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**Preliminary observations of the Working Group on Enforce
Disappearances at the conclusion of its visit to Sri Lanka (
2015)**

Introduction

A delegation of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances concluded a ten-day official visit to Sri Lanka. The visit took place from 9 to 18 February 2016.

The delegation was composed of the Vice-Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Bernadett Kohler, Mr. Tae-Ung Baik and Mr. Ariel Dulitzky, members of the Working Group. During the visit, the Working Group took place in a historic moment and at a time of great hope and opportunity in the country. The Working Group has received information from the Government, victims, and civil society about enforced disappearances and studied the measures adopted by the State to prevent and address enforced disappearances, including issues related to truth, justice and reparation.

At the outset, the Working Group wishes to thank the Government of Sri Lanka for its invitation to visit the country, and for the efforts made before and during the visit. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to facilitate its smooth undertaking. It welcomes the fact that the meetings requested by the Working Group were accommodated and the openness and disposition of officials. It also appreciates that many authorities have provided the documents requested by the Working Group.

The Working Group also wishes to thank the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Country Team in Sri Lanka, as well as the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, for their support.

During its ten-day mission, the Working Group visited all parts of the island, including Batticaloa, Galle, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Matale, Mullaitivu and Trincomalee. The Working Group met with the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Reforms, Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Interreligious Affairs. It also met: the Chief of the Army Commander; the Chief Justice; the Attorney-General; the Inspector General of Police; the Director of the Terrorism Investigation Division; the Director of the State Intelligence Service; the Vice-Director of the Criminal Investigation Department; the Governors of the Northern and Eastern Provinces; the Chairman of the Rehabilitation of Persons, Properties and Assets Authority; as well as officials from the Office of National Unity and Reconciliation, the Analyst's Department; the Presidential Commission on Missing Persons; a group of civil society including the Speaker; and the Human Rights Commission. The Working Group visited the graves in Matale and Mannar and the memorial for the disappeared in Seeduwa Boosa Detention Center, the Navy Base in Trincomalee - including a former secret detention facility within the base - and the temporary detention facilities on the 4th and 6th floor of the building.

The Working Group met a very high number of relatives of disappeared persons from all parts of the country and also held several meetings with representatives of all communities and civil society including NGOs, human rights defenders and lawyers. The Working Group wishes to thank all the relatives of disappeared persons who courageously shared their testimonies with the Working Group, many for the first time.

The invitation extended by the Government to the Working Group and its increa

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