-Check against delivery-

ORAL STATEMENT
Item 2: Interactive Dialogue on OHCHR written update on Sri Lanka (res.46/1)

THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT MUST END THE USE OF, AND REPEAL, ITS ABUSIVE TERROR LAW

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-ninth regular session
28 February – 1 April 2022

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the OHCHR report highlighting the continued lack of accountability for past human rights violations and abuses in Sri Lanka, lack of recognition of victims' rights, and other trends that continue to impede reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

Amnesty International remains deeply concerned by the shrinking civic space, and urges the government to halt all forms of reprisals against critics and perceived critics, including those advocating for justice for the tragic April 2019 bombings.

We have documented how families of the disappeared continue to face obstacles and push back from state agents while they demand their right to truth and justice, including through the State's pursuit of court orders attempting to restrict their freedom to protest. We have also documented the state's alarming discrimination and targeting of the Muslim community, which continues unabated.

Amnesty continues to call for an immediate moratorium on the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which continues to be used to detain hundreds - particularly minorities – for prolonged periods without charge or trial. Repeated attempts to amend the Act have proved futile, including the latest iteration of amendments that fail to address critical gaps in the law to bring it in line with international law. While we welcome court decisions to grant bail to selected PTA detainees, hundreds more still languish in detention without access to bail. Sri Lankan authorities must ensure that all those still detained have access to fair bail hearings and must release those not yet charged with recognizable crimes under international law.

Thank you.