<sup>4162</sup>) writes that „the executive currently enjoys more power to govern than any other that has held office in the country. Furthermore, the President, the family has been assigned extensive influence through the appointment to key positions: his three brothers serve as Defense Secretary, Minister for Economic Development, and Speaker of Parliament, while other relatives, including his son, hold key political or diplomatic positions (<sup>4163</sup>; <sup>4164</sup>; <sup>4165</sup>). Together, they control ca. 70% of the country, the budget (<sup>4166</sup>; <sup>4167</sup>), and no major change in policy is implemented if they oppose it, even if the matter does not fall within their jurisdiction constitutionally (<sup>4168</sup>).

The two largest political parties are dominated by Sinhalese (<sup>4169</sup>). The constitution specifies Buddhism as the state religion, although religious freedom is largely respected (<sup>4170</sup>; <sup>4171</sup>). Based on this information, a concentration of Sinhalese power has undoubtedly taken place, especially after the 2010 elections and constitutional amendment. Since there are still token members from the Tamil and Muslim communities in the Cabinet however, the status dominant through 2017 appears reasonable. Although Sirisena (a Sinhalese) was supported by many Tamils in the Presidential Elections of 2015, politics still continue to be dominated by the Sinhalese (<sup>4172</sup>). The newly formed cabinet includes three more Tamil ministers as before, now amounting to five, out of 42 ministers in total.

### *Sri Lankan Tamils*

According to Freedom House (<sup>4173</sup>) the population share of Sri Lankan Tamils is only 0.039. However, the U.S. State Department background notes and Suryanarayan (<sup>4174</sup>) who cites census figures, note a population share of 0.12, which is in agreement with the current coding.

In 1987, Sri Lanka provided for the devolution of power and the recognition of Tamil as an official language (<sup>4175</sup>, 414). Yet, internment of hundreds of thousands of Tamils since 2006 suggests discrimination. Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP), political rivals of LTTE govern regional council but regional autonomy is worthless due to the strong military presence on the Tamil territory. Moreover, there is no devolution of powers yet to the Eastern Province. The International Crisis Group (<sup>4176</sup>) confirms this assessment: "No real space has been given to Tamil and Muslim political or community leaders in the north and very little in the east." Similarly, the UCDP (<sup>4177</sup>) states that the government closed off Tamil territories thereby "effectively placing the Jaffna peninsula under siege and prompting a humanitarian crisis in the north with hundreds of thousands of civilians being affected."

In 2013, 27 Sri Lankan Tamil representatives participated in the national parliament (<sup>4178</sup>). While local elections in the northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka were held, the provincial council elections were postponed indefinitely, in an effort by the government

<sup>4162</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4163</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4164</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4165</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4169</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4170</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4171</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4172</sup> [ICG, 2017]

<sup>4173</sup> [Freedom House, 2006]

<sup>4174</sup> [Suryanarayan, 2001]

<sup>4175</sup> [Hennayake, 1989]

<sup>4176</sup> [ICG, 2010]

<sup>4177</sup> [UCDP, 2008]

<sup>4178</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

to delay civilian political control of the area <sup>(4179)</sup>. According to the US Department of State <sup>(4180)</sup>, the elections were accompanied by political violence, especially by attacks on TNA (Tamil National Alliance) candidates, by pro-government paramilitaries.

The EPDP (Eelam People's Democratic Party) and the TNA are the only serious political parties representing the Sri Lankan Tamils, but few political analysts think them a strong option for the future political development of this group. The political importance of the EPDP, which was formerly the main northern party in the democratic mainstream that opposed the LTTE - has become much reduced since the defeat of the LTTE by the Sri Lankan military. Regarding the TNA, this is currently the most popular Tamil political party in the North, especially since it raises controversial issues faced by the Tamils. Nevertheless, its demands for political autonomy leave it somewhat isolated, given that they are rather unrealistic in the current political context <sup>(4181)</sup>. Indeed, Tamil hopes for political autonomy remain unfulfilled: LTTE rule has been replaced by that of armed paramilitary forces, which control most aspects of daily life <sup>(4182; 4183)</sup>. There are, however, sources that suggest that former Tamil Tigers have been invited to join the armed forces, and that ethnic Tamil and Tamil-speaking police officers have been trained and deployed <sup>(4184; 4185)</sup>.

