
US hypocrisy and double standards will undermine Council's legitimacy, warns

Ambassador Kunanayakam

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In a persuasive right of reply to the Statement made by U.S Under Secretary of State, Maria Otero, Sri Lanka's Ambassador/Permanent Representative Tamara Kunanayakam warned the Human Rights Council that the hypocrisy and double standards displayed by the United States in its treatment of countries such as Sri Lanka would, if encouraged, gravely affect the credibility of the Council and undermine its legitimacy. She regretted that the Under Secretary had thought it fit to unilaterally develop and set forth values that would guide the workings of the Council, departing from its founding principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non selectivity. Reacting to the Under Secretary's claim that the international community had to wait nearly three years for action, and insinuations that the LLRC recommendations will not be implemented unless action 'now' is taken by the Council, Ambassador Kunanayakam wondered at the impatience of the United States. Only two and a half months had elapsed since the release of the LLRC report and barely three years since the end of a thirty year war against terrorism and separatism. She regretted that the significant action undertaken by the Government had been ignored, although widely recognised and commended by the international community. The U.S did not exercise its right of reply to Ambassador Kunanayakam's statement. Full Text of Statement:

Madam President I am exercising my right of reply to the comments made by the EU and the US Under Secretary of State Maria Otero. It is regretted that, in her statement, the US Under Secretary of State has thought it fit to unilaterally develop and set forth values that would guide the workings of this Council, departing from its founding principles namely; universality, impartiality, objectivity and non selectivity. This intentional departure aims to legitimise the politicization of this Council and justifies its approach in treating countries such as Sri Lanka. Regrettably, the Under Secretary of State has failed to take cognizance of the significant actions taken by the Government of Sri Lanka since the end of the conflict, actions that have been widely recognised and commended by the international community. Moreover, in the very short span of time, less than 3 months since the release of the LLRC report, the Government has already commenced implementation of the recommendations through its domestic institutions and mechanisms. Significant progress has been made in implementing many of the recommendations of its domestic mechanism. Emergency regulations have been repealed, over 1200 detainees have been released, all but one detention centre has been closed, less than 300 of the more than 11,000 ex combatants that surrendered have been rehabilitated and reintegrated into society, and over 95% of nearly 290,000 IDPs have been resettled. Significant progress has also been made in addressing land issues, implementing the Trilingual Policy, scaling down of high security zones, demining, and rehabilitation of child soldiers. With regard to accountability, two Courts of Inquiry and a Board of Inquiry have been established by the Army and Navy, respectively. A time-bound National Human Rights Action Plan, which has many synergies with the LLRC, has commenced implementation in a structured manner. Madam President, The UPR is the appropriate mechanism to discuss progress made in the promotion and protection of human rights of all countries. Sri Lanka will be presenting its report during the second cycle of the UPR in October this year. Madam President, Only two and a half months from the publication the LLRC report and three years from the end of a thirty year war against terrorism and separatism, the United States appears to be impatient! The hypocrisy and double standards thus displayed would, if encouraged, gravely affect the credibility of the Council and undermine its legitimacy. Thank You.