



CPA STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF THE HON. R. SAMPATHAN, MP

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) mourns the loss of Rajavarothiyam Sampanthan, MP, one of the most distinguished parliamentarians of our time, who adorned Parliament with his oratorical skills and legislative ability.

In his time as a Member of Parliament, and especially as the Leader of the Opposition in 2015-19, he dominated the proceedings of Parliament – in the floor of the House, in Committee, and outside. His *élan* was reminiscent of an earlier era of our legislature. During the devaluation of Parliament in the period of the current presidential constitution, Mr Sampanthan was among a handful of parliamentarians who kept our tradition and idiom of parliamentary traditions and politics alive. His mastery of historical and policy detail; his fluency in all three languages; his knowledge of our parliamentary customs and procedure; his chairing skill over committees; his genial but firm ability to work with both fellow Members as well as parliamentary officials and civil servants, made him an exemplary legislator.

Mr Sampanthan was an indefatigable defender of the Tamil people as the leader of his party. He began his professional life as a practitioner at the Bar, but due to his obvious talents, he was co-opted into Federal Party politics. Mr Sampanthan was one of the most articulate and intelligent defenders of the constitutional claims of the Tamil people in the form of a federal Sri Lanka. With his linguistic and cultural felicity, however, he loved and delighted in the company of all the other communities of Sri Lanka. He was one of the true exemplars of a plural and united Sri Lanka.

He was a friend of CPA and many members of CPA, actively participating in our activities both in the country and abroad over many years. He was a superb raconteur, sharing (often rather long) stories with knowledge, wit, and wisdom, and with the impeccable timing of the born story-teller. He had a most healthy sense of humour, and he enjoyed being teased (within limits).

In Mr Sampanthan's passing, we have lost a politician to whom civic duty was all, and we send our condolences to his family and all of those who, like us, admired and appreciated him.

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