Reports emphasize continued systematic discrimination against ethnic Tamils, including in government employment and other matters controlled by the government, and that a disproportionate number of victims of serious HR violations, especially at the hands of security forces and paramilitary groups, were Tamils <sup>(4186; 4187)</sup>. Another issue is that of land appropriations in traditionally Tamil areas, both directly by the government or through government-aided resettlement of Sinhalese families <sup>(4188; 4189)</sup>. This has, inter alia, impinged on the ability of local people to return to their property after the end of the civil war, as have general war damage and mines <sup>(4190; 4191)</sup>. As a result, 9,800 remain IDPs.

Given the limited access to national (and local) level power, combined with strong discrimination, of Sri Lankan Tamils, they remain discriminated until 2017. The hopes of harmony that rose in 2015 when Sirisena was elected president with the overwhelming support of the Tamils have not been fully realized as of today. Sirisena's reform plans included greater devolution to the provinces, including powers over police and land registration, which was intended to satisfy Tamil demands for self-rule without resorting to full federalism. Other legislative proposals tackled the question of transitional justice, e.g. by creating an office for missing persons to chronicle the thousands of people abducted or killed in the war, replacing the PTA (see above), providing for compensation for property seized or destroyed in the war, and setting up a truth-and-reconciliation commission. However, The Economist writes that "the Sri Lankan authorities have been, at best, marking time", which is why the Tamils are "increasingly frustrated" <sup>(4192)</sup>. The military resists returning

<sup>4179</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4180</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4181</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

<sup>4182</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4183</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4184</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4185</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4186</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4187</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4188</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4189</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4190</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4192</sup> [?]

additional occupied land to its owners in the north and west and continues to run shops and hotels and build Buddha statues in Tamil (and Muslim) communities. Government plans for transitional justice have largely not materialised. ICG reports that politics has been dominated by Rajapaksa-aligned Sinhala nationalists, who present even modest changes as existential threats to the nation's Sinhala and Buddhist character (<sup>4193</sup>). Beyond generic statements the government has done little to change the underlying ethno-nationalist dynamics that sustained the quarter-century of war.

<sup>4193</sup> [ICG, 2017]

### *Indian Tamils*

In 1948, shortly after independence, the first Ceylonese government under D.S. Senanayake introduced the Ceylon Citizenship Act which disenfranchised the Indian Tamils. The law was mostly motivated by their political support for Senanayake's political opponents. According to Suryanarayan (<sup>4194</sup>) who cites the Sri Lankan census, several Indian Tamils returned to India in the 1970s due to the Srma-Shastri pact of 1964 and Indira-Sirimavo supplementary agreement of 1974 and/or identified themselves as Sri Lankan Tamils. Accordingly, the population share of Indian Tamils decreased by almost 50% to 0.055 while that of the Sri Lankan Tamils rose to 0.127. The remaining Indian Tamils were granted citizenship and became politically represented in parliament by 1977 but did not wield major influence in government. The leader of the Indian Tamil Ceylon Worker's Congress (CWC), Saumiyamurthy Thondaman, was a continuous cabinet member since the 1970s and emerged as a "king-maker" for the Sinhalese majority parties (<sup>4195</sup>). Since his death in 1999 his grandson Arumugan Thondaman has become leader of the CWC but faces intra-ethnic challenges from other political groups. The CWC receives continued support from the Indian mainland (possibly of interest for TEK coding - <sup>4196</sup>).

