

UNP Structure & Committees

Last Updated Thursday, 24 September 2009

The United National Party, often referred to as the UNP Sinhalese: 'ඒඒ-ඒ ආ-ඒ' (pronounced Eksath Jathika Pakshaya), Tamil: 'ආචන්ද්‍ර ජන මිඞ්ඞු', is a leading political party in Sri Lanka. It currently is the main opposition party in Sri Lanka and is headed by Ranil Wickremesinghe. The UNP is considered to have right-leaning, business friendly policies.

At the last legislative elections in Sri Lanka, held on 2 April 2004, the UNP was the leading member of the coalition United National Front, which won 37.8% of the popular vote and 82 out of 225 seats in Parliament. It came in second to the United People's Freedom Alliance, a left-leaning coalition, which won 45.60% of the vote. The Front previously held a majority in parliament from December 2001 until April 2004, when it had 109 seats, with Ranil Wickremesinghe as prime minister. The UNP had previously been the governing party or in the governing coalition from 1947 to 1956, from 1965 to 1970 and from 1977 to 1994. In total, the UNP governed Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) for 33 of 57 years of its independent history. The UNP also had control of the executive presidency from its formation in 1978 to 1994.

The UNP is a democratic socialist party, although it is generally seen as more conservative than the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, favouring a more neo-liberal market-oriented economy. The UNP is comparatively to the right and is part of the International Democrat Union.