

UN Human Rights Council 43: Item 2 Joint Statement by the Core Group on Sri Lanka

Thank you Madam President

This statement is on behalf of Canada, Germany, North Macedonia, Montenegro and the UK, the Core Group on Sri Lanka.

We thank the High Commissioner for her update on Sri Lanka.

In 2015, Sri Lanka co-sponsored resolution 30/1, which provided a framework to address the legacy of conflict and build the foundations for sustainable and inclusive peace. Sri Lanka committed to delivering progress on accountability, reconciliation and human rights with the support of the Council and reaffirmed those commitments through two further resolutions. As the High Commissioner's report highlights, these resolutions have their origins in Sri Lanka's domestic processes.

These resolutions are hugely significant for Sri Lanka and for this Council. They marked the end of a period of confrontation with voted resolutions and an international investigation. They heralded the start of a partnership and a sense of common purpose between Sri Lanka and the Council.

From 2015, important steps have been taken, as recognized in successive Council reports. We join the High Commissioner in welcoming the significant progress in institution building including through the establishment of the Office of Reparations and the Office on Missing Persons. Fulfillment of the mandates of these offices would bring hope to those left behind following tens of thousands of cases of enforced disappearances over many years.

Following the resolution, human rights defenders, academics and journalists have had more freedom and experienced less intimidation. However, we share the High Commissioner's concern at the growing number of reports of harassment and surveillance of human rights defenders and victims of human rights violations. The protection of civil society, independent media and human rights institutions from intimidation remains critical to fulfill Sri Lanka's commitment to a free and open democratic society, both in the build up to, and beyond the upcoming Parliamentary elections.

We are deeply disappointed and concerned that the government has changed its approach to the resolution. We remain profoundly committed to resolution 30/1 and its principles of reconciliation, accountability, intercommunal harmony, and justice for victims of conflict.

We urge the government of Sri Lanka to advance all of these principles and to ensure a prosperous and inclusive Sri Lanka for which the rule of law and ending impunity are a fundamental basis.

We encourage the government of Sri Lanka to continue cooperation and dialogue with the Council, the OHCHR, and UN human rights mechanisms, to facilitate progress towards a lasting peace where the rights of all of Sri Lanka's people can flourish.

Thank you Madam President