



THE EMBASSY OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

TO BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

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European Parliament rejects move "to seek the immediate establishment of an international justice mechanism in 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 members 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 anyone 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".

Embassy of Sri Lanka
Brussels

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Comment by Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha to Rupavahini News 13 May 2011 on the
outcome of the 'Urgency' debate on Sri Lanka held in the European Parliament on 12 May
2011

“The objective of the Greens and the Socialists who introduced this resolution in the first place, and later the Socialists who moved an oral amendment to seek the ‘immediate establishment of an international justice mechanism on Sri Lanka’, was largely to use the Darusman Report to try to build political opinion within Europe, in a bid to seek to operationalize this report and set up an international mechanism. Now by defeating this particular sinister move, what the European Conservatives, British Conservatives and European Liberals, who together hold a majority of seats in the European Parliament have done, is realizing that it is the diaspora elements supportive of the LTTE who are behind this move and who lobbied heavily to have their way, they have said enough is enough. They have shown that while they do keep a very watchful eye on Sri Lanka, and human rights and good governance issues, that they are not ready to become a cat’s paw in the games of such a diaspora. Infact several who spoke in this debate made the point that the bigger problem in Europe is this diaspora, that is pro-LTTE, which we know continues to advocate separatism in Sri Lanka, while espousing the ideology of the LTTE, using its money and being manipulated by its surviving military leaders. I think this could be an important ‘turning point’ in Europe in relation to the discussion on Sri Lanka, and we should use this moment to reach out to governments, political groups, civil society groups and individuals within Europe who continue to be misled by those who oppose Sri Lanka due to various vested interests.”

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