



**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: (00322)3445394. (00322)3445585 FAX: (00322)3446737 E-MAIL: [secretariat@sriankaembassy.be](mailto:secretariat@sriankaembassy.be)

### **Ambassador Aryasinha says “human rights groups in indecent hurry to vilify Sri Lanka ahead of the release of the LLRC report”**

Sri Lanka’s Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU Ravinatha Aryasinha has said the timing of the screening of the film ‘Sri Lanka’s Killing Fields’ at the European Parliament today ( 12 October 2011) was particularly sinister, coming on the eve of the presentation of the LLRC Report due next month. The Ambassador said, “it would appear that Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group who sponsored the screening, are intent on pre-judging and discrediting the LLRC report even before it is released”. He added that “this indecent hurry to host such events and to call for international inquiries, is probably due to their fear that once the LLRC report comes out, they will be short of one further excuse, with which to continue their obsessive attack on the Government of Sri Lanka”.

Ambassador Aryasinha made these observations when he intervened during a panel discussion that followed the screening of the film 'Sri Lanka’s Killing Fields' held at the premises of the European Parliament on Wednesday (12 October 2011). The screening was jointly organized by the three human rights organizations, and was also addressed by the Director/Producer of the film and several Members of the European Parliament.

The Ambassador who strongly protested the use of the Parliamentary premises for the screening of this film through a private member's initiative, highlighted that on his bringing this insidious agenda to the attention of the President of the European Parliament, Dr. Jerzy Buzek, the President's office had assured him that "similar to many other events organised on the Parliament's premises, this film screening is not organised by an official political organ of the European Parliament, therefore it does not represent or reflect an official position of the institution or any of its bodies".

The Ambassador said “those responsible for facilitating this private event, and in allowing the European Parliament to be used as a platform by LTTE apologists”, “only serve to strengthen the rump elements of the LTTE seeking refuge in the West, who use the propaganda value derived from the screening of this film, as a tool to intensify its fundraising and recruitment activities, thereby undermining the process of reconciliation in Sri Lanka”.

In his critique of the film, the Ambassador said first, the film's authenticity is in question, as it includes footage of dubious origin, content that is distorted, without proper sourcing and makes unsubstantiated allegations against the Government of Sri Lanka. Having detailed these aspects, he noted that it had the potential to incite hatred amongst different communities in Sri Lanka, including future generations, and adversely affects the ongoing reconciliation process. Second, the film seeks to downplay the immense suffering caused for nearly 30 years to the people of Sri Lanka, predominantly the Tamil community, by the LTTE, an entity proscribed as a terrorist organization by the EU. Third, the clear motive of the producers and promoters of this film was to discredit and vilify Sri Lanka and to detract attention from the considerable positive developments that have taken place on the ground since the ending of terrorism a little over 2 years ago. The Ambassador who enumerated these developments, said these have been acknowledged by numerous visiting foreign delegations to the country, including the South Asia Delegation, the formal body of the European Parliament which follows developments in Sri Lanka, and whose members visited Sri Lanka earlier this year and submitted their report in June 2011. Fourth, the timing of this event was particularly sinister, coming on the eve of the presentation of the LLRC Report due mid-November. Fifth, the event was also a reminder that the sponsors were driven by the compulsions of certain interested elements of the Sri Lankan Tamil expatriates who have become vote banks and pressure groups in several Western countries.

Copies of 'Lies Agreed Upon' – the video documentary and report titled 'Humanitarian Operation: Factual Analysis', produced by the Government of Sri Lanka, was distributed among the participants at the meeting. The first provides a point by point response to the allegations made in the film 'Sri Lanka's Killing Fields', while the latter details the various stages of the humanitarian operation. The Ambassador expressed the hope that after perusing this material, members of the audience will be better informed about the facts in this case, which would help them in separating the truth, from the propaganda.

Ambassador Aryasinha also emphasised that "it is important that European States and institutions that stand for the ideals of freedom and democracy, should not be fooled by the false pretences of those elements behind such exercises", and urged that they "do not provide any political or symbolic support to the subterranean agenda of LTTE apologists". He said, "we must seriously ponder the question, as to who speaks for the Sri Lankan Tamil community? Whether it is the self-seeking vociferous minority living in greener pastures overseas who continue to advocate mono-ethnic separatism in Sri Lanka, while espousing the ideology of the LTTE, using its resources and being manipulated by its surviving military leaders. Or, whether it is the Tamil community living in the North and the East and other parts of Sri Lanka, who together with the enlightened sections of the Sri Lankan Tamil expatriates, are keen to re-build their own future and that of their children in a new and peaceful Sri Lanka, in a spirit of reconciliation".

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