



British Tamils Forum
பிரித்தானிய தமிழர் பேரவை

US*TPAC

For immediate release

ATC, BTF & USTPAC Endorse Human Rights Council's Call for Clear Timeline for Action on Sri Lanka's Transitional Justice Commitments

GENEVA, March 26, 2018: As the 37th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) ends in Geneva, the US Tamil Political Action Council (USTPAC), British Tamils Forum (BTF), and Australian Tamil Congress (ATC) would like to thank Deputy High Commissioner Kate Gilmore for emphasizing the importance of return of land for trust in the government's good faith, the need for an end to impunity, the worrying attacks on ethnic communities, continued reports of torture of Tamils and surveillance, harassment of human rights defenders and the fact that the Office of Missing Persons is still not actually in operation in her presentation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) written report ([A/HRC/37/23](#)) on progress on implementation of HRC Resolution 30/1.

We fully concur with the Commissioner's assessment that, "it seems doubtful that the transitional justice agenda committed to by the Government under this Council's resolution 30/1 could be fully implemented before our next report in March 2019." We wholeheartedly support her 'strong advice' "that this Council continue to focus its attention on the human rights of the people of Sri Lanka and in particular on the processes in place for accountability and reconciliation."

We strongly agree with the Commissioner's concern related to the Government of Sri Lanka's lack of progress on its own commitments on accountability. She said, "[T]he Authorities have yet to demonstrate the willingness or the capacity to address impunity for gross violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law. ***This strengthens the argument for the establishment of a specialized court to deal with serious crimes, supported by international practitioners. In the absence of such a mechanism, we call on Member States to exercise universal jurisdiction.***"

<http://www.ohchr.org/RU/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22875&LangID=E>

We thank the OHCHR for the quite accurate assessment in its written report ([A/HRC/37/23](#)) that progress on transitional justice is 'virtually stalled,' for the detailed description of the current state of affairs and for the suggestion that other states prosecute those who have committed serious crimes as Sri Lanka is not.

We also thank the group of countries – the United Kingdom, the United States, Macedonia and Montenegro – which originally led Res. 30/1 and which delivered a statement on the written report and, along with the problems noted by the Commissioner, emphasized the need for political and security sector reform and the repeal of the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act. We strongly support the call for "determined leadership and a clear timeline for action" by the Sri Lankan government on the reform and justice agenda it has committed to. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/human-rights-council-37-joint-statement-on-sri-lanka>

We would like to thank all the countries and international NGOs which spoke during the Interactive Dialogue on Sri Lanka and for the numerous recommendations to encourage Sri Lanka to make progress on its transitional justice process without delay and in a planned and integrated manner to make progress on all four transitional justice mechanisms.

As the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on Transitional Justice end their terms, we thank them for their exceptional service and wish them well for the future.

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