
Response of the Government of Sri Lanka to the Film broadcast on Channel 4 on 14th March 2012

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The Government of Sri Lanka deeply regrets that, once again, Channel 4 chose not to share the video footage or any of the other material upon which it purports to have relied, prior to broadcast of its film ‘Sri Lanka Killing Fields: War Crimes Unpunished’ on 14th March 2012. This denied the Government of Sri Lanka of the rightful opportunity to address any of the concerns raised. This appears to be a continuation of the approach adopted by Channel 4 in its broadcast last year. It may be recalled that last year’s broadcast was severely criticised by many including the Sunday Times UK, which described the commentary to the broadcast as “intemperate and partisan”, and rightly pointed out that most of the footage which was used was unattributed and uncorroborated. The Government of Sri Lanka regrets Channel 4’s continuing hostile and biased editorial position with regard to its reporting on Sri Lanka. Channel 4 chooses to focus its attention on a number of highly spurious and uncorroborated allegations and seeks, falsely, to implicate members of the Sri Lankan Government and senior military figures.

The Government of Sri Lanka categorically rejects the malicious allegations made by ITN Productions and Channel 4. It is noted that much of the footage shown in the broadcast is highly repetitious, having simply been recycled from Channel 4’s discredited broadcast of last year. It may be observed that Sri Lanka is finally on the path to reconciliation and progress following nearly three decades of conflict inflicted by the LTTE, which it should be remembered was outlawed as a terrorist organization by many countries including India, the UK, the United States and the European Union. It is indeed regrettable that Channel 4 has chosen to ignore the many positive post-conflict developments now taking place in the country. This approach inevitably gives Channel 4 viewers a very distorted and unbalanced view of Sri Lanka and only serves to adversely impact the ongoing and comprehensive reconciliation process taking place among all communities in Sri Lanka, in the post-conflict era. The Government of Sri Lanka is strongly of the view that this film as well as the timing of its broadcast are part of a cynical, concerted and orchestrated campaign to assist in gathering support for a resolution calling for action on Sri Lanka, tabled at the ongoing 19th Session of the Human Rights Council. As with its previous pattern of behaviour, Channel 4's airing of this biased, deeply misleading video at this time is not coincidental, but is strategically driven, and clearly motivated by collateral political considerations. Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Geneva, Switzerland 16 March 2012