



Diocese of Colombo



Church of Ceylon

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Diocese of Kurunagala

STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF CEYLON ON THE CABINET DECISION TO PROPOSE AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION TO RAISE THE AGE OF RETIREMENT OF JUDGES

The Church of Ceylon (the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka) expresses its concern and disappointment with the Cabinet's decision to proceed with the proposed constitutional amendment to raise the age of retirement of appellate court judges. The Church of Ceylon hoped that the President and the Cabinet would listen to the powerful arguments of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, the wider legal community and civil society that pointed to the serious dangers of such an amendment undermining the Rule of law and public confidence in the independence and impartiality of the Judiciary.

The government's attempts at justifying the amendment citing the need for a speedy disposal of a backlog of cases were seriously undermined by the fact that a large number of vacancies remain in the appellate courts for reasons that have no rational or principled explanation. We can only conclude, therefore, that the real motivation for this amendment lacks *bona fides*.

The Church of Ceylon has for many years, including before the last Presidential and parliamentary elections, highlighted the importance of constitutional reform to abolish the executive presidency, introduce an electoral system that promotes accountability and inclusion, strengthen independent institutions and the Bill of Rights and address the legitimate grievances of the minority communities in the country. Despite promises to do so, the NPP Government has said and done nothing to initiate this vitally important national process that requires widespread public consultation. Deciding instead to pursue constitutional reform on an issue that was not raised in constitutional reform debates in recent years or during the last national election campaigns, lacks moral legitimacy and constitutional propriety.

The Church of Ceylon believes that ultimately the leadership of the three main organs of government, the executive, legislature and the judiciary, have to examine their consciences to ascertain the real reason for this sudden, *ad hoc* and *ad hominem* constitutional amendment. The public is tired of politicians and leaders who champion the importance of independent institutions while in Opposition, and then, once they assume public office, initiate policies that promote executive convenience and self-interest. This politics of opportunism has gone on in this country for so long that an unhealthy cynicism has developed in the body politic of the country.



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The Church of Ceylon calls upon the President and the Cabinet of Ministers to withdraw the proposed constitutional amendment, for the legislature to remember that its primary function is to check the executive, and the judiciary and its leadership to be mindful of the damage that this amendment will cause to its reputation and the Rule of Law in the country.

+Dushantha Rodrigo



The Right Reverend Dushantha Rodrigo
Bishop of Colombo

+Nishantha Fernando



The Right Reverend Nishantha Fernando
Bishop of Kurunagala

30th July 2026