

Item 4 Intervention

International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism

Mr. President,

We wish to express concern regarding the situation in Sri Lanka. Despite the pledges given and agreements made with the UN system there is lack of progress. Due to international concern and electoral considerations even though the IDPs were released from camps the process has been adhoc. Today they lack basic needs, their right to housing and land is violated and in some instances those IDPs taken away for further screening have not returned back to their families. No information is available related to the 12,000 detainees and surendees who belongs to the Tamil population. Furthermore the Government of Sri Lanka has not been able to respond clearly re the allegations of summary and arbitrary execution of surrendees. Many still remain under detention without any charges been brought against them some so long as for 13 years.

We bring to the notice of the council the continuing violations of human rights committed in the context of continuing restriction of civil and political rights and fundamental freedoms . Journalist Prageeth disappeared in January 2009, state control media continues to threaten and abuse human rights defenders and media persons who express dissenting views that of the government thereby exposing them to assassination and attacks. The most alarming development is the detention and attacks made on supporters of opposition political parties nullifying the basic principles required to hold free and fair elections.

Challenging impunity, guaranteeing the rule of law, due process and respect for human rights as well as creating a political framework that can guarantee the equal rights of minority communities remain critical areas for intervention.

We urge the council to take note of the following concerns:

- Continuing detention of the opposition Presidential candidate Sarath Fonseka and the decision taken to bring him before a military tribunal. We urge due process be ensured by facilitating civil trial.
- The non-implementation of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution which guarantees the appointment of independent Police, Election , Human Rights and Public Services Commissions.
- The urgent need to introduce a political framework for power sharing for the resolution for the ethnic conflict.
- Appointment of an all Party Commission to investigate into allegations of election related violence and breach of election laws including the abuse of Executive powers during the Presidential Elections held in January 2009
- The appointment of UN Election Observers for the forthcoming Parliamentary Elections scheduled for 8th April 2009

We ensure the fullest cooperation with all persons and institutions committed to the defense of human rights in Sri Lanka at the national and international level, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its special procedures and the Office of the Secretary General of the UN, and committing to the protection of the rights of human rights defenders in Sri Lanka are imperative if there is to be any improvement in the human rights situation in the country.

Thank You Mr President