



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST FOUNDATION (IBF)

Geneva Buddhist Vihara

27th Session of the HRC – Agenda Item 2 - HC Country Reports

Delivered by Dr. Chandra Pinnagoda

Mr. President,

Having followed the evolutionary process of the Resolution A/HRC/25/1 on Sri Lanka, International Buddhist Foundation (IBF) notes with concern the growing tendency in this Council to target selected Nations like Sri Lanka to serve political motives of certain Member States, which totally undermines the very objective of this Council. We note that the said Resolution mandates the OHCHR an investigative authority, which many countries in this Council have not agreed to in principle. We like to remind this august Council that it must focus its limited resources to deal with persisting and escalating horrendous situations of violations of human rights that threaten world peace.

The present investigation being carried out by the OHCHR is violating the delicate homegrown peace and reconciliation processes in Sovereign Nations like Sri Lanka by the Council and it is also illegitimate according to the principles of the UN Charter in respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Any move to pursue action on the said Resolution, is unwarranted, vitiates the peace process and above all goes against the basic principles of impartiality and non-selectivity which this Council should be based upon.

Mr. President, the IBF reiterates its support to all stakeholders who are genuinely and relentlessly pursuing paths to establish peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. We hosted a Side Event on the first day of this Session, launching a book Narrative iii about Truth and Accountability-the Last Stages of the War in Sri Lanka, a valuable product of two Sri Lankan civil society organizations, Marga Institute and the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) that elucidates an alternative path that the world community can agree on; firstly, truth established beyond suspicion and secondly, reconciliation fortified with mutual trust and forgiveness.

The co-authors of the Narrative iii seek to fulfill a crucial gap in the information available in the public domain on the ground realities of how the war was fought in Sri Lanka. In their work attention is drawn to the accountability of both UN and a group of Western countries for the failure to engage effectively at the crucial stages of the war when the LTTE terrorist strategy of taking civilians as hostages and human shields, amidst mobile terrorist artillery and comingling cadre, became alarmingly clear. They bring the argument that Sri Lanka's situation presents the international community an extraordinary opportunity to address critical issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in extraordinary situations that arise in conflicts between a state and a non-state actor, with a view of strengthening international humanitarian and human rights law regime.

IBF regrets the exaggerated accounts of religious intolerance being leveled against the people of Sri Lanka, using them as a focus of few isolated incidents of religious and ethnic intolerance which

happened in all parts of the world. It must be remembered that Sri Lanka has for thirty years been at the receiving end of systematic targeting and sacrilege by the LTTE of religious shrines including the Tooth Relic of the Buddha in Kandy, the Sacred Bodhi tree in Anuradhapura and the massacre of 33 novice monks in Aranthalawa as well as ethnic cleansing of Muslims and Sinhalese from the North. It is regrettable that these far more heinous acts of organized violence did not receive any attention in this Council or its preceding Human Rights Commission.

Mr. President,

We request the new high Commissioner and the international community, to allow the ongoing domestic process to continue without hindrance; support it and be patient as establishing peace and reconciliation **inculcating trust** in one's mind goes beyond truth to appease one's mind. In The Buddha's words: *"Trust is one's incomparable Relation"*.

Thank you.