

**57th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council****Item 2: Interactive dialogue on the OHCHR report on Sri Lanka****Oral statement delivered by Ahmed Adam****On behalf of Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Amnesty International and International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)****9 September 2024**

Mr. President,

We thank the High Commissioner for his report.

We echo the High Commissioner's emphasis on the need for transformational change in the country.

Such transformational change requires a clear commitment backed by genuine political will to finally provide justice, truth and reparations for crimes under international law committed during the internal armed conflict in Sri Lanka and to prosecute individuals suspected of criminal responsibility, *including many who continue to hold senior government positions*. It also requires allowing for the memorialisation of victims in the North and the East and releasing without delay of military held land *in the area*.

The 2022 economic crisis further underlines the need to meaningfully address the crisis of impunity and the rule of law *that has beset the country since the end of the war*, in order to ensure political and economic stability.

However, with no real willingness from any of the governments in the past 15 years *since the end of the war* to: ensure justice and accountability; protect the rights of victims; break from a culture of persecution *and silencing of advocates* for justice and human rights including the families of victims; and with no clear *and strong* commitment from any of the leading presidential candidates on accountability and human rights, the stage appears to be set for the continuation of cycles of violations and impunity.

In this context, it is imperative that the Council takes action based on a principled position on human rights rather than political considerations, to renew the mandates of OHCHR's Sri Lanka Accountability Project and *that* of OHCHR to monitor and report on the situation for a minimum of two years.

Failure to do so would amount to betrayal of the *tens of thousands of* victims and their families who, in the absence of any possibility for domestic accountability, depend on the Council's efforts towards justice, truth and reparations.

Thank you.