<sup>4194</sup> [Suryanarayan, 2001]

<sup>4195</sup> [Sambandan, 2003]

<sup>4196</sup> [Sambandan, 2003]

As of the 2005 Presidential election Mahinda Rajapaksa, an ethnic Sinhalese, is not only President but also holds the Defense, Finance, and two infrastructure ministries. While the majority of the Indian Tamils as well as the Muslims did vote for the losing opposition party (<sup>4197</sup>), the United National Front (UNP), the Indian Tamils seem to have gained government access once more in the new jumbo cabinet. Rajapaksa is joined by over 100 additional cabinet members (<sup>4198</sup>) including CWC politicians (<sup>4199</sup>). The influence of the CWC has certainly waned in comparison to the pre-1999 and the autocratic style governing by President Rajapaksa does not allow a continued Junior Partner coding. Hence, Indian Tamils are powerless from 2006.

<sup>4197</sup> [Becker, 2005]

<sup>4198</sup> [BBC, 2007]

<sup>4199</sup> [TamilNet, 2007]

Both the US Department of State (<sup>4200</sup>) and the Minority Rights Group International (<sup>4201</sup>) mention longstanding and continuing discrimination against and marginalization of the Indian Tamil minority, in terms of their social, economic as well as political rights. On the one hand, this is due to their similarity in name and iden-

<sup>4200</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4201</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

tity to the Sri Lankan Tamils: even though they were not directly involved in the conflict, they often face the same treatment. On the other hand, ca. 200,000 still have problems of documentation, which, *inter alia*, prohibits them from voting (<sup>4202</sup>).

Nevertheless, there are Indian Tamil political parties participating in mainstream politics (<sup>4203</sup>). The Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) was able to attain a more influential role by forming coalition governments in the past, but has recently faced criticism for allying with the government; in the 2010 elections, its number of seats dropped from 8 to 4 (<sup>4204</sup>). Therefore, while they do have access to the political space, they are unlikely to wield much power in the context of Sinhalese dominance. Also, while they are neglected and underprivileged, they are unlikely subjected to targeted discrimination at the level faced by the Sri Lankan Tamils. Furthermore, no remarkable change has been brought by the elections in 2015 (<sup>4205</sup>). Hence, the Indian Tamils continues to be powerless as of 2017.

<sup>4202</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

<sup>4203</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4204</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

<sup>4205</sup> [ICG, 2017]

### *Moors (Muslims)*

Three members of the cabinet from 2005 until 2009 represent the Muslim community: These are A. L. M. Athaullah (Minister of Water Supply and Drainage), Ferial Ashraff (Minister of Housing and Common Amenities), and Kabir Hashim (Non-Cabinet Minister of Tertiary Education). It remains unclear how much influence these individuals wielded or how well they were representing the Moors as a group and although the Bertelsmann Country Study mentions that "Muslim political parties that had emerged in the last twenty years, and had advocated a separate Muslim province have begun to ally themselves with one or the other of the main parties" (<sup>4206</sup>), the Muslims under President Rajapaksa, same as the Indian Tamils, are powerless.

<sup>4206</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009]

Muslim parties have gradually shifted from advocating a separate Muslim province to allying themselves with one of the main political parties (e.g. the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) is allied with the Sinhalese-led UPFA) (<sup>4207</sup>; <sup>4208</sup>). According to the US Department of State (<sup>4209</sup>), there are currently 18 representatives of the Muslim minority serving in parliament. The SLMC has support of Muslim voters in most parts of the country, and in 2010 parliamentary elections won 8 seats (<sup>4210</sup>). The leader of the National Unity Alliance (NUA), however, lost her seat after a racist campaign, during which Sinhalese voters (who made up 1/3 of her support base) were publicly motivated to vote for any Sinhalese candidate rather than for her (<sup>4211</sup>). There has also been an increase in discrimination and harassment against the Muslim community more generally (<sup>4212</sup>; <sup>4213</sup>; <sup>4214</sup>).

<sup>4207</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4208</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

<sup>4209</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4210</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

<sup>4211</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

In sum, even though the Muslim minority is represented in the national political arena, the representatives are unlikely to be in the position to ensure effective representation of their group's interests. Further, no remarkable change has been brought by the

elections in 2015 <sup>(4215)</sup>. Hence, the Moors are powerless until 2017.

