

Vaddukoddai Resolution

The first Tamil-electoral mandate for self-determination, adopted 14 May 1976 by the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) at the First National Convention in Vaddukoddai, Jaffna District.

Vaddukoddai is the hinge. Before it, Tamil politics worked through constitutional federalism; after it, the Tamil parliamentary leadership held — and was repeatedly re-elected on — a mandate for the restoration of Tamil sovereignty by peaceful means. The 1977 general election returned the TULF as the largest opposition party in the national parliament on this mandate. The mandate was never withdrawn. The constitutional response was the Sixth Amendment (1983), which removed the mandate-holders from parliament altogether.

§1 What it is

The Vaddukoddai Resolution declared that 'the restoration and reconstitution of the Free, Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of Tamil Eelam' had become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil Nation in Ceylon. It catalogued the cumulative legislative and administrative measures since independence — the 1948–49 citizenship acts, the 1956 Official Language Act, the 1972 Constitution, the 1972–73 university standardisation policy, state-aided colonisation schemes — and concluded that constitutional remedy within the unitary state had been exhausted.

It called on the Tamil Nation to mobilise under the leadership of the TULF, by all means including 'the struggle for freedom', and bound Tamil parliamentary representatives to this mandate as the basis for contesting the 1977 elections.

§2 Electoral mandate

The TULF contested the 1977 general election on the Vaddukoddai mandate. It won 18 of 19 seats in the Northern Province and additional seats in the Eastern Province, becoming the largest opposition party in the national parliament. This is the only post-independence electoral verdict in which a Tamil polity directly mandated the principle of separate statehood at the ballot box.

No subsequent Sri Lankan government has acknowledged the 1977 result as a binding minority mandate. The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution (1983) made advocacy for a separate state grounds for forfeiture of parliamentary seat and disqualification from public office — retrospectively criminalising the platform on which the TULF had been elected six years earlier.

§3 Why it sits at narrowing-step 8

Vaddukoddai is the moment at which the Tamil political leadership formally exhausted constitutional federalism as a viable pathway. Steps 1–7 in /case/narrowing — the 1948–49 citizenship acts, 1956 Official Language Act, abrogated Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam and Dudley-Chelvanayakam Pacts, 1972 Constitution, 1972–73 standardisation — are the upstream foreclosures that made Vaddukoddai necessary. Steps 9–22 (Black July, Indo-Lanka Accord, CFA, P-TOMS, LLRC, UNHRC resolutions) are the downstream attempts at remedy that have, in their turn, also exhausted.

Sources

- DeVotta, Blowback (2004), Stanford UP — chs. 5–6 on the TULF and Vaddukoddai.
- UN Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka (Darusman Report, 2011) — historical context.

- S.J. Tambiah, Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy (1986), University of Chicago Press.
- Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka (Act No. 6 of 1983), lawnet.gov.lk.

What this is not

- This is not a call to arms. Vaddukoddai's own text bound the struggle to peaceful, electoral, and constitutional means; the subsequent turn to armed conflict was a separate, contested development that TLTE does not endorse, archive, or rehabilitate.
- This is not a TLTE re-declaration of Tamil Eelam. TLTE is a stateless civilisational framework, not a successor party. It does not claim the Vaddukoddai mandate as its own and does not speak for the 1977 electorate.
- This is not glorification of any armed group. References to subsequent militant organisations appear only in historical and accountability context, consistent with UK Terrorism Act 2000 §12 academic-discussion protections.