



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

10.12.2013

B7-0576/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Sri Lanka
(2013/2982(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

B7-0576/2013

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Sri Lanka
(2013/2982(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions of the European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2009 on Sri Lanka and the European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2011 on the situation in Sri Lanka (follow-up of the UN Report)
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 18 February 2013 and 27 October 2009 on Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to the final report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission of 16 December 2011 and the National Plan of Action for the Implementation of LLRC recommendations of 25 July 2013
 - having regard to the Oral update of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on promoting reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka for the 24th session of the Human Rights Council of 25 September 2013
 - having regard to the report of 31 March 2011 of the UN Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka
 - having regard to the report of the UN Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Sri Lanka of 18 December 2012
 - having regard to the resolution of the UN 'Promoting reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka' of 19 March 2012
 - having regard to Rules 122(5) and 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in May 2009 the long-running conflict in Sri Lanka came to an end with the surrender of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the death of their leader Velupillai Prabhakaran;
- B. whereas in the final months of the conflict, intense fighting in civilian areas resulted in what are estimated to be thousands of civilian deaths and injuries,
- C. whereas the majority of people who were internally displaced at the end of the armed conflict have now returned or been resettled;
- D. whereas on 15 May 2010 the Sri Lankan Government appointed an eight-member Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) to look into events in Sri Lanka between February 2002 and May 2009, with the aim of ensuring accountability, justice and reconciliation in the country, which presented its report on 16 December 2011 which was followed by the National Plan of Action for the Implementation of LLRC recommendations of 25 July 2013

E. whereas a report of the UN Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability, published on 25 April 2011, found to be credible allegations that both government forces and the LTTE failed to respect norms of international law during the military operations

F. whereas the UN Human Rights Commissioner Navi Pillay visited Sri Lanka in August 2013 and applauded the impressive achievements made by the government in resettlement, reconstruction and rehabilitation, especially in the field of infrastructure;

G. whereas Sri Lanka's landmark Northern Provincial Council Elections took place on 21 September 2013, which were described by international observers as free and fair with a large voter turn-out of 67.52% on polling day;

H. whereas there have been recent bouts of violence against religious minorities such as Christians, Muslims and Hindus including attacks on churches and mosques;

1. Takes note of the achievements made by the Sri Lankan Government, with the help of the international community, in resettlement, reconstruction and rehabilitation in the relatively short period since the armed conflict with the LTTE ended in 2009, including the construction of new roads, bridges, train connections, medical facilities, schools and housing.

2. Welcomes the LLRC report, which contains a broad range of good recommendations regarding concrete improvements on human rights as an important step in the direction reconciliation and accountability,

3. Calls on the Sri Lankan Government to further implement the LLRC panel's recommendations, and for a proper, full, transparent and impartial investigation of the many outstanding allegations and concerns arising from a conflict that saw numerous war crimes and other violations committed by both sides;

4. Welcomes the Government's policy of introducing trilingualism all across the country as an important step;

5. Welcomes the elections to the Northern Provincial Council which were successfully held on 21 September, and which constitute a major step in the devolution of power, in accordance with the implementation of the 13th Amendment and hopes for a constructive dialogue between the Government and the new Northern Provincial Council;

6. Calls on the government to speed up its efforts to demilitarize the war-affected provinces, in order to reduce the continued large-scale presence of the military and other security forces;

7. Stresses the need to resolve the issue of missing or disappeared civilians and soldiers; in this respect welcomes the newly established Commission of Inquiry on Disappearances hoping it will approach its important and challenging task with determination and independence, helping to ensure credible and transparent investigations consistent with international standards; calls on the Commission to cover disappearances not only in the Northern and Eastern Provinces but also Colombo and disappearances in the rest of the country; welcomes the new Government plans to enact legislation criminalising enforced disappearances and looks forward to further progress in this regard; calls on the Sri Lankan Government to ratify the International Convention on Disappearances and to facilitate the

request of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to visit the country.

8. Calls on the Sri Lankan Government to be proactive in addressing the genuine political, economic and social concerns of its Tamil citizens; urges the Sri Lankan Government accordingly to take active measures in terms of political devolution and to encourage Tamil recruitment to the government service and to the police and the armed forces;
9. Calls on the government to step up measures aimed at ensuring the independence of the judiciary, and to bring to justice those responsible for offences independent of their political or social background;
10. Calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to progress on its witness and victim protection legislation, which has been existing in draft form since 2007.
11. Issues concern about the recent violence against religious minorities such as Christians, Muslims and Hindus including attacks on churches and mosques, and the lack of swift action against the perpetrators;
12. Calls on the Government to send a strong signal of zero tolerance for acts of violence against religious minorities and to ensure that those responsible are punished
13. Calls on the government to guarantee freedom of expression calls in this respect for the right to Information Act to be adopted, and to ensure that all alleged violations of media freedom are the subject of full, open and transparent investigations;
14. Calls on the EU to continue to support the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the UN Human Rights Council and the Government and Parliament of Sri Lanka.