



General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 September 2019

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-second session

9–27 September 2019

Agenda item 8

**Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration
and Programme of Action**

Written statement* submitted by African Green Foundation International, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

GE.19-15126(E)



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Bias attitude of the UNHRC and other UN related organizations towards Sri Lanka

The objective of the United Nation's Human Rights Council is defined as the protection and promotion of human rights throughout the globe by overlooking the related aspects with specialized agents. There is no doubt that this is a key requirement for the betterment of all around the world. Attempts made towards promoting human rights should be in line with the well-being of all the populations in the world and such actions should never be biased to any selected community or a population since the biased activities inevitably violates the rights of some other populations or communities. Such a biased nature will definitely challenge the ultimate objective of the Council which was established based on the 60/256 resolution on 15th March 2006 which is also harmful to the overall objective of the United Nation as a whole.

As far as the countries such as Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic and Sri Lanka are concerned, it will be possible to remove the negative attitudes among the local communities towards the UN and its affiliated organizations by sensitively and responsibly responding to the past and present conflict situations. It can never be objected that almost every person in the world loves and respects her or/his motherland. Many migrated citizens into other countries tend to come back to their motherlands at some point in their love, similar to children who are approaching their parents. This attachment to the mother country is largely visible in Asian countries such as Sri Lanka.

The general public does not like the unnecessary interferences into the local matters, primarily based on the consent of external countries. It has already been proven that there are many organizations that are spreading a fake ideology based on monetary of other benefits and privileges. Most people who are acting on specific political agendas are destroying the heart of Sri Lanka.

A significant development related to this was the establishment of a dedicated office for inquiring into missing people as per an act enforced in August 2016. Even though it is a responsible act to investigate into missing people, using the same regulations and provisions cause inconvenience in discharging the ordinary duties of the security personnel cannot be accepted. The resolutions in general have made a significant impact on our national security and intelligent authorities, even after satisfying only a few requirements. Hence, one can safely ask “where will the country stop if all the resolutions are implemented?”

The last phase of the 30 years' war in Sri Lanka began when the LTTE blocked “Mavil Aaru” and depriving the innocent people of their right to live. If the security forces did not take action to defeat terrorist attempts such as this, the whole country would be a single cemetery by now. Nobody can forget the shocking attacks such as the brutal assassination of Buddhist monks in “Aranthalava”, “Kebithigollewa” bus bomb, the killing of unarmed civil people at the “Sri Maha Bodhi” which is of utmost importance to the Buddhists in Sri Lanka.

Undoubtedly, it is the prime concern of every one of us to see an environment where we and our loved ones have the opportunity to live without danger. However, it is quite surprising to note that there is a handful of people who are against such an environment. Fear of terror attacks which you feel in your own countries is felt by us in the same way. Even though humans differ in terms of ethnicity, caste, religion, geography or any other factor, the fear of death is common to everyone in the world.

It is essential to pay serious attention to the decisions made with regard to various countries from time to time. Common sense is sufficient to understand the fact that it is fairer to get the support and the contribution of local policy specialists and experts to formulate national policies and regulations.

By the end of March, it could be found out that 30% of the above-mentioned resolutions had been partly implemented while 42% of them were weakly implemented. 4% of the resolutions showed no progress. It should also be emphasized that a country needs to be

given due opportunity to adhere only to the resolutions that are not harmful to the country as a whole by ignoring the ones that might result in negative impacts on the country. Another key action that needs to be taken by the UN is the establishment of a proper mechanism to identify and remove such harmful resolutions. Without such a mechanism, the lives of the people of such countries will be victimized and the consequence will be criticisms against the organization.

It is also significant that the Sinhala community extended the hand of friendship towards the Muslim community when there were conflicts between them and the LTTE. This can be established by quoting a Muslim person who lived in the war-affected area. That statement is included in the report of the commission appointed to investigate into the expulsion of the Muslim community from the North by the LTTE. According to the statement given by Mr. M. S. Isadeen, male Muslims had been conducting a meeting at the Jinna playground in Jaffna at the time the chasing started. In the meantime, the LTTE terrorists had broken into the local Muslim houses and ordered women to leave.

The responded has emotionally reported that the terrorists even took packets of milk powder which were there in the houses for children into their possession. He further states that they had been ordered to leave the area within two hours.

A number of similar statements are included in the same report that this clearly indicates that this was a time when the Muslim community was severely victimized by the LTTE. In such a context the Sri Lankan Army and the government made arrangements to resettle them in the Northern and Eastern provinces, allowing them to recover and continuous usual living styles. It is with sadness that we need to notice the fact that the bulk of Muslim extremists in the country and most of the Muslim politicians have now forgotten such services.

The brutal terror attack on 21st April 2019 killed over 250 innocent people and over 500 people were injured. A large number of children and women were among these figures. Some of the injured people are still undergoing treatments at hospitals.

In the same way, if the criticisms and analysis by foreign parties and agents with regard to the recent attack are done in a manner that does not disturb the ongoing investigations by local security forces and law enforcement, that will inevitably be a very good starting step to eliminate terrorism in the region.

Even though there are many ethnic and religious communities in countries like the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, there are no laws specifically applicable only to selected communities or territories officially allocated to selected groups. It can never be assumed that citizens of any country would prefer the country being separated. Sri Lanka is 60 times smaller than India in geographical terms and the same rule apply to this country as well.

It is also a timely requirement to bring all different laws prevailing in Sri Lanka such as the *Muslim* law, Thesawalamai law, and Kandian law under the same national law. A clear interpretation of the disadvantages of having such different laws can be found in section 364 of the Penal Code of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, having sexual intercourse with a female person under the age of 16 is considered a statutory rape but the Islamic marriage law permits to marry a girl even if she is under the age 16, enabling the sexual intercourse after the marriage. This also points out that this particular Islamic law contradicts with the common law in the country, which is an extremely tragic situation.

All Sri Lankans including Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities should live together in the country keeping in mind the reconciliation they once had in the past. Following new and incompatible living styles definitely damages this reconciliation. Reconciliation is not something that needs to be introduced to the lives of Sri Lankans as the country's history is mainly based on that.

It is an obligation to comply with the laws applicable to the country at all times, irrespective of the ethnic or any other reasons. This is of vital importance to defeat global terrorism by taking national-level actions. In order to defeat terrorism, it is also critical to both empower the security forces and law enforcement and increase public awareness on related matters.

(reference - Kasun Ponnampereuma (LL. B) (Hons.)

Global Srilankan forum excom- GLSF UK, GLSF Australia, GLSF Poland, GLSF UAE, GLSF Ireland, GLSF Canada, GLSF Switzerland, GLSF Russia. NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.