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Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Note verbale dated 6 August 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva encloses herewith the comments of the Government of Sri Lanka on the advance version of the comprehensive report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Sri Lanka (A/HRC/60/21) (see annex).

The Permanent Mission kindly requests the Office of the High Commissioner to circulate the present note verbale and the annex thereto* as a document of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 2.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

Annex to the note verbale dated 6 August 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

GoSL comments on the Advance Copy of the Comprehensive Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Situation of Human Rights in Sri Lanka (A/HRC/60/21)

This document provides the comments of the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) on the advance copy of the Report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Sri Lanka (A/HRC/60/21) pursuant to Resolution 57/1.

At the outset, it is recalled that Sri Lanka did not accept Resolution 57/1 which inter alia extended the mandate of the Sri Lanka Accountability Project (SLAP). Sri Lanka has continuously objected to the SLAP as it constitutes an external initiative that is counter-productive to the ongoing domestic reconciliation processes.

Notwithstanding and without prejudice to the above position, these comments are provided by the GoSL in line with the spirit of constructive and open engagement that Sri Lanka continues with the HRC and the High Commissioner's Office as well as with the regular human rights mechanisms of the HRC such as the UPR process, Special Procedure Mandate Holders, and the Treaty Bodies. The most recent manifestation of this engagement, including at the highest levels, was the visit undertaken by the High Commissioner to Sri Lanka a month ago.

The GoSL, therefore, requests that the comments made herein be reflected in the final version of the report of the High Commissioner, in the interest of placing an accurate and balanced account of the situation in Sri Lanka before the members and observers of the Council. This would accord with the founding principles of the HRC, premised on universality, impartiality, objectivity, and non-selectivity. This would be also a manifestation of continuation of the spirit of constructive engagement referred to above.

General observations

5. As mentioned above, H.E. Volker Türk, High Commissioner for Human Rights undertook a visit to Sri Lanka from 23-26 June 2025 and engaged with representatives of all organs of the Government and a wide spectrum of society on matters relating to human rights and reconciliation.

6. The High Commissioner had meetings with Government stakeholders at the highest political level including H.E. the President, the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Speaker, the Hon. Chief Justice, the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment, and Tourism, the Hon. Minister of Justice and National Integration, the Hon. Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Attorney General, and the Hon. Deputy Minister of Defence, following which he noted that he observed "*a genuine openness to address complex issues*".¹ He also met the heads of the independent institutions dealing with reconciliation: the Office on Missing Persons (OMP); Office for Reparations (OR); and Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR). The High Commissioner met with a wide spectrum of civil society, and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka as well.

7. The Government reiterated to the High Commissioner its sincere commitment to towards continued advancement of human rights and briefed on the action already taken and those envisaged inter alia including further strengthening of reconciliation mechanisms, repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act, further enhancement of anticorruption initiatives, amending the Online Safety Act and initiating new laws to advance the rights of persons with

¹ Media Statement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the conclusion of his visit to Sri Lanka- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/06/turk-ends-mission-sri-lanka>.

disabilities, and poverty alleviation, the Clean Sri Lanka program and confidence building measures.

8. Following the visit the High Commissioner observed that he witnessed “*a real momentum of change*”² across all segments of Sri Lankan society. He also noted the Government’s plans on promoting ethical governance, human rights and national unity. The High Commissioner said that he was encouraged by the Government’s measures to address corruption and mismanagement and hoped that the momentum would continue. Noting that the discussions had showed genuine openness to address issues, the High Commissioner stated that “*Sri Lanka can become an example of peaceful co-existence, of understanding the other, of tolerance, of recognition of differences, while at the same time embracing diversity and seeing it as richness and as a strength*”³.

9. As acknowledged by the High Commissioner following his visit⁴, the GoSL is confident that its commitment towards advancing reconciliation, rule of law and human rights has already translated into concrete action.

10. The GoSL requests that the constructive discussions undertaken during the visit, clarifications provided and the optimism about Sri Lanka’s current trajectory that the High Commissioner expressed during and at the conclusion of the visit be adequately reflected in the report. Such an approach will help to accurately depict the current situation in the country and will encourage the transformative processes that the present Government has initiated towards advancing the rights and wellbeing of all Sri Lankans.

