

## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

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#### **Indian PM designate must ask Sri Lanka President to cooperate with UN investigation**

The Indian Prime Minister designate Narendra Modi should urge the visiting Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa to cooperate with UN-led investigation into alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes committed during the country's civil war, Amnesty International India said today.

"It has been five years, since the war ended, but Sri Lankan authorities have failed to bring those responsible for serious violations and abuses to justice," said Shashikumar Velath, Programmes Director at Amnesty International India.

In March 2014, the UN Human Rights Council voted to task the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to investigate alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes under international law committed by all sides during the brutal conflict that saw tens of thousands killed and wounded.

In May 2014, the Sri Lankan government announced that it would not cooperate with the UN investigation.

"The UN-led international investigation has brought new hope and is an important step towards breaking the cycle of impunity that fuels ongoing human rights violations in Sri Lanka. But the government's refusal to assist the investigation will only hamper the process and continue to delay justice for the victims and survivors of the war," said Shashikumar Velath.

"India abdicated its human rights responsibilities when it decided to abstain from the UN resolution this year. Now it should make amends by lending its support to the international investigation and urging Sri Lanka to co-operate."

"Prime Minister designate Narendra Modi needs to heed the voice of over 2.5 million people in India who have demanded that the Indian government stand up for justice and reconciliation in Sri Lanka."

Despite two prior resolutions by the UN Human Rights Council in 2012 and 2013, Sri Lanka has failed to take effective steps to deliver justice for the victims of its civil war. Instead, it has launched an aggressive campaign against those who advocate accountability and an end to impunity for human rights violations throughout the country.

Allegations have been made that, during the final stage of the armed conflict, government forces intentionally shelled civilians, blocked food and medicine from reaching communities and executed prisoners. Meanwhile, witnesses say that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) recruited child soldiers, used civilians as human shields, and killed those who tried to escape.

Since the end of the conflict, human rights defenders, activists, journalists and civil society members who are critical of the government have regularly been threatened and harassed.

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