

**United Nations Human Rights Council
24th Regular Session, 9 to 27 September 2013
Agenda Item 10**

ICJ Oral Statement in the General Debate on Item 10 (Technical assistance and capacity-building): Response to the oral update of the High Commissioner on her mission to Sri Lanka and implementation of Council resolution 22/1 on promoting reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka

LACK OF PROGRESS ON ACCOUNTABILITY IN SRI LANKA

25 September 2013

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Mr President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) welcomes the oral update on the situation in Sri Lanka and the High Commissioner's mission. The ICJ is deeply concerned that critical measures on accountability, such as those called for in Council resolution 22/1, are not being adequately implemented. The ICJ also deplores the personal attacks on the High Commissioner's integrity, including by Ministers of the government, made in connection with her visit.

In January, Chief Justice Bandaranayake was impeached in a highly politicized process declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The swift appointment of a former personal legal advisor to the President as replacement constitutes an assault on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary. Meanwhile, Chief Justice Bandaranayake continues to be harassed through legal proceedings that the Bar Association of Sri Lanka calls a 'mockery of justice'.

Without an independent and impartial judiciary in Sri Lanka, there cannot be effective and credible investigations into gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law. Indeed, the Government of Sri Lanka has yet to take concrete steps to properly investigate or bring to justice perpetrators of such violations occurring during the internal armed conflict, especially in its final stages. Progress in the investigation and prosecution of other human rights violations remains unacceptably slow.

More than four years after the armed conflict, hundreds, if not thousands of victims continue to be denied truth, justice and reparations. We look forward to the presentation of a comprehensive report from the High Commissioner at the 25th session and urge the Council to prepare to take action at that time if the Government continues to fail to take concrete steps to ensure justice and accountability for alleged violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law in Sri Lanka.

I thank you.

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