
Government's response to Channel 4 Film – “ Sri Lanka's Killing Fields”

Wednesday, 15 June 2011

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The Ministry of External Affairs directed its High Commission in London to issue a statement on this matter.

The Ministry's statement was issued in London on Wednesday, 15th June, 2011.

Appended below is the statement. Statement by Sri Lanka High Commission, London on the Channel 4 Film “Sri Lanka's Killing Fields”; The Government of Sri Lanka categorically denies the allegations that it has deliberately targeted its own civilians, as the Channel 4 alleges in its film “Sri Lanka's Killing Fields”. The Government of Sri Lanka, having being fully cognizant of the plight of all civilians in Sri Lanka including children and women launched a humanitarian operation in 2008 to rescue its own people from the clutches of an unlawful group of terrorists, what was undoubtedly the largest hostage taking in the world. Sri Lankan citizens are only too well aware of a past of blood shed and mayhem, during which they lived in fear and suspicion. They now enjoy peace and cherish that no civilian has been affected in any manner due to any act of terrorism in the country since the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009. There is a domestic mechanism appointed by the government, the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), which is similar to such mechanisms, set up elsewhere at the end of conflict. Mindful of comparative experiences elsewhere and local sensitivities both, this Commission, which reflects the pluralistic nature of Sri Lankan polity in its own composition, has held more than 200 public sittings covering former conflict areas as well. If the allegations levelled by Channel 4 or any other party are found to be genuine, the LLRC will take due note of all such cases and remedial measures will be taken by way of legal sanctions. This process will also take into consideration all matters that are important to the Sri Lankans living in Sri Lanka, and therefore, it should be allowed to continue without any hindrance or prejudice. It is recalled that reports of some well known Commissions in countries with much richer resources have taken decades to see day light. The Government of Sri Lanka is concerned about the distress the images in the Channel 4 film aired without any guarantee of their authenticity might have caused to the viewers, particularly to those belonging to different communities in Sri Lanka. This is an exercise which is carried out by a small section of international media at the behest of certain parties with vested interests and it caters only to the interests of separatist forces living outside Sri Lanka, the final objective of which is to push Sri Lanka back to war, by way of lacerating the wounds that the country is attempting to heal. The Channel 4 film has the potential to incite hatred amongst different communities in Sri Lanka, including future generations, and thereby, adversely affect the ongoing national reconciliation process. The malicious allegations in the film regarding the conduct of the Sri Lankan Army are in striking contrast to the standards maintained by the Sri Lankan Army. As the Channel 4 has continuously depended on footage already publicized by the LTTE websites and media bodies and also those claimed to have been supplied by the pro-LTTE lobby, the viewers may use caution in drawing any conclusions on the basis of this film. Channel 4's gross simplification of sensitive matters, on face value, insinuates only a sinister motive driven by a political agenda against Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka continues to remain engaged with UN agencies, INGOs and peoples representatives on improving the conditions and the rehabilitation and resettlement of the affected people. Sri Lanka High Commission London 15th June 2011