

**United Nations Human Rights Council
46th Regular Session
Item 2**

**Oral Statement of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) in the Interactive
Dialogue on the Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on
Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka**

24 February 2020

International accountability is the only way forward for Sri Lanka

Madam President,

The ICJ welcomes the comprehensive OHCHR report on Sri Lanka.

We share OHCHR's observation that domestic initiatives for accountability have repeatedly failed to produce results, 'more deeply entrenching impunity, and exacerbating victims' distrust in the system.' [[A/HRC/46/20](#), pp. 52]

The ICJ has continuously observed that Sri Lanka's incapacity and unwillingness to pursue accountability for crimes under international law is deep-rooted and longstanding.

The extensive militarization of civilian functions, the reversal of constitutional safeguards, the obstruction of the rare cases of domestic criminal accountability and the deteriorating human rights situation all point to a systemic culture of impunity that will only worsen in the years to come.

Sri Lanka's failure to establish a hybrid accountability mechanism in the five years since the adoption of Resolution 30/1 demonstrates a complete lack of political will to hold perpetrators accountable. The rights of the victims of human rights violations cannot be ignored any longer.

The ICJ endorses all of OHCHR's recommendations, particularly the call for international and external accountability processes, whether before the ICC or through the exercise of universal jurisdiction by other States.

We further call for enhanced monitoring and reporting on the ground situation and for the establishment of a mechanism for the collection and preservation of evidence for future prosecution.

Madam High Commissioner, how can OHCHR ensure that the victims' call for accountability is effectively fulfilled?

I thank you.

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