

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Human Rights Council Adopts Landmark Resolution on Sri Lanka

USTPAC calls for speedy implementation of transitional justice mechanism

Washington, DC – (October 2, 2015): The UN Human Rights Council [adopted a resolution](#) on Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka yesterday. With [the Report](#) of the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL), the Report of the High Commissioner and the Resolution in hand, stakeholders must collectively turn their focus toward full implementation of the respective recommendations and provisions.

“Together, the Resolution and UN reports provide a way forward for Sri Lanka to genuinely seek truth, justice and reconciliation following the mass atrocities and crimes against humanity committed before, during and after the war,” said Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, President of the United States Tamil Political Action Council (USTPAC). “USTPAC especially welcomes the Human Rights Council’s endorsement to establish a credible judicial mechanism fully capable of prosecuting those most responsible for the magnitude of crimes depicted in the OISL Report.”

“USTPAC joins in victims’ continuous and unequivocal **calls for a strong international role in all transitional justice mechanisms**. This includes appointing a majority of foreign judges, lawyers, prosecutors and investigators to the justice mechanism as well as robust material, technical and financial assistance from UN entities and Member States. Immediate establishment of an in-country OHCHR office, as recommended by the High Commissioner, would significantly allay victims’ doubts of fair process and fears of reprisals while providing the government practical expertise.”

Dr. Karunyan continued, “USTPAC calls on the government to follow the resolution’s adoption with participatory consultations among all of Sri Lanka’s communities, especially the predominantly Tamil victims. Immediate confidence-building measures are also necessary. These include repeal of the odious Prevention of Terrorism Act, a review and strengthening of the Witness and Victim Protection Act and the urgent demilitarization of the North and East. Sri Lanka should also seize this opportunity to work towards a political solution that guarantees non-recurrence, with the help of the United States and India.”

“USTPAC thanks the United States for standing by the Tamil victims and bringing successive resolutions in the Human Rights Council leading to the OISL report and this consensus resolution, all advancing human rights in Sri Lanka. Likewise, we express our gratitude to the United Kingdom, Montenegro, Macedonia and European states for their leadership in strengthening the resolution. USTPAC remains dedicated to working with all stakeholders inside and outside Sri Lanka to usher in a new period in the country’s history.”

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Notes to Editors

- The report of the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka follows multiple UN reports recounting the circumstances of the war, the atrocities committed, and ongoing rights violations in the war's aftermath. The foremost reports include the Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka (2011) and the Report of the Internal Review Panel on United Nations actions in Sri Lanka (2012). These reports concluded that 40 - 70,000 Tamil civilians were killed by mostly government troops in the final months of the war, and both sides are accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

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