
Anti-Lanka move thwarted in Geneva: Dayan's term extended

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by Shamindra Ferdinando President Mahinda Rajapaksa has ended a simmering controversy over the move to recall Sri Lankan Ambassador in Geneva Dayan Jayatilleke on the completion of his two-year term by extending it by another year. Political sources said that the President had informed Jayatilleke of his decision on Monday (March 30) in recognition of his significant contribution to Sri Lanka's successful effort at last month's Human Rights Council's sessions in Geneva. The well-known political commentator is also accredited to the United Nations in Geneva. He succeeded Ms. Sarala Fernando in 2007. Paying a glowing tribute to Ambassador Jayatilleke, Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe yesterday said the Ambassador had played a critical role in thwarting an attempt to target Sri Lanka at the Geneva sessions. He said at a press conference at the Meteorological Department that Jayatilleke's presence in Geneva had made his task easier. He commended the Geneva mission for meeting an offensive launched against the country's government by a group of persons bent on obstructing Sri Lanka's fight against LTTE terrorism. Had they succeeded, the LTTE would have been strengthened, he said. He dismissed assertions that the government would give in to international calls for a ceasefire with the LTTE. Human Rights Secretary Professor Rajiva Wijesinghe said that nothing could be gained by a ceasefire. The only beneficiary would be the LTTE, he said. Samarasinghe, who led the Sri Lankan delegation during what he called the high level segment of the sessions, regretted that the western regional grouping in the HR Council declined to give them an opportunity to explain the ground situation. Sri Lanka's request was turned down on the basis they were busy due to the presence of their ministers in Geneva, the minister said. The western regional group comprises the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and EU countries in the 47-member HR Council. The minister expressed satisfaction over his bilateral meetings with Swedish, Danish and French Foreign Ministers. The meeting with the Swedish Minister was of critical importance in the context of the Scandinavian country taking over the EU presidency in June this year. He said that the pro-LTTE group within the HR Council had made a desperate bid to zero-in on Sri Lanka during the sessions. After failing to move a Resolution against Sri Lanka, the group wanted UN Human Rights Commissioner to make a special statement on Sri Lanka at the council. Then they tried to prompt the President of the HR Council to make a statement on Sri Lanka. The minister said that both attempts had failed as special statements could be made only if member states unanimously agreed. Responding to our queries, he said that the pro-LTTE group continued its campaign against Sri Lanka until the last moment. The minister acknowledged that the country had faced a severe threat in Geneva and pulled off a significant diplomatic victory due to team effort. He praised the contribution made by the Attorney General Mohan Peiris, Human Rights Secretary Professor Rajiva Wijesinghe and Yasantha Kodagoda of the Attorney General's Department. Courtesy: Island.lk