



52nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Agenda Item 4: The Human Rights Situation that requires the Council's Attention – Human rights situation in Sri Lanka

Oral Statement

Delivered by Fr. Kachi Adindu C. S Sp

Thank you Mr President

VIVAT International would like to draw the attention of the Council on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. The unprecedented economic and political crisis in Sri Lanka have generated a situation in which widespread violations of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights continuous to take place.

Therefore, we call upon the Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to consistently address serious human rights concerns in Sri Lanka, in particular due to

- The attempts by the President to deny people's right to franchise by postponing local government elections, despite directives from the Supreme Court for the government officials not to withhold allocated money;
- Media reports about potential appointment of Deshabandu Tennakoon as the next Inspector General of Police, despite multiple pending disciplinary, criminal and fundamental rights complaints and cases against him at the Police Department, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, Magistrate Courts and Supreme Court¹;
- The appeal filed by the Attorney General to reverse the discharge of prominent student and protest leader Wasantha Mudalige by a Magistrate after more than 5 months in detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, during which the Magistrate had noted police had made false statements to imprison him;
- The continuing repression of dissent, especially attacks on protests, including through the use of expired tear gas obtained without following relevant tender procedures;
- Negative implications on human rights of an IMF loan and non-consideration of pro-poor, sustainable approaches to resolve the economic crisis, such as through debt cancellation, wealth taxes, reversing of tax holidays, recovery of stolen assets, recovering foreign currency stashed overseas by exporters and illicit overseas cash flows;
- Continuing militarization and occupation of lands in war affected North and East;
- Impunity for massive and systemic violations of human rights in past several decades, including during and after the war.

We also call on UN member states and OHCHR to ensure that war time atrocities, serious post war crimes including Easter Sunday bombings and attacks against protests since last year, along with economic crimes, are included in the evidence gathering process of the UN based on resolution 46/1.

We also call on UN member states to proactively advance accountability for these crimes in their national jurisdictions, through prosecutions, travel bans and asset freezes against persons credibly implicated in planning and implementing these crimes. Thank you.

¹ These include allegations of concealing evidence in a case of abduction and assault of a journalist, threatening a journalist, threatening a police officer, attacking peaceful protests, abducting a Buddhist Monk, not implementing a protection order issued by the Witness and Victim protection authority and issuing an illegal order to a police officer to hand over money found in presidential residence to a minister instead of to court.