

Sixth Amendment to the Constitution, August 1983

Enacted within weeks of the Black July pogrom, the Sixth Amendment required every Member of Parliament to swear an oath renouncing support for a separate state. The TULF parliamentary group, holding a democratic mandate on the 1977 Vaddukoddai platform, was constitutionally barred from sitting. The Tamil parliamentary mandate was removed by constitutional amendment after a pogrom against the community that had elected it.

The Sixth Amendment is the structural pivot the case file uses to demonstrate that the post-1983 collapse of parliamentary Tamil representation was not a Tamil-side withdrawal — it was a state-side constitutional removal. The mandate the TULF held on the 1977 platform was rendered constitutionally unutterable. The narrowing timeline reads the Sixth Amendment as the constitutional confirmation that the parliamentary route had been closed by the state, not by the community.

§1 What it required

An oath, sworn by every MP, renouncing support for the establishment of a separate state within the territory of Sri Lanka. Refusal to swear the oath disqualified the MP from sitting. The TULF, elected in 1977 on a manifesto that included the Vaddukoddai Resolution, could not swear the oath without renouncing the platform on which they had been elected.

§2 What it produced

Removal of the Tamil parliamentary opposition. Closure of the parliamentary route as a vehicle for the Vaddukoddai mandate. The structural sequence is documented by DeVotta, Wilson, and the OHCHR OISL: state-tolerated mass violence (Black July) followed within weeks by constitutional disenfranchisement of the affected community's elected representation.

Sources

- DeVotta, Blowback (2004).
- A. J. Wilson, The Break-Up of Sri Lanka (1988).
- Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (1978), Sixth Amendment (1983).

What this is not

- This article does not name individual MPs disqualified by the amendment.
- This article does not endorse any post-1983 armed organisation.