11. The GoSL requests that the High Commissioner recognises, in particular, of the significant progress made by the Government within a short period of 10 months since assuming office, some highlights of which are given below:

A government representing the will of all communities: The result of the Parliamentary election held in November 2024 reflected a collective and unified voice from people of all regions of the country – North, South, East, West – and of all ethnicities and religions, supporting, with an overwhelming mandate, the government’s vision for a positive transformation and rejection of divisive politics.

An inclusive legislature: In November 2024, Sri Lanka formed one of the most inclusive Parliaments in its history including a record number of women and representatives of different communities. Two female members from the Malaiyahar community and a visually impaired person were elected as MPs for the first time.

III. Economic empowerment: Increased allocations were made by the 2025 Budget for the welfare and economic empowerment including historic allocations for health and education. Special empowerment measures were introduced for women, children including orphaned, disabled and autistic children, estate sector population, students, persons with disabilities and people living in conflict affected or under-developed areas of the country.

IV. Development of the Northern and Eastern Provinces: Allocations were made to develop infrastructure, support livelihoods and promote industries in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The 2025 budget also allocated Rs.1,500 million to meet the needs of resettlement, expedite the housing programme and provide essential relief to the families.

V. Confidence building measures: In November 2024, a number of roads in the Northern province including the Palali- Achchuveli main road were opened for public use after several decades. The President made an open invitation to Tamil-speaking youth to be part of Sri Lanka’s police service. The 2025 budget made significant allocations to upgrade the libraries throughout the country, including the historical Jaffna library which is a symbol of education and enlightenment for the Tamil community.

VI. The “Clean Sri Lanka” program: On the first day of 2025, the President launched the Clean Sri Lanka program, seeking to promote a new political culture and commitment to

² Media Statement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the conclusion of his visit to Sri Lanka- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/06/turk-ends-mission-sri-lanka>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

moral and ethical governance in the country. All government institutions have devised and are in the process of implementing coordinated action plans towards this end.

VII. Anti-corruption: New legislation was brought in to strengthen the anti-corruption drive. Independent investigations and prosecution were undertaken by authorities regarding alleged perpetrators of corruption, resulting in several landmark convictions.

VIII. Upholding people's franchise: In May 2025, the Government made arrangements to hold the Local Government elections which were scheduled for 2022. The Government plans to hold Provincial Council elections once the delimitation process is completed.

IX. Strengthening of domestic reconciliation processes:

(a) The Government continues to strengthen the domestic reconciliation mechanisms – the Office on Missing Persons (OMP), Office for Reparations, and Office of National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) – by guaranteeing their independence and making the necessary financial and human resource allocations. The OMP is working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in its work. Sri Lanka is open to receiving proposals on technical assistance as conveyed to the High Commissioner during his visit.

(b) A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) will be established following the ongoing process of considering the draft law that already exists in this regard and consulting stakeholders on the same.

(c) An independent public prosecutor's office will be established to ensure accountability. A committee approved by the Cabinet of Ministers is already discussing the establishment of this office. On 4 August 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers decided to further expand the composition of the Committee with more experts of the subject and to call for the views of the general public as well as the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka on the subject.

(d) Formulation of a National Reconciliation Action Plan: In August 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the formulation of an Action Plan on National Reconciliation by Sri Lanka's Office for National Unity and Reconciliation with the support of the United Nations Country Office in Sri Lanka. The objective is to promote inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue, strengthen institutional mechanisms and trust building towards ultimate national reconciliation.

(a) Repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act: The Government expects to gazette a new counter terrorism legislation repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) by September 2025. The Cabinet appointed Committee in this regard continues its deliberations towards finalising a draft counter terrorism legislation that aligns with international standards and best practices

(b) Amending the Online Safety Act – A Committee appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers is in the process of formulating amendments to the OSA. The Committee expects to consider views of all stakeholders and the general public in finalising the proposed amendments. The draft amendment Bill will be gazetted once this process is completed.

