
UN HRC disassociates itself from the screening of No Fire Zone at the UN Premises in Geneva

Thursday, 28 February 2013

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The United Nations Human Rights Council has disassociated itself from the screening of the Channel 4 film “No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka” organized by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and FIFDH to be held on Friday (01 March 2013) in Geneva at the UN premises. In response to a protest lodged by Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha last Monday, which was followed up with a meeting on Tuesday, the President of the UN Human Rights Council Ambassador Remigiusz A. Henczel in a letter dated 27 February 2013, has observed that such events “do not reflect an official position of the Council”.

In his letter, President Henczel has observed that “the participation and consultation with the observers of the Human Rights Council, including INGOs, is based on arrangements, including Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, and practices observed by the Commission on Human Rights (rule 7 of the Council‘s Rules of Procedure)”. He further notes that “NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC have the right to organize side events”, and that “a large number of such meetings take place in the margins of the session and they do not reflect an official position of the Council”. He however adds that “the organizers of side events take full responsibility for the content of their events”.

Sri Lanka on Monday lodged a formal protest against the screening of the latest Channel 4 film. In his letter addressed to Ambassador Remigiusz Achilles Henczel, President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Aryasinha had observed that “Sri Lanka views this film, as well as the timing of its broadcast as part of a cynical, concerted and orchestrated campaign that is strategically driven, and clearly motivated by collateral political considerations”.

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