

Sri Lanka: Maithri's decisive political action

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Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) General Secretary and Health Minister Maithripala Sirisena launched, what could be described as one of the most decisive Political action the country has witnessed. Suppressing Ranil Wickremesinghe he became the common candidate to contest President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the upcoming Presidential Election. Addressing a media briefing, Sirisena said he would take on the incumbent regime which was engulfed in 'nepotism, corruption and the abuse of the rule of law.' This adjutant of the president, who claimed recently that he is one of the most loyal followers of his leader, claimed in this press conference: "the entire socio-economic and political systems of this country have been taken over by one family. It is against this that I am coming forward as the common candidate of the Opposition".

However he failed to explain how he remained all these years a very loyal Cabinet minister to President Mahinda Rajapaksa. But he went on to say "I am the longest serving General Secretary of the SLFP and I took this decision with much difficulty. I was totally disappointed and heart broken the way the President treated me. I was removed from the Irrigation and Mahaweli Ministerial portfolios one week after I laid the foundation stone for the Deduru-Oya Multi Purpose Development Project that would give relief to millions of people in the Rajarata."

The minister, who is supported by Hela Urumaya, former President Chandrika Bandaranaike announced "I will abolish the Executive Presidency in 100 days after being elected as the President. I will restore the rule of law by reactivating the 17th Amendment to the Constitution and make the Police, Elections, Public Service and the Judicial Service Commissions fully independent. The President will be made answerable to the Legislature and create a people's government that enjoy real peace,

prosperity and happiness."He added condescendingly"The UNP leader will be the Prime Minister of the new government we hope to form". It is sad to see how the Leader of the Opposition who initiated the Protest of the Opposition with the leaders of the UNP, NSSP, DPF, TNA, NUA and so on got displaced by the new comer. It was the consistent struggle of the VIPAKSHAYE VIRODAYA spread through out the country that broke the foundation of the fascistic regime of Mahinda. Workers' struggle to defend the provident fund money, struggle to implement LLRC recommendations, campaign to implement 13 amendment, fishers protest against rising fuel prices, Rathupaswela struggle, mass protests spread through out the country, struggle to defend the media and media institutes, and so on were launched with the support of the VV. These were done facing the repression of the fascistic regime, where Minister Sirisena was one of the prominent ministers. Today this minister has come out and jumped on the shoulders of the Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe, and shouts and weeps."I have suffered immensely at the hands of this regime, I could not implement the national drug policy nor could I implement the pictorial warnings on cigarette packets. This country knows why that happened and who was behind it," he said. He claimed that billions were given by the multinationals to suppress his efforts. On that basis he was involved in a struggle against the MNCs system and the neo liberalism of global capitalism. It is unjust for such leader to undermine the struggle of the Opposition made against reactionary policies of the government. The minister accepted that the average Sri Lankans, public servants, farmers, professionals, private sector and professionals have suffered immensely under the Executive Presidency, while a few have become multi millionaires. Therefore, the priority of the next

government under President Maithripala Sirisena would be to raise the living standard of this sections, which do not have a voice. In that case he should have recognized the importance of the struggle made by the Opposition for freedom and democracy. The decision to grab the place of Ranil Wickremesinghe is wrong and unjust. Minister Sirisena should have allowed Ranil Wickremesinghe to contest in the coming presidential elections, thereby he should have consolidated the path of freedom and democracy.

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*<http://www.ceylontoday.lk/51-78548-news-detail-maithris-decisive-political-action.html>