

Justice and Accountability Must Be Realized in Sri Lanka

Dismay on delayed Report tempered by promises for stronger outcome- says USTPAC

Washington, February 20, 2015: On 16 February, the Human Rights Council followed recommendation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to [postpone the release](#) of the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL) until September. While this decision is a great disappointment to many victims and survivors in the Tamil community who have waited six long years for truth-telling and accountability, USTPAC continues its work to steadfastly chart a clear path to justice.

“USTPAC appreciates High Commissioner Zeid’s [“absolute and unshakable commitment”](#) to the OISL report’s publication in September,” said Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, President of US Tamil Political Action Council. “We also take note of the Government of Sri Lanka’s stated commitments, made in conjunction with the announcement of the delayed release, and urge the international community to vigilantly ensure that these commitments are fully honored and translated into measurable metrics.”

USTPAC also stresses that numerous well-known steps towards true comprehensive justice were excluded from the Government’s commitments. These include the full demilitarization of the North, the return of all Tamil lands to their rightful owners, the release of detainees who have not been charged, repeal of Sri Lanka’s Prevention of Terrorism Act, and progress on a political settlement. A glaring omission from the government’s listed commitments was a stated pledge to fully cooperate with the OHCHR investigation.

The Northern Provincial Council on February 10 [unanimously passed a Resolution](#) calling the UN Human Rights Council to investigate the charge of genocide against Tamils by successive Sri Lankan governments. With High Commissioner Zeid expressing hope that “important new information may emerge which will strengthen the report” during this extra time, USTPAC urges the OISL to address the concerns brought by the Northern Provincial Council that has overwhelming support of the affected Tamil community.

Those in the international community who called for or supported the postponement of the report also stated a continued commitment to full accountability and justice in Sri Lanka. USTPAC urges all actors to measure the new Sirisena Administration not by its words, but by its actions. USTPAC calls on the international community not to lose focus or momentum in this struggle for justice, and to ensure that all of the necessary steps, including those noted above, are earnestly taken over the coming months.

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