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The Human Rights Council should establish a credible and independent investigation into allegations of human rights violations in Sri Lanka: Amnesty International oral statement to the 25th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (3 – 28 March 2014)

7 March 2014

Item 2

Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr. President, Madame High Commissioner,

Long-standing and credible allegations of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Sri Lanka remain unanswered. Amnesty International continues to receive eyewitness accounts and other new allegations of violations committed by Sri Lankan government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam during Sri Lanka's armed conflict and its aftermath. Some may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Madame High Commissioner,

The Human Rights Council must act now on your recommendation that it establish its own international inquiry mechanism to further investigate the alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and monitor any domestic accountability processes.

This is all the more important in light of your determination that the Government of Sri Lanka has failed to satisfy this Council's call for a credible and independent investigation into allegations of serious human rights violations and your conclusion that the failure reflects a lack of political will.

Amnesty International reiterates its call to the Human Rights Council to initiate an international commission of inquiry to ensure truth, justice and reparations to the many thousands of victims of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Sri Lanka, where this fundamental lack of political will to account, combined with a deep and growing intolerance of dissent, have contributed to the consistent failure of domestic human rights mechanisms.

Madam High Commissioner,

Amnesty International also urges support for your call on the Sri Lankan Government to arrest, prosecute and punish perpetrators of attacks on minority communities, media and human rights defenders, and to protect victims; as well as your calls for other reforms, including importantly, enacting effective laws to protect victims and witnesses, criminalizing enforced disappearances, repealing the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act and lifting its regulations that allow for arbitrary detention.

This Council must continue to monitor the human rights situation in Sri Lanka.

Thank you Mr. President.