

Check against Delivery

27th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

September 24, 2014

Geneva

Item 2+10: General Debate

Organization: **Pasumai Thaayagam Foundation**

Presenter: Mr. A. Ganesh Kumar, M.L.A

Thank you, Mr. President.

Pasumai Thaayagam wishes to express our sincere gratitude for the OHCHR report on Sri Lanka. We are extremely encouraged that the High Commissioner in his opening statement attached great importance to the investigation on Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka has rejected the resolution and refuses to cooperate with this Council's mandate. Instead, Sri Lanka has embarked on yet another domestic reconciliation process. It is the failure of such domestic processes in the past, driven by deep rooted impunity led this Council to establish an investigation in Sri Lanka.

Five years after the end of armed hostilities, the ground realities are a far cry from what Sri Lanka presented before this Council in its statement on September 8, 2014. Tamil areas in the North and East of Sri Lanka still remain under heavy military occupation – 85% of Sri Lanka's Sinhala military is deployed in Tamil areas and 96% of Tamils live within 5-miles of an army base or checkpoint. As the High Commissioner himself pointed out, there is alarming increase in threats against human rights defenders, victims and witnesses, and there is severe escalation of violence against Tamil people of Muslim and Christian faiths.

When widespread and systematic attacks on the Tamils, because of their ethnic and religious differences are allowed to flourish, those responsible must be held accountable without further delay. Given the lack of cooperation from Sri Lanka, it is the responsibility of this Council to prioritize the implementation of all steps of a comprehensive investigation not only for past abuses but also for the on-going crimes against humanity that are occurring in Sri Lanka today.

In addition, this investigation must address the underlying structural patterns of violations and discrimination against the Tamils, including systems that have led to a comprehensive failure in Sri Lanka to promote and protect human rights for all.

We wish to thank the High Commissioner for the dignity and courage with which the OHCHR continues to undertake and fulfill its obligation, despite significant obstacles, to promote and protect human rights in Sri Lanka and throughout the world.

Thank you Mr. President.