<sup>4215</sup> [ICG, 2017]

### *General Observations*

Since 2009, we observe the first post-conflict phase following the defeat of the LTTE in 2009 after 26 years of civil war - a war that came in the context of broader Tamil claims of discrimination by the Sinhalese majority <sup>(4216)</sup>. Inter-ethnic tensions between all ethnic groups remain <sup>(4217)</sup>, making the rehabilitation of trust, especially among those most affected by the war, a major challenge <sup>(4218)</sup>. This process has been particularly hampered by a general climate of nationalist rhetoric and impunity <sup>(4219)</sup>, as well as by the persistent unwillingness of the ruling group to make political concessions to the Sri Lankan Tamil minority <sup>(4220)</sup>.

<sup>4216</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4217</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4218</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4219</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4220</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

The political context in Sri Lanka has been characterized by a growing solidification of Sinhalese power. President Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected for a second 6-year term in 2010 <sup>(4221)</sup> having won 58% of the vote <sup>(4222)</sup>. Voting was divided along ethnic lines, with the Tamils and Muslims voting mainly for the main opponent Sarath Fonseka, the former head of the armed forces, while the Sinhalese voted mainly for Rajapaksa <sup>(4223)</sup>. In the parliamentary elections, the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), a coalition led by the President, took 144 of the 225 seats, while the Tamil National Alliance won 14 <sup>(4224)</sup>. Both elections were considered neither fair nor free, especially in that the state apparatus was used to benefit the incumbent/ruling coalition <sup>(4225; 4226; 4227)</sup>. According to the US Department of State <sup>(4228)</sup>, the elections were also accompanied with violence and intimidation.

<sup>4221</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>4222</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4223</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4224</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4225</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

Overall, there has been a considerable deterioration in political democracy, the biggest challenge being the absence of a strong opposition, which ensured by the current government's modus operandi <sup>(4229)</sup>. Indeed, Sri Lanka is becoming increasingly authoritarian through the growing concentration of power in the presidency <sup>(4230; 4231)</sup>. President Rajapaksa's regime consolidated its position in various local, divisional and provincial council elections in 2011 and 2012, and now controls the national legislature, all provincial legislatures and most local governments <sup>(4232; 4233)</sup>. There was also a Constitutional Amendment in 2010, which gave the President control over appointments to previously independent public institutions, including the judiciary and key commissions (police, human rights, civil servants); it also removed the 2-term limit on presidents <sup>(4234; 4235; 4236)</sup>. Restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and movement further constrained opposition politics <sup>(4237; 4238; 4239)</sup>. Opposition parties were generally not free to operate or organize, especially if they spoke out in favor of minority groups <sup>(4240; 4241)</sup>. According to the Minority Rights Group International <sup>(4242)</sup>, "At the end of the conflict should have offered new opportunities to (minority parties), but instead most have become considerably weaker.

<sup>4229</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4230</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4231</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

<sup>4232</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014]

<sup>4233</sup> [Freedom House, 2013]

Presidential and Parliamentary elections were held in 2015, bringing with themselves a certain “wind of change”: In August 2015, Sri Lanka held nationwide Parliamentary elections, just under eight months ahead of schedule, following a closely contested Presidential election in January, which saw a change of President, the formation of a minority-led national government and a change in the leadership of the political party and political alliance with the largest number of seats in Parliament. In 2010, then President Rajapaksa’s government enacted an amendment to the Constitution, which removed presidential term limits. Subsequently, in late 2014, Rajapaksa, leader of the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), announced that he would seek a third term in office by means of an early election. The main opposition party in the country, the United National Party (UNP), and other smaller opposition parties came together to field a common opposition candidate, Maithripala Sirisena, a member of the Rajapaksa cabinet and General Secretary of the SLFP. The campaign period of the January 2015 elections was marked by high levels of violence, abuse of state resources and open violation of election laws<sup>(4243)</sup>. Sirisena defeated Rajapaksa (with 51.28 versus 47.58 per cent of votes), and appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister<sup>(4244)</sup>. Parliamentarians of the UNP took up key ministerial positions in the cabinet. The government subsequently passed the 19th amendment to the Constitution, aiming at reducing the executive powers of the President (which had been strengthened significantly through Rajapaksa’s 18th amendment in 2010). The 19th amendment resulted in a hybrid governance system in the country in which the President remains the Head of State, Head of Government, Head of the Armed Forces and Head of the Cabinet. This can be considered an important step towards the restoration of parliamentary democracy<sup>(4245)</sup>. Newly elected President Sirisena dissolved the parliament in June 2015, making way for fresh parliamentary elections. It has been reported that the incidents of serious violence in this election campaign period were significantly lower than experienced in previous elections<sup>(4246)</sup>. The official turnout amounted to around 78 per cent. The strongest parties were UNP with 45.66 per cent of votes and the UPFA (led by SLFP) with 42.38 per cent<sup>(4247)</sup>.

