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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Joint written statement submitted by Fondazione Proclade Internazionale - Onlus, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International Movement of Catholic Students), non- governmental organizations in special consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 August 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Human Rights Situation in Sri Lanka: Ensure Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence for the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks

1. With the support of the Centre for Society and Religion (CSR), we wish to draw the attention of the Human Rights Council to the continuing human rights and accountability concerns arising from the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka. On 21 April 2019, coordinated attacks targeting three churches and three hotels and later in a guest house and a residence, resulted in approximately 269 deaths and more than 500 injuries. (1) Seven years later, victims, survivors, and their families continue to await truth, justice, accountability, and effective reparation. The prolonged delays in investigations and accountability raise serious concerns regarding impunity and the State's obligations to ensure justice and guarantees of non-recurrence.
2. Several investigative mechanisms examined the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks; however, key reports remain only partially disclosed, including the Presidential Commission of Inquiry, Presidential Committee reports, and the Parliamentary Select Committee report and their recommendations remain largely unimplemented. Full disclosure and implementation of recommendations are essential to establish truth, accountability, justice, and prevent recurrence.
3. The reports of all committees and the commission appointed to uncover the truth have suggested that this attack was not merely an act of the group of Zahran Hashim but has characteristics of an organized conspiracy that goes beyond that. (2)
- I. Failure and Misleading by Intelligence Agencies: Although the State Intelligence Service (SIS) and the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) possessed information prior to the attack, it was not properly shared. In particular, the military intelligence's erroneous view that Zahran had gone to India while he was in Sri Lanka is something that raises serious suspicion. (3)
- II. Channel 4 Disclosure, Suresh Sallay, and Intelligence Agencies: According to the disclosure made by Hanzeer Azad Maulana, allegations have been made that the former Director of the State Intelligence Service, Suresh Sallay, and Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan, known as Pillayan, aided and abetted this attack. It was revealed at the Malalgoda Committee that the Counter-Terrorism Division had not sent the complete files regarding Zahran to the Attorney General's Department. It was revealed at the Presidential Commission and the Select Committee that military intelligence closely monitored some of these bombers. It was also revealed that security forces had engaged certain high-level members of their groups as informants. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Justice Imam Committee had to accept that there were links between Hanzeer Azad Maulana, who revealed a political conspiracy through Channel 4, and Zahran's group. (4)
4. Parliamentary Select Committee: A serious lack of coordination among security forces and the fact that intelligence services were aware of Zahran was revealed here. Furthermore, it included observations that raised suspicions about whether the Easter Sunday terrorist attack was not an isolated incident but the result of a conspiracy to gain power. (5)
5. The CSR sent a letter dated 4th October 2024 to the President, outlining short- and long-term measures to advance truth, justice and accountability for the victims of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks. (6) The letter called for a thorough and independent investigation into the allegations contained in the Channel 4 documentary, appropriate measures concerning officials whose alleged involvement required clarification, and the reinstatement of investigative teams that had previously conducted preliminary inquiries into the attacks. Some of these recommendations have subsequently received attention. Relevant information concerning the allegations raised by the Channel 4 documentary has been placed before the Colombo Magistrate's Court in Case No. B 35882/24. Investigations have also reportedly commenced into alleged links between a State Minister and the Easter Sunday attacks. In addition, former State Intelligence Service

Director Suresh Sallay has been detained, while a travel ban was issued to former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. A team led by Criminal Investigation Department Director Shani Abeysekera travelled to France and recorded Maulana's statement at the official residence of the Sri Lankan Ambassador. (7) These developments are significant steps towards establishing the truth and accountability. Nevertheless, sustained, impartial and comprehensive investigations are essential to determine the full circumstances surrounding the attacks, including any failures to prevent them, and to identify all persons responsible.

