

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADROral Statement: 37th session of the Human Rights Council Item 6: UPR outcome of Sri Lanka

19 March 2018

Speaker: Taisuke KOMATSU

Thank you Mr. President,

We welcome the recent appointment of the Commissioners for the Office of Missing Persons (OMP), the first and long-awaited mechanism for transitional justice in Sri Lanka. We call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to take necessary measures to ensure that the OMP can operate independently and effectively.

We are gravely concerned that the series of violent attacks against Muslims community that erupted two weeks ago. We regret that our previous appeals¹ to the Government have not led to any concrete action against those spreading religious extremism, particularly Bodu Bala Sena (BBS). We urge the Government of Sri Lanka to:

1. Provide adequate protection for the community concerned;
2. Conduct thorough investigations and bring every perpetrator to justice; and
3. Take decisive measures against any group or individual who incite hatred, violence or racial discrimination in line with Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

We regret the Government's decisions to note 53 recommendations. The recommendations to develop a clear timeline and benchmarks for the implementation of the Human Rights Council resolution 30/1 did not enjoy the Government's support. Such continuing indecisiveness today has given rise to intimidation and hate speech against minorities and human rights defenders committed to work with the Government to effectively implement the transitional justice process including the OMP. In his written update which will be presented this week, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also expresses his concerns about the absence of "*a comprehensive transitional justice strategy, including a clearly defined timeline for implementation*"². We emphasise the need to uphold a victim-centred approach and an inclusive policy when developing strategies for UPR follow-up. We call upon all the authorities to strengthen consultations with victims, civil society and relevant stakeholders to promote large civic participation and to strengthen the journey for peace, reconciliation, human rights and justice in the country.

Thank you Mr. President.

¹Freedom of religion in Sri Lanka (HRC 28th, 2015),
http://imadr.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/IMADR-FI-Joint-Oral-Statement_HRC-28th_item-3-Clustered-ID-with-the-SR-on-freedom-of-religion-or-belief_10MAR2015.pdf

Religious Extremism and Intolerance in Sri Lanka (HRC 26th, 2014, OS),
http://imadr.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Oral-Statement_HRC-26th_item-4-General-Debate_19JUN2014.pdf

² A/HRC/37/23, paragraph 12