
Internationalization will hinder local process – Minister Peiris

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“Mr. James Moore who was Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in Colombo, you would be able to see the difference between that time and now on the ground, in the war affected areas,” External Affairs Minister Prof G. L. Peiris told Mr. Moore who is one of the members of the US high level delegation now in Colombo, when he met with the delegation last evening. Mr. Moore, who was the Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in Colombo from 2006 to 2009, agreed he could see a substantial difference for the better.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State James Moore, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Vikram Singh and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jane Zimmerman comprise the US State Department delegation now in Colombo. Minister Peiris also said that applying pressure on Sri Lanka would polarize the affected parties, and that Sri Lanka has voluntarily provided information to the Universal Periodic Review and the UN Human Rights Council sessions and worked within these processes. Minister Peiris also told the delegation that there was a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) which the Tamil National Alliance should join and collaborate with, to contribute to the process of change and political reform. He also told the delegation that internationalizing aspects of the reconciliation process would only serve to overshadow the progress made locally in this front - when reconciliation was exclusively a local process. He also told the delegation that there should be a level playing field and that targeting Sri Lanka unfairly and specifically would mean there is no level playing field as far as human rights and governance evaluations of different countries is concerned. Minister Peiris said that Sri Lanka has always worked with the UN agencies and instruments such as the UPR and UNHRC and told the delegation that this was a voluntary process and undue pressure in this regard will serve to internationalize the issue, and polarize the communities in Sri Lanka. He said rather than internationalize the issue, and overshadow the local process the country should be given time to complete the reconciliation process that has seen tremendous progress. Undue pressure will serve to polarize the communities and keep the people in the former war affected areas from making economic gains and reaping the peace dividend. Such economic uplift of the people will speed up the process of reconciliation if given the requisite time and space, he told the visiting delegation. Source: Daily News (31st January 2013): <http://www.mea.gov.lk>