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Amnesty International urges Sri Lanka to provide timeline for full implementation of Resolution 30/1

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Sri Lanka

In Council Resolution 30/1 on “Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka”, adopted on 1 October 2015, Sri Lanka committed to ensuring truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence of human rights violations which had previously been committed in the country.

Sri Lanka has taken some important steps towards delivering on these commitments, including ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, establishing a Consultative Task Force on Reconciliation, passing the amended Office on Missing Persons Act and appointing its members, and criminalizing enforced disappearance.

Amnesty International is disappointed, however, by the lack of further progress, and in some cases backsliding, in particular with regard to addressing the thousands of enforced disappearances, ensuring protection of religious and ethnic minorities and human rights defenders, and repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act. More than two years after the adoption of Resolution 30/1, the Act is still being applied.

During its UPR in November 2017, Sri Lanka’s re-affirmed some of these commitments including to operationalize the Office on Missing Persons;¹ to establish a truth commission, an office for reparations and a judicial mechanism with special counsel;² to review the Prevention of Terrorism Act;³ and to legally recognize the crime of enforced disappearance.⁴

Amnesty International is very concerned that the government has failed to publish a timeline for the full implementation of Resolution 30/1, and that it rejected six UPR recommendations to do so.⁵

The establishment of a time-bound action plan is vital for victims, survivors and their families in their quest for truth, justice and accountability, and its continued absence sends a very discouraging message to victims and survivors, and to this Council, about the government’s commitment to the full implementation of Resolution 30/1.

¹ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Sri Lanka, A/HRC/37/17, recommendations 116.63 (Germany), 116.76 (Slovenia), 116.77 (South Africa), 116.79 (Thailand), Sri Lanka’s voluntary pledges, para 128.

² A/HRC/37/17, recommendations 116.77 (South Africa), 116.80 (Belgium), 116.87 (Ireland), 116.88 (Germany) and Sri Lanka’s voluntary pledges, para 128.

³ Sri Lanka’s voluntary pledges, para 122.

⁴ A/HRC/37/17, recommendations 116.62 (Sweden), 116.66 (Slovakia).

⁵ A/HRC/37/17, recommendations 117.37-117.43 (Italy, Argentina, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Namibia, Australia).

Amnesty International calls on Sri Lanka to urgently provide this Council with a time-bound schedule for the implementation of commitments under Resolution 30/1, to take immediate steps to guarantee accountability and reparations, to publish a complete list of detainees and those who surrendered, and to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Sri Lanka on 19 March 2018 during its 37th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered this oral statement.

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