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INTERNATIONAL**



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UN Human Rights Council  
Nineteenth Session  
27 February – 23 March 2012

Item 4  
General Debate

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Madam President,

Gross and systematic human rights violations continue to take place in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan organisations have documented 32 cases of involuntary and enforced disappearances and related extra-judicial executions since October 2011. Just last October, the Committee against Torture observed that torture is widespread in Sri Lanka. Impunity for serious human rights violations remains pervasive.

The Government of Sri Lanka has sent a large, a very large delegation, to this session of the Council to “inform” us about the human rights situation in Sri Lanka and about measures that will be taken one day, eventually, sometime, to implement the recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission. It is unfortunate that in contrast with the extravagance of its delegation, the Government of Sri Lanka has been so economical with the truth about the human rights situation in Sri Lanka and the lack of accountability for human rights violations.

The large Sri Lankan delegation could also better specify how the government will ensure that the many sound recommendations of the LLRC do not share the non-implementation fate of the LLRC's interim recommendations of September 2010 and the recommendations of most prior Sri Lankan national commissions of inquiry, including the 2006 commission established by H.E. President Mahinda Rajapakse.

In Sri Lanka the government is whipping up hostility to the UN and those seeking to have this Council consider the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. It denounces publicly as traitors those Sri Lankans who seek to bring to this Council a description of the human rights situation in Sri Lanka at odds with

the government's version. Then Sri Lankan officials say that adoption of a resolution by this Council will fuel the fires of sectarianism in Sri Lanka and impede national reconciliation. That is behaviour suitable to the proverbial boy who murders his parents and then pleads for mercy on the grounds that he is an orphan.

The government of Sri Lanka has before it crucially important tasks in ensuring national reconciliation and in ending the decades-long impunity that permits grave human rights violations to continue to this day. Amnesty International wishes Sri Lanka well in these tasks.

The international community must provide the Sri Lankan authorities with much needed encouragement. This Council must demonstrate to Sri Lankan civil society that it will not abandon them.

Thank you Madam President.