“Special Panel on Sri Lanka uncalled for and unwarranted” – President to Ban Ki-moon

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“Act in keeping with principles of UN Charter on non-interference” President Mahinda Rajapaksa has pointed out that the intention of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a panel of experts to advice him (i.e. the SG) on Sri Lanka is totally uncalled for and unwarranted.

In a telephone conversation between the President and the UNSG yesterday (March 05, 10), arising from a letter written by the UNSG on February 25, President Rajapaksa was emphatic on this position. He said it was both unprecedented and unwarranted as no such action had been taken about other states with continuing armed conflicts on a large scale, involving major humanitarian catastrophes and causing the deaths of large numbers of civilians due to military action. The UNSG was told that Sri Lanka had concluded its armed conflict with the most ruthless terrorist organization in the world, more than nine months ago, and was in process of working towards further strengthening of national reconciliation.The President also said that the implementation of such an intention would certainly be perceived as an interference with the current general election campaign being held island wide; where the people of the North and of the East who were not free to participate in such elections earlier were being given the opportunity to do so, respecting the highest standards of democracy. President Rajapaksa recalled how interested forces attempted such interference, including by trying to draw in the UN and other bodies, in the recently concluded Presidential Election too, which has been internationally accepted as being peaceful, free and fair. The UNSG was told that the allegations about Sri Lanka were motivated misrepresentations by apologists of the LTTE, and by some Non-Government Organizations that due to being so misguided or otherwise, were clearly working on agenda that was directed against Sri Lanka. There are also sections of the western world being increasingly subjected to electoral pressure by the same apologists of the LTTE, the President said.The President informed the UNSG that he had already, as a further measure of reconciliation, appointed a special committee to study and report on the lessons from the conflict situation that prevailed in some parts Sri Lanka. The President and also drew the attention of the UNSG to the panel of eminent persons already working on the allegations of human rights violations and other charges reported by the US State Department, as well as the action by UN Rapporteur Philip Alston on the much disputed Channel 4 video on Sri Lanka.President Rajapaksa reiterated to the UNSG that any appointment of such a panel as intended, would compel Sri Lanka to take necessary and appropriate action in that regard. The President stressed that Sri Lanka looked forward to treatment as per the United Nations Charter that provides for equal treatment to all Members of the United Nations, while respecting the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.The discussion concluded with the President stating that he would shortly be addressing a letter to the UNSG, further to this telephone discussion. Presidential Secretariat Colombo
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