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## THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

### IMADR Oral Statement: 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council

#### Item 4: General Debate

13 March, 2012

Thank you Madame President,

We draw the attention of the HRC to spiralling violence and ongoing human rights violations taking place in Sri Lanka today. Human Rights Defenders and journalists are intimidated and disappearing, freedoms of expression, opinion and association are seriously undermined in a brutal way. State controlled media is spreading misleading message inciting hatred and violence against those who are engaging with the UN. We waited for the “home grown solution” promised by the GOSL for several years. It is now reported that Army personnel are involved in the White Van abductions with sanctions from the highest authorities of the government to the actions. It came to light when these white van abductors were caught by people a few days ago in Colombo. Facing absolutely collapsed rule of law and prevailing culture of impunity in the country, we are asking, is any of the state actors able to address accountability or bring justice to the victims at all? Should we wait longer for more human rights defenders, journalists, political and trade union activists die or disappear? We have been drawing the attention of the HRC to HR situations in Sri Lanka for a long time, waiting for decisive action taken by the international community. It is high time for the Council to bring about tangible impact on the ground, if it should not lose its credibility.

We also draw to your attention the racism in judiciary and unfair trial in Japan. On May 23 1963, Mr. Kazuo ISHIKAWA, a man of Buraku origin was arrested for a murder which he did not commit. Through forced confession he was convicted with a life sentence and after nearly 32 years of imprisonment released on parole in December 1994. However, justice is not realized until his innocence is established through fair and impartial retrial of the case. Despite his appeal and recommendations from the Tokyo High Court, the Tokyo High Prosecutor Office has been concealing evidences which will prove Mr. Ishikawa’s innocence. In order to ensure fair and impartial trials and to eliminate discrimination and racism in the Police and the Prosecution, all stakeholders, especially the government of Japan must take all necessary measures immediately, such as enactment of a law on the disclosure of evidences and visualization of the police interrogation.

Let us highlight another issue in Japan, 74% of U.S. military bases in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa which takes only 0.6 % of Japanese territory. While the disproportionately high concentration of the US bases can be regarded as a manifestation of discriminatory policy of Japanese government towards Okinawa/Ryukyu, the presence of U.S. military has caused various problems violating fundamental rights of the people of Okinawa, including violence against women, crimes of military servicemen who are granted extraterritorial rights, “noise pollution” and environmental degradation. In addition, construction of new base in Henoko and helipads in Takae is now forced by Japanese and US governments despite the strong objection of the people of Okinawa. We urge the government of Japan to address the human rights violations suffered by people of Okinawa, stop the construction plan, if no consent of the people of Okinawa is given, engage in wide and genuine consultation with them and review its discriminatory policy.

Thank you Madame President.

**IMADR is an NGO in consultative status (Special) with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations**