

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement, Human Rights Council 15th Session

Item 2 & 3: General Debate

16 September

Mr. President,

IMADR appreciates the efforts of the High Commissioner and all other stakeholders in promoting and protecting all human rights in different regions of the world. In particular, we share the concern about the situation of Human Rights defenders expressed by the High Commissioner in her opening statement of this Council session.

Taking this opportunity we wish to remind the Council about a number of commitments made by Sri Lanka, especially during the UPR process and at the special session of May 2009. Up until now the government of Sri Lanka has failed to provide adequate information on cases of disappearance, such as the Vice Chancellor of Easter University, and the journalist Prageeth Eknaligoda, and these are only two examples of many. Furthermore, assassinations and extra-judicial killings have not been investigated. We are also alarmed by the manner in which provisions related to the independent commissions – as laid down in the 17th amendment to the constitution - has been completely abolished through the recently introduced 18th amendment. The Human Rights Commission in Sri Lanka will have grave implications in the new turn of event. In fact we wish to share with the members of the Council that the Civil Rights Movement, the Organization of Professional Associations, the Bar Association of Sri Lanka have all warned the government not to resort to the “urgent bill” procedure. Some leading academics have also stated that constitutional reforms, including elections, go to the heart of what it means to be a democracy in the modern-day.

We recommend the council to take note of the present development in Sri Lanka and its human rights implications and request the government of Sri Lanka to inform the HRC, in particular on following two points:

- 1) the status of the national action plan for human rights; and
- 2) the procedure of the appointment of the Commissioners for the Human Rights Commission as laid down in the new constitutional amendment – especially regarding, whether the new provisions adhere to the Paris Principles.

Thank you Mr. President.