Foreign Govts, acknowledge that Sri Lankans who arrive illegally are economic migrants, not refugees Monday, 03 December 2012

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Addressing the 101st Council Session of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva on Friday (30 November), Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva Ravinatha Aryasinha has observed that emphasis by the international community that Sri Lanka is now free from the dangers that constrained it during the time of the conflict, has been an important factor for those who left the country as refugees during the time of the conflict to return, with the joint assistance of the host countries, and organizations such as the IOM. However, at the same time illegal people-smuggling rings continue to rob families not only of their hard earned savings, but some times even their loved ones. Noting that the IOM, as well as a number of foreign governments, have in recent months acknowledged that the many Sri Lankans who continue to arrive on foreign soil illegally, are in fact economic migrants and not refugees, Ambassador Aryasinha said Sri Lanka remains committed to work with international partners toward raising awareness as to the dangers relating to illegal migration, with a view to end such practices. Full text of statement is attached.

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