

Continuous postponement is unjustifiable...

PAFFREL urge GoSL to expedite LG elections

BY NIRANJALA ARIYAWANSHA

People's Action For Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) have urged the government to not continuously postpone the LG election saying that delimitation work has not been completed as yet.

PAFFREL in a letter sent to Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government Faiszer Musthapha, points out further that it is not justified to keep postponing LG elections which are closest to the people as a result of the committee appointed for delimitation not carrying out their duties properly.

Copies of this letter which has been sent by Executive Director Rohana Hettiarachchi on behalf of PAFFREL have also been sent to the Elections Commissioner, and secretaries of all political parties as well as all civil organizations which show a keen interest regarding this issue.

Explaining further to *Ceylon Today*, Rohana Hettiarachchi

said that local government institutions for which delimitation problems have been solved be gazetted and the problems of institutions which still have them be solved rapidly and that the government should take steps to hold the election soon.

He further said postponing the local government election is not a responsibility of the minister in charge of the subject.

"Local Government institutions are organizations that represent the people in connection with their daily problems and are very close to the public. Maintaining these institutions for an extended length of time under an official's administration is not beneficial to a country's democracy. The tenure of certain local government institutions have gone beyond several years. The committee under the chairmanship of Asoka Peiris said initially that it would be possible to complete delimitation

by the end of January subsequent to taking into consideration complaints they have received and that they could be gazetted. Then they postponed it until 31st March. This is a very harmful situation," Hettiarachchi said further.

In their letter, PAFFREL has pointed out that elections have not been held since 2011 at the Batticaloa Municipal Council and 8 Pradeshiya Sabhas. While an election has not been held at the Vavuniya Municipal Council from 2012, an election has not been held at the Jaffna Municipal Council from 2013. At the same time these elections at Pudukudiyiruppu and Muhudubadapaththu Pradeshiya Sabha had been postponed for legal reasons.

Hettiarachchi emphasizes to the government in the letter that under these circumstances problems regarding 336 LG institutions have to be solved soon and that the government should take steps to hold elections promptly.