<sup>4243</sup> [Commonwealth Observer Group, 2015]

<sup>4244</sup> [?]

<sup>4245</sup> [?]

<sup>4246</sup> [Commonwealth Observer Group, 2015]

<sup>4247</sup> [?]

The government failed to properly implement important recommendations to improve the human rights situation in the country, including a repeal of the "draconian" Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA; which allows for arrests for unspecified "unlawful activities" without warrant and permits detention for up to 18 months without the suspect appearing before a court) and reforms to the Witness and Victim Protection Law. Other undertakings, such as broader reform of the security sector and return of the private lands confiscated by the military, were halting at best<sup>(4248)</sup>.

<sup>4248</sup> [Human Rights Watch, 2017]



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## Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka

*From 1948 until 1955*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.7	DOMINANT
Indian Tamils	0.12	DISCRIMINATED
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.11	POWERLESS
Moors (Muslims)	0.06	POWERLESS

*From 1956 until 1963*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.7	DOMINANT
Indian Tamils	0.12	DISCRIMINATED
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.11	DISCRIMINATED
Moors (Muslims)	0.06	DISCRIMINATED

*From 1964 until 1983*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.7	DOMINANT
Indian Tamils	0.12	POWERLESS
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.11	DISCRIMINATED
Moors (Muslims)	0.06	DISCRIMINATED



Figure 838: Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1948-1955.



Figure 839: Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1956-1963.

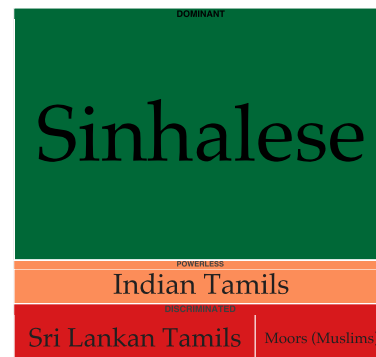


Figure 840: Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1964-1983.

*From 1984 until 1984*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.74	DOMINANT
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.11	SELF-EXCLUSION
Moors (Muslims)	0.08	DISCRIMINATED
Indian Tamils	0.06	POWERLESS

*From 1985 until 1986*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.74	SENIOR PARTNER
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.11	SELF-EXCLUSION
Moors (Muslims)	0.08	DISCRIMINATED
Indian Tamils	0.06	JUNIOR PARTNER

*From 1987 until 1987*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.74	SENIOR PARTNER
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.1	POWERLESS
Moors (Muslims)	0.08	DISCRIMINATED
Indian Tamils	0.06	JUNIOR PARTNER

*From 1988 until 2005*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.74	SENIOR PARTNER
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.09	POWERLESS
Moors (Muslims)	0.08	JUNIOR PARTNER
Indian Tamils	0.06	JUNIOR PARTNER

*From 2006 until 2012*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.74	DOMINANT
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.09	DISCRIMINATED
Moors (Muslims)	0.08	POWERLESS
Indian Tamils	0.06	POWERLESS



Figure 841: Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1984-1984.

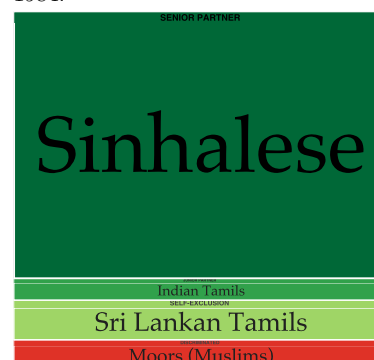


Figure 842: Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1985-1986.

