



New UN Human Rights Council resolution granting Sri Lanka more time and space another UN ‘grave failure’; Authorizes continued impunity

March 25, 2013: Washington, DC – PEARL expresses its deep disappointment at the new United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution that again asks the Sri Lankan government to investigate itself for its own violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Resolution 22/L.1, the second UNHRC resolution in two years on Sri Lanka, again led by the United States, calls upon the Sri Lankan government to conduct an independent and credible investigation into alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, while simultaneously expressing concern about continuing reports of human rights violations.

“Given Sri Lanka’s structural impunity for past and present crimes, it is a mistake to grant Sri Lanka one more year of ‘time and space’ to investigate itself. This will only exacerbate Sri Lanka’s insidious efforts to Sinhalize and militarize Tamil areas, causing irreversible damage to the Tamil community,” PEARL spokeswoman Anjali Manivannan said. “This HRC session presented an opportunity for meaningful international action on Sri Lanka, and this resolution wasted that opportunity. Last November’s Internal Review on UN Action in Sri Lanka described the UN’s ‘grave’ and ‘systemic’ failure in inadequately responding to rapidly escalating civilian casualties during early 2009. Unfortunately, what we have seen at the Council now is another grave failure of the United Nations on Sri Lanka.”

While PEARL appreciates continued attention by the Council on Sri Lanka, we regret the resolution’s failure to establish an international Commission of Inquiry to investigate war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Sri Lanka.

“Though the Human Rights Council asks the Government of Sri Lanka to implement recommendations from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council itself fails to implement her recommendation to create an international investigation for Sri Lanka,” Manivannan said. “Watchdog human rights groups including PEARL, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International advocated strongly for the creation of an international Commission of Inquiry during this session. PEARL is deeply disappointed to see such a toothless resolution. Nearly four years after the peak of Sri Lanka’s genocide, Tamil victims and survivors deserve more.”

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