



THE EMBASSY OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

TO BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

27, RUE JULES LEJEUNE, 1050 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

TEL: (0032.2)3445394. (0032.2)3445585 FAX: (0032.2)3446737 E-MAIL: secretariat@srilankaembassy.be

European Parliament rejects move "to seek the immediate establishment of an international justice mechanism Sri Lanka"

The European Parliament today defeated an attempt by the Socialist group **"to seek the immediate establishment of an international justice mechanism"** on Sri Lanka, during an 'urgency' debate called by the Socialist and Green parties at the Strassbourg Plenary session to draw attention to the so called "UN Panel Report" on accountability issues in Sri Lanka.

The eventual resolution adopted instead said the European Parliament,

- "Takes the view that, in the interests of justice and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, the allegations contained in the UN panel of experts' report warrant a full, impartial and transparent investigation; encourages the Government of Sri Lanka to respond constructively to the recommendations made by the panel of experts";
- " Calls on the Government of Sri Lanka, in compliance with its international obligations and with a view to improving its domestic accountability process, to contribute to the efforts already being made for a comprehensive reconciliation";
- " Recognises, in this respect, that the Sri Lankan Government has established a Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC); urges the LLRC to take serious account of the UN report; notes that the LLRC is empowered to ask the Sri Lankan Attorney-General to institute criminal proceedings, based on its findings";
- " Urges the Sri Lankan Government to implement the panel's recommendations, starting with the 'immediate measures', and immediately to commence genuine investigations into the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law allegedly committed by both sides involved in the armed conflict;
- "Calls on the VP/HR, the Council and the Commission to support further efforts to strengthen the accountability process in Sri Lanka and to support the UN report".

Earlier in the Debate, Chair of the 'Friends of Sri Lanka' group of the European Parliament Geoffrey Van Orden (The European Conservatives and Reformists/UK) said, "I regret that we are having this debate today. I suspect that it has been promoted by extremist elements in the Tamil diaspora - the same people who have helped to sustain the LTTE terrorist campaign over many years through political activity and funding, often from the proceeds of crime. Instead of trying to bring together the peoples of Sri Lanka, there are those that seek to continue a campaign of hatred and division. They see this Darusman Report as a weapon in this campaign and just want to put the Sri Lankan government in the dock. This approach is malicious and counter-productive".

"Of course there should be an enquiry and openness regarding allegations of human rights abuse. This is the responsibility of the Sri Lankan government which has set up an eight-member Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) with the aim of ensuring accountability and justice. I believe that its work would be strengthened enormously with international input and it needs to take serious account of the UN's Darusman Report. Let us do all that we can to support the Government and peoples of Sri Lanka instead of attacking them". He urged the European Parliament "to remain vigilant concerning those that seek to reignite the embers of LTTE terrorism. I call on the EU and European governments to be more active in dealing with extremists in our midst".

Representing the Majority European Peoples Party (EPP) German MEP Thomas Mann said in February 2011 he "was in Sri Lanka as a member of the South Asian Delegation and saw just how much effort was being made to progressively deal with the post conflict issues like removing land mines and facilitating displaced people to return to their homes. The Government's readiness to cooperate, desire to integrate minorities and assure proper democratic and human rights standards implies that there will be a valid future for this country".

Representing the European Conservatives and Reformists, UK MEP Dr. Charles Tannock said the report "it is a far cry from the reality and was heavy on criticism but light in substance". He said "Sri Lanka has finally achieved peace by defeating a ruthless terrorist organization LTTE which rejected all the peace bids made by the government". He said "the term 'Genocide' is being mentioned by some even without the knowledge of its meaning". Dr. Tannock questioning the arguments made by the Socialists and Greens, asked "how any one could accuse the Sri Lanka Army for genocide or crimes against humanity when the same Army rescued more than 200,000 Tamil civilians from the LTTE and have now helped re-settle most of them".

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