

## Press Release

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We want UNP.....

The United National Party (UNP) yesterday said it was ready to discuss a common plan to defeat the Rajapaksa Government at the forthcoming Presidential election, with anyone who accepts the party to lead the coalition. UNP General Secretary, Tissa Attanayake said, a final decision on a common candidate will be taken before end-October. UNP's short term plan was to abolish the Executive Presidency; ensure democracy prevails; strengthen the 17th Amendment; change the electoral system and establish the independence of the Judiciary.

Despite ideological and policy differences, several government constituents were engaged in successful discussions with the UNP on forming a united front, Attanayake asserted. He claimed the UNP was the party which commanded 80% of the opposition votes.

Some of those groups inside the government, too, wanted the Rajapaksa regime out, Attanayake pointed out.

"Of the 12 million registered voters, only 10 million would exercise their mandate. We must get at least 6.5 million votes. We have proven that we can get over 40%, and it is a question of getting 11% more, to make our count of 51% and secure a victory at the Presidential election. Although obtaining 11% on our own is not difficult, we would like to obtain the support of the majority of the country, based on the common goal of kicking the Rajapaksa regime out, and that was why we are ready to discuss with the National Movement for Social Justice, the Bodu Bala Sena and the Sri Lanka Muslim Council," he said.

Concerning the Presidential election, the government was presently engaged in Election Law violations which would prevent the election from being fair, impartial and just, Attanayake said.

"The legality or illegality of the President's third term requires a Court interpretation, something which I will not go into as I could be arrested. We are not scared of President, Mahinda Rajapaksa and he should hold the election. We have requested the Elections Commissioner to have international monitors from the time the presidential election is officially announced and to have them in the country until one week after the conclusion of the poll. Pope Francis' arrival in the midst of an election could mean that there is a political agenda to appease the Catholics," he said.

An adequate time period of at least 45 days must be allowed for promotional activities, he said.

The UNP on Friday (24) will hold a meeting at the Hyde Park for 12,000 electoral organizers.