



Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development  
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**37<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council**  
**Item 2: Report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka**  
**Oral Statement Delivered by R. Iniyana Ilango on behalf of Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**  
**Thursday, 22 March 2018**

Mr. President, FORUM-ASIA welcomes the report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on Sri Lanka.

The government has failed to implement most of its commitments under resolution 30/1 on promoting reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka. Draft legislation for three of the four promised transitional justice mechanisms is not publicly available and the one that saw some steps taken – the Office of Missing Persons OMP – is still not operational. The Prevention of Terrorism Act and its draconian provisions still remain; and no meaningful steps have been taken towards holding perpetrators of international crimes accountable. Dissatisfaction has led to continuous public protests for over a year by families of the disappeared and communities whose lands are still occupied by the military in the North and the East.

As noted in the report key preconditions for transitional justice remain unfulfilled. Reports of assaults, death threats, surveillance and harassment of human rights defenders and victims of violations continue. A new draft law to “regulate, supervise and inspect NGOs” grants policing and judicial powers to a “NGO secretariat” under a Minister – severely restricting freedom of association and human rights defenders.

In a context of impunity for past attacks on minorities, fresh attacks on Muslims this month saw mosques, homes and businesses destroyed and several injured. Police had watched by and ignored early warnings and had themselves assaulted civilians. Though arrests have been made belatedly, there are doubts about prosecutions or convictions.

We endorse the High Commissioner's call for application of universal jurisdiction but it is also imperative that this Council intensifies and does not reduce, its scrutiny of Sri Lanka till March 2019 and beyond.

Thank you.