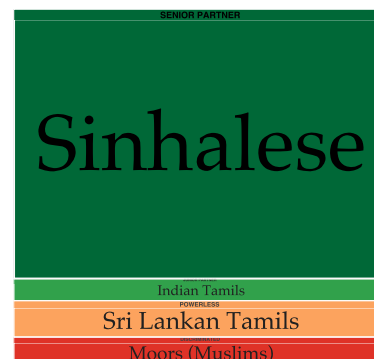


Figure 843: Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1987-1987.

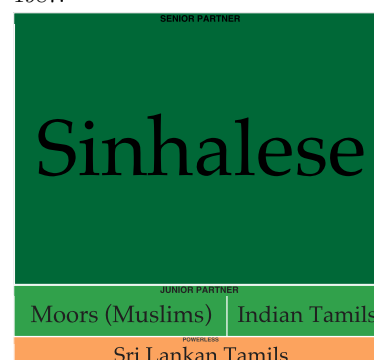


Figure 844: Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1988-2005.



*From 2013 until 2017*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Sinhalese	0.75	DOMINANT
Sri Lankan Tamils	0.11	DISCRIMINATED
Moors (Muslims)	0.09	POWERLESS
Indian Tamils	0.04	POWERLESS



Figure 846: Political status of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 2013-2017.

## *Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka*

*From 1948 until 1990*

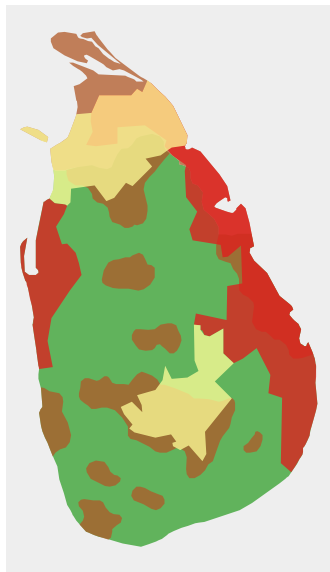


Figure 847: Map of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1948-1990.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■ Sinhalese	57 672	Regionally based
■ Sri Lankan Tamils	23 949	Regionally based
■ Moors (Muslims)	15 436	Regionally based
■ Indian Tamils	11 336	Regional & urban

Table 287: List of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1948-1990.

*From 1991 until 2017*

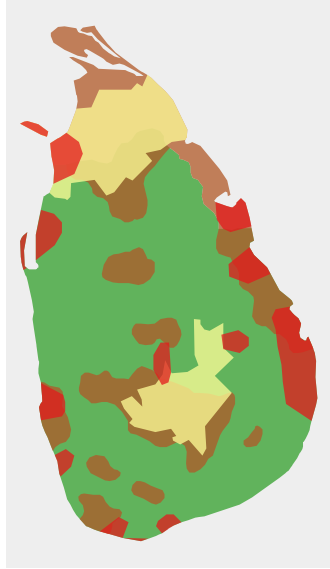


Figure 848: Map of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1991-2017.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Sinhalese	57 672	Regionally based
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Sri Lankan Tamils	23 949	Regionally based
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Indian Tamils	11 336	Regional & urban
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Moors (Muslims)	6645	Regionally based

Table 288: List of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka during 1991-2017.



## *Conflicts in Sri Lanka*

*Starting on 1971-04-04*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Sri Lanka	JVP	Sinhalese	1971-04-04	No	Yes, from EGIP	No

*Starting on 1975-07-26*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Sri Lanka	LTTE	Sri Lankan Tamils	1975-07-26	Explicit	Yes	No
Government of Sri Lanka	TELO	Sri Lankan Tamils	1978-05-05	Explicit	Yes	No
Government of Sri Lanka	EPRLF	Sri Lankan Tamils	1985-05-03	Presumed	Yes	No