(c) New Disability Rights Bill – A Bill introducing a rights-centred approach to persons with disabilities and an institutional framework that better promotes their rights and wellbeing is expected to be presented to the Parliament soon. The Bill is being finalised in consultation with all stakeholders including civil society.

(d) Strengthened framework for promotion and protection of women's rights: Following Sri Lanka's constructive engagement with the UN Committee on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in February 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers recently decided to set up an inter-ministerial mechanism to take follow up action on recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee and to ensure better coordination among agencies in this exercise. The mechanism consists of a high-level committee, a senior officials' committee and a coordination unit.

12. As mentioned, the above progress has been achieved since September 2024. This progress builds on the incremental post-conflict progress achieved by Sri Lanka over the

years including restoration of peace and security and normal civilian and economic life in the former conflict affected areas, the rehabilitation of child soldiers and ex-combatants, resettlements of IDPs, and demining enabling the displaced to return to their lands. Many of the rights and freedoms that had been adversely affected during the conflict, due to LTTE activities, such as the freedom to vote, freedom of opinion and expression as well as the freedom of movement, have now been fully restored.

13. Sri Lanka therefore calls upon the Council and the High Commissioner's Office to afford the time and space required to realise these objectives through domestic processes that have and will be put in place in the near future.

The GoSL comments on certain specific paragraphs of the advance report are set out in the following sections.

Comments on specific paragraphs

Paragraph 4

14. The dates of the visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should be corrected as "from 23-26 June 2025". Among the list of dignitaries that the High Commissioner met during his visit, it is requested to reflect in the report that he also met the Hon. Speaker, the Hon Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment, and Tourism, the Hon. Minister of Justice and National Integration, the Hon. Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs, the Hon. Attorney General and the Hon. Deputy Minister of Defence.

15. The institutions dealing with reconciliation may be mentioned by name as follows: Office on Missing Persons (OMP), Office for Reparations (OR), and Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR).

Paragraph 5

16. The name of H.E. the President should be corrected as "Anura Kumara Disanayaka".

17. With regards to the reference made to the elections, the following may be noted:

Sri Lanka's longstanding democratic tradition was manifested by the peaceful Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2024 where the incumbent Government received a historic majority including a clear endorsement from the people of the Northern and Eastern Provinces which translates into a two thirds majority. The results of the elections, which were free, fair and peaceful, reflected the collective and unified voice of all communities in all parts of the country. Democratic ideals of Sri Lanka is further manifested by the free and fair Local Government elections conducted in May 2025. The Government plans to hold Provincial Council elections once the delimitation process is completed.

Paragraph 6

18. With regards to the reference made to the speeches delivered by the H.E. the President, the following may be noted:

On 19 May 2025, addressing the event to mark the sixteenth year of the conclusion of the war he highlighted that *"this commemoration is not merely a remembrance of the war's conclusion, but also a pledge to unite all communities, Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher and Malay, in building a nation rooted in brotherhood and harmony, rather than allowing divisions to reignite."*⁵ This has been acknowledged by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in his remarks to the media following his visit to Sri Lanka as follows: *"I have followed and been encouraged by the speeches of the President over the past few months in which he has publicly recognised the shared pain and grief of individuals from all communities"*⁶.

Paragraph 7

⁵ <https://pmd.gov.lk/news/war-is-a-tragedy-we-will-not-allow-such-a-tragedy-to-occur-again-in-our-country/>.

⁶ Media Statement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the conclusion of his visit to Sri Lanka- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/06/turk-ends-mission-sri-lanka>.

19. Please note the following factual update:

The Poverty rate has declined to 19.2% in 2025, from 24.5% in 2024⁷. The household food insecurity rates improved from 16% in 2024 to 11.3% in 2025⁸.

Paragraph 8

20. Please note the following factual update:

Focused interventions led to a 28% reduction in reported food insecurity in the estate sector. According to data from the Family Health Bureau (FHB) – National Nutrition Surveillance Reports, Q1–Q2 2025, the underweight prevalence among children under 5 years has decreased from 17.0% in 2024 to 14.6% in 2025.

