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## Famous Liberation Theologian Writes to UN Secretary General

Monday, 25 May 2009

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I am one who has worked for a peaceful resolution of our ethnic relations since 1956, and that right through the 1977 riots, the Black July of 1983 and since then. Recently I wrote an open letter to President Mahinda Rajapakse and leader of the Opposition Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe urging a southern consensus for a peaceful political solution, as I had done decades earlier to President J.R. Jayewardene and Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike.

I am writing to you to welcome you to Sri Lanka and also thank you and your staff for helping us in this tragic situation in Sri Lanka. I wish also to remind you and the UN Human Rights Groups of more serious and urgent responsibilities of the UNO in the global context. I refer first to the build up of the world system by the European peoples during four and half centuries by violence since 1492. The present world order that the UNO is meant to preserve is the fruit of 450 years of the worst racist terrorism in human history. The empires of the European peoples were built up in all the continents of the world by the colonial invasions of nations such as Portugal, Spain, Britain, France, Russia and later Germany, Italy, and Japan, etc. After World War II, the United Nations Organisation (UNO) was set up by the victors of the war with special privileges for themselves. The world system largely conserved the territorial limits they set up in the Americas, Africa, Oceania and much of Asia. The UN Security Council gives the right of veto to the main victors of World War II concerning any proposals brought to the UN sessions. During the period of colonization the European peoples migrated to much of the open spaces as the Russians did to North East Asia. The European peoples could migrate to fertile lands elsewhere during these centuries while their population increased. On the other hand while the population of the South, so-called Third World Countries, now increase rapidly, the European populations are decreasing and ageing. But the countries of the North such as Europe, North America and Australia, New Zealand do not readily welcome peoples of the South specially Africa and Asia. The United Nations Organisation does not deal with a just alignment of population according to changes in the nation states. This situation is likely to get much worse in the coming decades when China and India in each have an increasing population more than a billion people. There will be more regional violence in Africa and Asia in the coming decades. I am mentioning this to remark that much of the ethnic conflicts in the South have a relation to the colonial expansion and also because of the population pressure on the land. This is not to excuse ethnic chauvinism in countries such as Sri Lanka. But in our context too it is useful to recall that one million of our population was brought into our country by the British colonial power for their economic benefit through the plantations. Fortunately this issue is now being resolved by agreements between the governments of India and Sri Lanka. It is also to be remembered that the economies of the colonies were transformed to benefit the colonial powers. They set up their multi-national corporations on a worldwide basis to obtain the profits from the land and work of the colonized peoples. The UNO has not done much to re-establish justice in the world economic system. On the contrary two of its supported organizations such as IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank support the Global Capitalist System which the colonial powers set up. The independence of the colonies and the end of colonial rule did not mean a just re-organization of the exploitative global capitalist system. What we have since then is a new imperialism based on technology, finance and military power. It has to be noted that the hegemonic military power of the United States of America can interfere in the domestic affairs of countries and invade places that it wants to control such as Iraq, without the United Nations being able to do anything about it. On the contrary recently the last US President Bush more or less declared "the war on terror" indicating the peoples of the lands where there are oil resources and stand in need of liberation by the democratic West. I am writing this to you as Secretary General of the United Nations to remind you that your effort to bring justice to oppressed peoples has been rather deficient at the international level where the super powers are concerned. While we welcome your interest in justice and peace in Sri Lanka with the backing of the nations of the European Union we wish to remind you that the main on-going injustice in the world is the result of international lawlessness since 1492. If the world is not to have worse clashes within and among countries of the South in the coming decades, the prevailing injustice among nations must be remedied with an adjustment of land and resources according to the numbers and needs to the populations. The safeguarding of the natural resources of the world and prevention of the worsening of the climate change also need attention by the United Nations without leaving the super powers to act as they wish. These remarks are made very briefly as you are doubtless aware of them. I have written at length in my book Planetary Theology published by the Centre for Society and Religion (CSR) in 1978 and later by Orbis, Maryknoll, New York. I sincerely hope that during the remaining period of your service as Secretary General for United Nations you can make a) an evaluation of the damage done by the super powers to the poorer peoples of the world (including slavery) and b) make reparation and compensation for the killings of these peoples and transfer of their resources including gold and silver to the colonizing powers to form their capital c) in this connection you can evaluate also the justice or otherwise of the foreign debt of the poor peoples and remedy their sufferings due to unfair terms of trade. d) Plan together for world justice for 2010-2020, with practical means of implementation to go forward to a better safeguarding of basic human rights specially in Asia and Africa internally and globally. I am concluding this short letter informing you that some of us would be ready to dialogue with the United Nations Human Rights groups concerning the obligations of the former colonial powers and present neo-imperialist nations. Perhaps this could help you to rethink your agenda on human rights in a more comprehensive nature during the coming years. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, OMI Chairperson, Centre for Society & Religion

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Courtesy: Island.lk