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THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement: 21st Session of the Human Rights Council**Item 4: General Debate**

17 September, 2012

Thank you Madame President,

We take note of the response of the government of Sri Lanka to the council resolution A/HRC/19/2. Nevertheless, we regret that political leaders of the ruling coalition continue to incite hatred and antagonism against HRDs using phrases such as *“the plot of the international community”*, *“agents of the UN working against the motherland”*. Furthermore Sri Lanka has failed to institute investigation related to (a) the threats expressed by the Deputy Minister against HRDs and his claim that a journalist fled the country after being assaulted by his people (b) state control media which carried out a hate campaign against the HRDs during the 19th session as reported in the UNSG Report A/HRC/21/18. We also would like to draw to your attention the increasing number of rape and child molestation recorded by the Sri Lanka Police. Of the 18 incidents of rape and killing of women reported in the past 18 months in the predominantly Sinhala area, Sabaragamuwa Province the authorities have been able to arrest suspects of only 2 - 3 cases. In many of these incidents local leaders of the ruling coalition have been identified as perpetrators by the women victims. Brutal assaults by the Special Police Unit during the Vavuniya prison riots resulted in the deaths of two Tamil prisoners. The authorities have been failing to provide proper protection to Tamil detainees. This case is documented in detail in our written statement to this council. We reiterate that accountability is a necessary precursor to reconciliation. However, without respect for the rule of law, protection for human rights defenders and the restoration of the dignity of the Tamil people, reconciliation cannot be achieved.

Madame President,

Let us also highlight the issue of militarisation affecting indigenous peoples of Ryukyus in Japan. 74% of U.S. military bases in Japan are concentrated in Ryukyu / Okinawa comprising only 0.6 % of Japanese territory. Through the colonisation and militarisation of the islands by the Japanese and US governments various rights, such as right to land, education, health of the Ryukyu peoples have been violated. Furthermore, crimes and accidents caused by the US military have been one of the serious threats to the life of the people of Ryukyu / Okinawa, as documented in our written statements. Despite the problems which already exist and strong opposition from the local population, Japanese and US governments are still forcing the deployment of problematic MV-22 Osprey in the islands as well as the construction of a large air base and six helipads in the islands. It is against this backdrop that we call upon the both governments to immediately stop these plans. We further urge the government of Japan to officially recognise the peoples of Ryukyus as indigenous and protect, promote and respect their rights in full accordance with international standards.

Thank you Madame President.

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