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UN expert group urges Sri Lanka to seize the moment to fulfil the families of the disappeared

COLOMBO / GENEVA (18 November 2015) – “Sri Lanka has the opportunity to c the rights and legitimate expectations of thousands of families of disappeared,” United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances said t waited too long - the time for action has come.”

“The widespread use of enforced disappearances for many decades has left prof society and a deep sense of mistrust among the relatives,” stressed the Group’s Duhaime, Tae-Ung Baik, and Ariel Dulitzky at the end of an official visit* to the

The experts noted an almost complete lack of accountability and decisive and su search for the truth – in particular the determination of the fate or whereabouts disappeared - as well as the absence of a comprehensive and effective reparati psychological and economic support for the relatives.

“We welcome, however, the commitments made by the new Government of Sri comprehensive measures to ensure truth, justice and reparation for victims, as recurrence of disappearances in the future,” they indicated.

“Finally there is a positive environment to seriously address these issues,” the e encouraging steps such as the official invitation for the Working Group to visit tl excellent cooperation received during the visit and the Government’s increasing Working Group also highlighted the commitments expressed by various authorit to establish a dedicated Office for Missing Persons and to carry out broad consu measures to be taken.

“These promises and commitments must now be followed by concrete efforts ar they emphasized. “This is the only way to regain the trust of victims for past fai rights. The Government will need to adopt bold steps to reach out to and create victims.”

“Sri Lanka must seize this historic opportunity and adopt urgent and profound n rights of the victims as a fundamental step which will help lay the ground for a : process,” they said. “Reconciliation, however - while extremely necessary in Sri achieved at the expense of the rights of the victims.”

The experts expressed support for the recommendation made by the UN High C Human Rights in his recent Human Rights Council report to integrate internation lawyers and investigators into the envisaged judicial mechanism aimed at prose rights and humanitarian law violations - including enforced disappearances.

“The Working Group also supports the establishment of the Office for Missing Pe humanitarian task of searching for the thousands of disappeared in the country, The Working Group noted that this body should act in a non-discriminatory, imp professional manner, adopting a victim-centred approach.

“This Office should look at all enforced disappearances, regardless of the time a occurrence, and regardless of the perpetrator,” the experts said. “The same prin

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