



Call for a Vote and Explanation of Vote before the Vote by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan during the consideration of Resolution on “Promoting Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka”

23 March 2021

Madam President,

Pakistan has always advocated dialogue and engagement as preferred means to advance respect for and to resolve concerns around human rights. Consent of and cooperation with the country concerned are essential ingredients in support of national efforts to promote compliance with human rights obligations.

We appreciate Sri Lanka's constructive engagement throughout the informal consultations on draft resolution L.1/Rev.1.

The Sri Lankan delegation made constructive proposals to align the draft text with its national action plan on reconciliation and accountability, including through empowerment of Commission of Inquiry as well as Offices on Missing Persons and Reparations. We regret rejection of these proposals. Ignoring these suggestions were a missed opportunity to secure national ownership of the draft resolution in line with aspirations of the Sri Lankan people.

Madam President,

During the course of informal consultations, Sri Lanka and a number of other delegations had explained that operative paras 5 & 6 of the draft text lacked balance, proportionality and consistency. For example, preambular paras 4 & 11 of the text reaffirm the sovereignty of Sri Lanka and welcome its continued engagement with the UN and its human rights mechanisms. However, these provisions are at complete variance with the legally untenable external accountability mechanism. We note that such provisions are neither grounded in nor are drawn from the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the founding UNGA resolution 60/251, and the IB package.

Similarly, operative para 7 seeks to expand the scope and the context of 12 years long Sri Lanka's engagement with the Council. We note that the original process that was rooted in “promoting reconciliation and accountability” in the context of civil war in 2009 is now incompatible with the approach and contents of the resolution before the Council.

Madam President,

Every country, including the sponsors of this resolution, have human rights challenges, on which there may be diversity of views, interpretations and solutions depending upon

national context and circumstances. Having said that, we have seen media reports related to concerns over burials during the COVID pandemic. We appreciate the steps taken by the Sri Lankan government to address these concerns. We encourage Sri Lanka to continue such steps to preserve the pluralistic fabric of the society where people of different faiths have been living in harmony for centuries.

Madam President,

The estimated PBIs of 2.8 million US dollars for the annual implementation of OP6 also raise serious questions about the equitable utilization of regular budget, especially when the OHCHR and the Council are facing serious liquidity crisis. Deployment of 13 posts in OHCHR on Sri Lanka, nearly the size of a Branch, can hardly be justified when OHCHR is faced with serious financial crunch.

We request the OHCHR for a breakdown of PBIs and share information on how the financial resources would be arranged for this mandate without compromising other mandated activities from the regular budget. Resort to extra-budgetary resources or voluntary contributions would undermine the transparency, impartiality and credibility of the whole process.

Madam President,

Draft resolution L.1/Rev.1 also fails to acknowledge the long struggle of the Sri Lankan people and government against LTTE, an internationally recognized terrorist organization. The horrendous terrorist activities by LTTE, aided, abetted and financed externally, had resulted in the loss of innocent lives and depriving the people of Sri Lanka of their basic rights and freedoms. The draft resolution fails to condemn these crimes unequivocally and shies away from a call for accountability of the LTTE and its sponsors and financiers. Unfortunately, the draft resolution appears to rekindle the sufferings rather than healing the wounds of the people of Sri Lanka.

Madam President,

In view of the reasons highlighted above, Pakistan's delegation would call the resolution in L.1/Rev.1 to vote and would vote against it.

I thank you.