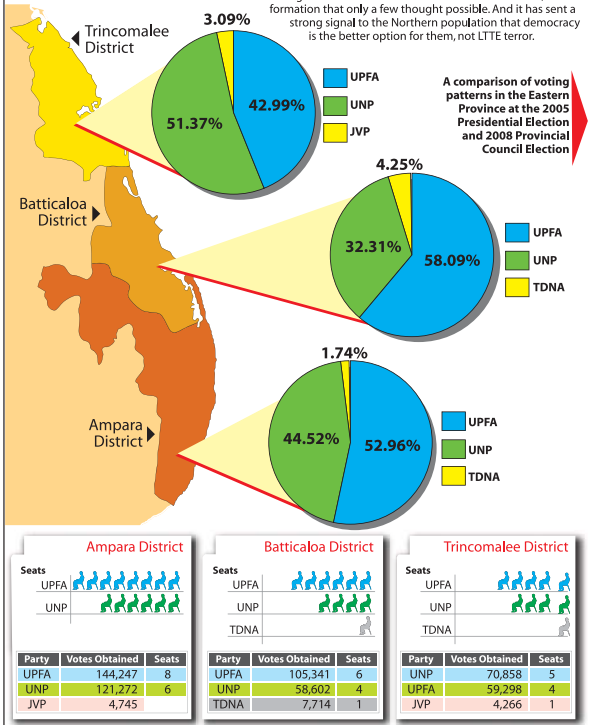


Eastern Poll: A landmark in Lanka's election annals

The Eastern Province saw its first ever provincial council election on May 10, following the Supreme Court verdict on the demerger of the North-East province. According to both local and foreign monitors, this election was conducted in a free and fair manner. The Batticaloa local poll on March 10, one of the most peaceful elections ever held in the country, paved the way for the successful conclusion of this poll. The United People's Freedom Alliance obtained 308,896 votes from the entire province, while the UNP/SLMC received 250,732 on May 10. More than 646,000 voters out of 982,721 registered voters participated in the poll, a considerable achievement given that provincial elections were a relatively new phenomenon for most voters there. It is interesting to note that on May 10, the UPFA secured both Ampara and Batticaloa districts which the UNP won in 2005. The UNP managed to retain that position only in Trincomalee.

The Eastern Poll was remarkable in more ways than one. It marked the restoration of democracy in a region liberated from LTTE tyranny. Even more significantly, it saw an armed group embracing democracy. Its leader Pillayan has emerged as the Chief Minister of the Eastern Province, a transformation that only a few thought possible. And it has sent a strong signal to the Northern population that democracy is the better option for them, not LTTE terror.



TRINCOMALEE district

Presidential Election 2005			Eastern Provincial Council Election - 2008		
TRINCOMALEE					
Candidate	Votes	Percentage	Political Party	Votes	Percentage
Ranil Wickramasinghe	41,369	77.90	UNP	28,146	62.26
Mahinda Rajapaksa	10878	20.48	UPFA	13,828	30.59
			JVP	1,408	3.11
SERUWILA					
Mahinda Rajapaksa	21,353	53.71	UPFA	21,915	61.47
Ranil Wickramasinghe	17,835	44.86	UNP	10,855	30.45
			JVP	2,286	6.41
MUTUR					
Ranil Wickramasinghe	29,061	59.54	UNP	28,233	59.08
Mahinda Rajapaksa	18,817	38.55	UPFA	18,451	38.61
			USP	495	1.04

BATTICALOA district

Presidential Election 2005			Eastern Provincial Council Election - 2008		
BATTICALOA					
Candidate	Votes	Percentage	Political Party	Votes	Percentage
Ranil Wickramasinghe	65,401	79.34	UPFA	52,053	58.78
Mahinda Rajapaksa	15,798	19.17	UNP	29,770	33.62
			TDNA	3,222	3.64
KALKUDHA					
Ranil Wickramasinghe	28,482	70.55	UPFA	36,731	66.81
Mahinda Rajapaksa	11,105	27.51	UNP	15,673	28.51
			EPDP	1,421	2.58
PADIRUPPU					
Ranil Wickramasinghe	24,142	94.72	UPFA	14,379	42.89
Mahinda Rajapaksa	905	3.55	UNP	11,829	35.28
			TDNA	3,594	10.72

AMPARA district

Presidential Election 2005			Eastern Provincial Council Election - 2008		
KALMUNAI					
Candidate	Votes	Percentage	Political Party	Votes	Percentage
Ranil Wickramasinghe	29,316	75.60	UNP	27,596	66.46
Mahinda Rajapaksa	8,951	23.08	UPFA	13,468	32.44
			UNA	174	0.42
SAMMANTURAI					
Ranil Wickramasinghe	24,969	53.53	UPFA	24,119	52.22
Mahinda Rajapaksa	21,029	45.09	UNP	21,401	46.34
			INDP GR 22	253	0.55
AMPARA					
Mahinda Rajapaksa	57,624	55.85	UPFA	47,319	57.10
Ranil Wickramasinghe	44,218	42.86	UNP	31,386	37.87
			JVP	3,693	4.46
POTUVIL					
Ranil Wickramasinghe	55,467	65.75	UPFA	54,619	58.56
Mahinda Rajapaksa	27,704	32.84	UNP	37,488	40.19
			JVP	490	0.53