6. A complaint has been lodged with the Criminal Investigation Department, with copies forwarded to the Attorney General's Department and to the Victims and Witnesses Support and Protection Division, concerning sustained attempts to influence the investigation into the Easter Sunday Attacks. The complaint concerns statements made at press conferences and on social media by a lawyer who met the third suspect while in detention in relation to the case B 35882/24, directed at the complainant, at witnesses who have given statements, and at the officials conducting the prosecution. The Magistrate was informed of this in open court during the hearing of the case. Effective protection of complainants and witnesses is essential to the integrity of these proceedings.
7. The Attorney General's Department has filed around 41 High Court cases relating to the Easter Sunday Attacks, including the Colombo Permanent High Court Trial-at-Bar against 25 accused, which is currently proceeding daily against 24 following the death of one accused. (8)
8. A High Court Trial-at-Bar convicted former Inspector General of Police Pujith Jayasundara and former Defence Secretary Hemasiri Fernando of criminal negligence in connection with the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks and sentenced both to death by a majority decision of the three-judge bench in 2026. (9) While this judgment represents an important development in the pursuit of justice and accountability, we recall the opposition of both the United Nations and the Catholic Church to the death penalty, and affirm that accountability must be pursued with full respect for the right to life and human dignity.

Recommendations

We call upon United Nations Member States to:

- Take appropriate measures, in accordance with international law and applicable domestic legislation, to investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute those responsible for the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks within their respective jurisdictions.
- Monitor significant judicial proceedings in Sri Lanka relating to the Easter Sunday Attacks and encourage fair, transparent, and effective judicial processes.
- Ensure effective protection for victims, witnesses, human rights defenders, activists, and other individuals at risk in connection with efforts to seek truth and accountability for the attacks.
- In the event of continued failure to conduct independent, impartial, and effective investigations into the Easter Sunday Attacks, urge the Government of Sri Lanka to seek appropriate assistance from relevant international investigative and accountability mechanisms.

We call upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to:

- Include the latest developments concerning the investigations and accountability for the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks in reports and updates submitted to the Human Rights Council.
- Ensure that relevant information and developments concerning the Easter Sunday Attacks are incorporated into the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) evidence-gathering project.

The Human Rights Council should urge the Government of Sri Lanka to:

- Ensure effective and adequate protection for victims, witnesses, human rights defenders, activists, investigators, and other individuals at risk as a result of their efforts to seek truth, justice, and accountability for the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks.
- Make publicly available the full reports and findings of all committees, commissions, and other bodies established to investigate the Easter Sunday Attacks.
- Fully and effectively implement the relevant recommendations contained in the reports of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry and the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Easter Sunday Attacks.
- Expedite and ensure the independence, impartiality, and transparency of investigations into the allegations and claims raised in the Channel 4 documentary concerning the Easter Sunday Attacks, and publicly report on their progress and findings.
- Expedite all pending investigations and judicial proceedings relating to the Easter Sunday Attacks, in accordance with due process and fair trial guarantees, with a view to ensuring accountability for those responsible.
- Disciplinary and legal action must be taken against all those who obstructed investigations, destroyed evidence, and misled investigations. (10)
- Establish, in accordance with the Government's stated commitment, an independent commission comprising suitably qualified Sri Lankan and international experts, with a clear mandate, adequate resources, and effective powers to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the Easter Sunday Attacks and to make recommendations aimed at establishing truth, ensuring justice and reparations, and preventing recurrence.

The Centre for Society and Religion, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

1. Centre for Society and Religion, Memory, Pain: Seeking Justice After 07 Years, April 2026, <https://easterattack.info/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/CSR-report-on-Easter-Attacks-Memory-Pain-Seeking-Justice-After-07-Years-17Apr2026-Eng-summary.pdf>
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Centre for Society and Religion, letter to the President, 4 October 2024, https://easterattack.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/CSR-letter-to-president-AKD-on-EA_-Sinhala.pdf
7. Newswire, 20 May 2026, <https://www.newswire.lk/2026/05/20/cid-makes-explosive-revelations-in-court-over-easter-attacks/>
8. Ibid., note 1.
9. Associated Press, 2026, <https://apnews.com/article/sri-lanka-easter-bombings-police-chief-islamic-state-3552d08464abb4c0cf35b88c354496cc>
10. Ibid., note 1.