



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA

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Statement by

H. E. Mr. A. Gopinathan  
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of India

at the 11<sup>th</sup> special session of  
the United Nations Human Rights Council  
on "the human rights situation in Sri Lanka"

GENEVA  
26 May 2009

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THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
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STATEMENT BY INDIA

Mr. President,

India has <sup>had serious</sup> reservations about the objectives and usefulness of convening a special session of the UN Human Rights Council on "The human rights situation in Sri Lanka" at this time.

Sri Lanka has just brought to an end a long and tragic conflict waged by an organisation wedded to terrorism and separatism. The international community's over-riding goal and priority in Sri Lanka today should be to promote a process of reconciliation and healing, overcoming the consequences of this tragic conflict. Instead, by forcing a special session on the Council, some members have, regrettably, politicised our work. This is an unfortunate development. It would have sufficed if this discussion had taken place during the 11<sup>th</sup> regular session of the Council that is barely a week away.

Mr. President,

The activities of the LTTE have, in fact, reinforced the need for the Council to focus its attention on human rights violations by non-state actors, especially terrorist groups. We must not be reluctant to hold non-state actors accountable for their human rights violations.

What Sri Lanka needs now is international assistance for the serious humanitarian situation of civilians who have come out of the conflict areas. The rights to life, freedom and of choice of the internally displaced persons from the Tamil minority community have been among the first to be affected during the long, <sup>nearly three decades old</sup> ~~twenty-three year~~ conflict in Sri Lanka. Today, there is an urgent need to rehabilitate the several thousands of internally displaced persons who are in camps established by the Government. The Government of Sri Lanka is taking steps to rehabilitate them and restore

their normal lives outside the camps in the next six months. In addition, the longer-term challenge of reconstruction remains. The attempt of the international community should be to ensure that the Tamil civilians and others return to their homes at the earliest, to the full exercise of their rights and to resume their normal lives. The Council needs to pay attention to not only the civil and political rights of the people affected by the conflict, but with the creation of conditions through which they can enjoy fully their economic, social and cultural rights.

Mr. President,

India will continue to assist Sri Lanka in this formidable task of rehabilitation and reconstruction. In the last few months, India has been engaged intensively in providing assistance to Sri Lanka in these areas, especially to the internally displaced persons. We are also engaged in demining efforts, will provide shelter material, and undertake several projects to bring back normalcy to the troubled island. Our sixty-two member field hospital has done commendable work in treating serious medical cases among those who have been displaced. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has announced <sup>immediate</sup> ~~an~~ large humanitarian relief assistance package of USD 20 million *and is actively considering* ~~to make further assistance available for Sri Lanka.~~

Mr. President,

*a further package of 100 mn \$ towards rehabilitation and reconstruction*

Sri Lanka today faces the principal challenge of restoring the nation to a life of normalcy and peace after nearly three decades of conflict and terrorism. India remains committed to working with the Government of Sri Lanka bilaterally in tackling the challenges that lie ahead, in supporting the process of greater devolution of powers to the provinces and finding a negotiated political settlement acceptable to all the communities within the framework of a united Sri Lanka.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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