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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Geoffrey Van Orden, Nirj Deva, Thomas Mann, Bernd Posselt, Charles Tannock, Laima Liucija Andrikiienė, Colm Burke

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the situation in Sri Lanka

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Sri Lanka

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions of 18 May 2000, 14 March 2002, 20 November 2003, and 17 May 2006 on Sri Lanka, and of 13 January 2005 on EU aid after the tsunami disaster,

- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Sri Lanka has been afflicted by the armed insurgency and terrorism of the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) for some 25 years, resulting in over 70,000 deaths;

B. whereas the LTTE has carried out indiscriminate terrorist attacks on the civilian population, has murdered Tamil representatives that oppose it, has targeted key figures in government and the security forces and has been proscribed by the EU, the UK, US, India, Canada, Malaysia, and many other countries;

C. whereas in recent weeks the military operations of the Sri Lankan armed forces have successfully liberated large areas in the North of Sri Lanka previously under LTTE control, including Killinochchi, Elephant Pass, and Mullaitivu, and whereas residual elements of the LTTE's military wing are currently confined to a small area of the North East approximately 15 by 20 km;

D. whereas the civilian population in the liberated areas is in need of humanitarian assistance, and that while government agencies have now been able to respond to their needs, many thousands of civilians in the areas of continuing conflict are still exposed to great danger and remain deprived of basic necessities of life;

E. whereas the Government has declared safe corridors, "no fire zones", and a 48 hour halt to artillery and mortar fire to enable civilians to escape from the remaining areas of conflict, but the LTTE has been condemned by the International Committee of the Red Cross and by the United Nations for preventing this, has abused the safe areas and issued false statements concerning the humanitarian situation;

F. whereas following the defeat of the LTTE in the Eastern Province 80% of those displaced were returned to their homes within 10 months;

G. whereas it is recognised that there will be no simple military victory in this conflict and that the capacity for terrorist cadres to continue with random terrorist attacks will continue even after the formed armed groups operating in the field have been defeated unless any lingering support base within the wider population is eroded;

H. whereas President Rajapaksa has responded to calls to be vigorous and pro-active in addressing the concerns and interests of his Tamil citizens and is committed to fully

implementing the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution as well as further and significant devolution measures;

I. whereas the EU is the biggest single market for Sri Lanka's exports receiving 37.4% of total exports to the value of \$2.9 billion;

1. Calls on the LTTE to lay down its arms and to recognise that the interests of the Tamil peoples of Sri Lanka are best advanced by participation in the peaceful democratic process;

2. Urges the Sri Lankan government to work closely with international agencies, NGOs and friendly governments in order to expedite relief of the humanitarian situation in the liberated areas;

3. Calls on the Commission and Council urgently to provide humanitarian assistance and subsequently a well-targeted programme of development assistance for the East and North of Sri Lanka in order to help build the foundations of a lasting peace;

4. Expresses concern that with the end of armed confrontation in Sri Lanka, violence in the Tamil diaspora in Western countries could increase between those who support and oppose the LTTE, or that terrorists might seek to enter Europe as refugees and also offer their expertise to other terrorist groups;

5. Calls on the Council to swiftly add to the EU list of terrorist organisations LTTE front organisations in Europe being used to fundraise and distribute propaganda on behalf of the LTTE, including the Tamil Youth Organisation, the Tamil Co-ordinating Committee, and the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation;

6. Welcomes the enquiries into alleged abuses of human rights already set in train by the government;

7. Notes Sri Lanka's voluntary participation during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process in the Human Rights Council in May 2008, and the ongoing development of a National Plan of Action for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (NHRAP) that will identify gaps in the promotion and protection of human rights in Sri Lanka with a view to addressing them over a five year period from 2009;

8. Welcomes the commitment of the Sri Lankan government to substantive provincial devolution that will enable predominantly Tamil as well as other areas to exercise greater control of their administration within a united country;

9. Notes that the Commission of Inquiry (COI) appointed to investigate high profile crimes, is nearing completion of the cases of the 5 youths in Trincomalee and into the killing of 17 aid workers of Action Contre la Faim (ACF) in Muttur;

10. Welcomes the Victim and Witness Assistance and Protection Bill presently before the Sri Lankan Parliament;

11. Welcomes the Sri Lankan government's pledge to ensure full, open and transparent investigations into all alleged violations of media freedom;

12. Urges the Government to give urgent attention to the clearance of land-mines, the presence of which may present a serious obstacle to rehabilitation and economic regeneration; in this regard calls on the Sri Lankan government to take the very positive step of acceding to the Ottawa Treaty (The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction);

13. Rejects the process of “investigation” over the decision regarding Sri Lanka’s continued receipt of GSP+ concessions, and welcomes efforts made by the Sri Lankan government to engage with the EU on issues of concern, and particularly the openness shown during the recent visit by Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama, accompanied by a high level group of experts to clarify issues of concern, including with members of the European Parliament;

14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, to the Governments of Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, the Government of Sri Lanka and the other SAARC countries.