
Ambassador of India responds to Navi Pillay's remarks on Sri Lanka at the UN in Geneva

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Ambassador Gopinathan Achamkulangare of India, responding yesterday to the remarks on Sri Lanka included in the statement of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms. Navi Pillay said, "...it will be prudent to adhere to the outcome of the special session and be sensitive to the concerns expressed already, rather than take a position on contested proposals or controversial issues and ideas, which did not find eventual acceptance in the outcome of the special session."

Full transcript of the Ambassador's statement:

Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. President, we thank the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms Navanethan Pillay for her statement this afternoon that provides useful updates on human rights themes and on situations of particular concern. We wish to raise a matter of some concern to our delegation with regard to the remarks made by the High Commissioner on Sri Lanka and the recently concluded special session in her statement. The High Commissioner has welcomed the special session and consequently, we consider it safe to assume that she also accepts its concomitant outcome. The High Commissioner and her office would be fully aware of the discussions and negotiations on the different elements of the outcome, and on the positions adopted by different member states and groupings on these elements. It is important to recall and reaffirm that the outcome of the special session reflects an inter-governmental decision, adopted according to the rules of procedure of the council. What is more, it endorses the joint communiqué issued at the end of the recent visit to Sri Lanka by the UN secretary General, which among other things, reaffirms the willingness of the government of Sri Lanka to address the issue of accountability in response to the concerns expressed by the UN Secretary General in this regard. We feel that in these circumstances, it will be prudent to adhere to the outcome of the special session and be sensitive to the concerns expressed already, rather than take a position on contested proposals or controversial issues and ideas, which did not find eventual acceptance in the outcome of the special session. It would be extremely unfortunate, if the inter-governmental decisions adopted by the human rights council, were to be ignored or set aside, and the High Commissioner and/or her office were to misinterpret them or willfully neglect them, or supersede them according to their convenience or in accordance with the agenda of some states, or unrepresentative or unaccountable organizations, or to pursue their own agenda. In this regard, we would like to remind all concerned, that the independence of the High Commissioner cannot be presumed to exceed that of the UN Secretary General. Thank you, Mr. President.