The same report notes that stunting rates among children under 5 have improved from 10.5% in 2024 to 9.2% in 2025, marking a reversal of the previous upward trend documented in the OHCHR report (which indicated an increase from 7.4% in 2021 to 10.5% in 2024).

Paragraph 9

21. The economic crisis of 2022 affected all communities and ethnicities throughout the country and it is acknowledged that the crisis exacerbated the challenges faced by already vulnerable segments of the population. Ameliorating the standards of living of and land and labour rights of plantation sector employees from all ethnic communities is a priority for the Government. The election of two female members of the Malaiyahaar community to the national legislature for the first time in history is symbolic of this commitment. Over the past years, Sri Lanka has taken the necessary legislative steps to grant citizenship to members of the community who remained stateless after being recruited by British colonial rulers to work in Sri Lanka's tea plantations. These efforts have been welcomed by the UNHCR and Sri Lanka's experience in this regard is touted as a best practice by the UN in dealing with statelessness. Today, they are members of the Sri Lankan citizenry forming the backbone⁹ of one of the main economic sectors of the country.

22. The Government will continue with efforts to advance the rights of the plantation sector community and in furtherance of this goal, the Parliament enacted National Minimum Wage of Workers (Amendment) Act, No. 11 of 2025, Budgetary Relief Allowance of Workers (Amendment) Act, No. 9 of 2025 were enacted in July 2025.

Paragraph 10

23. It may be noted that the personal income tax free threshold has been raised from LKR 1,200,000 to LKR 1,800,000 while revising tax rates applicable on the taxable income of an individual.

Paragraph 11

24. The reference to 'public debt' should be amended as 'government debt'.

Paragraph 12

25. With regard to the reference to 'Sri Lanka's IMF programme sets an indicative floor target of 0.7 per cent of GDP for social safety net spending', it may be noted that the indicative target for social spending was met in end-March 2025.

26. It is requested that the following section be deleted from the report as it is factually incorrect in its entirety:

⁷ The national poverty rate declined to 19.2% in 2025, from 24.5% in 2024, as per the Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) – Annual Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), Mid-Year Update 2025.

⁸ The World Food Programme (WFP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, conducted a nationwide Food Security and Nutrition Assessment in May 2025, which estimated that 11.3% of households are food insecure, showing improvement from the 16% reported in 2024.

⁹ <https://www.unhcr.org/news/news/unhcr-applauds-sri-lankas-move-recognise-stateless-tamils>.

“,a contraction in coverage is however, planned, with up to 250,000 families losing access to support, raising concerns over adequacy and targeting of social protection...”

27. In this regard, the GoSL emphasises that no contraction of the coverage of the Aswesuma program is planned. Aswesuma is an empowerment program extended to vulnerable individuals until they reach the capacity to support themselves economically. Accordingly, beneficiaries periodically graduate out of the program after reaching a level of economic empowerment and support is thereafter provided to new deserving beneficiaries. A transitional beneficiary group was initially included in the Aswesuma beneficiary categories to support families affected by the economic crisis. Originally, assistance to this group was scheduled to end on December 31, 2023. However, the government extended this support twice—first until December 31, 2024, and then again until April 30, 2025. Although Aswesuma payments for the transitional group concluded on April 30, 2025, elderly individuals within this group will continue to receive payments under the elderly payment scheme until December 31, 2025. This was based on the eligibility of their earnings.

28. Additionally, in Phase II of the Aswesuma program, 815,000 new families were identified as beneficiaries, and so far, 285,000 families have been selected to receive benefits. Payments to these newly selected families are expected to commence from August 2025. Therefore, contrary to what is stated in the High Commissioner’s report, the Aswesuma programme has been expanded enabling more beneficiaries to access the Social Safety net.

Paragraph 13

29. With reference to the statement below, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) wishes to offer the following observation:

“Sri Lanka is expected to make external debt repayments close to 30 per cent of Government revenue over the next decade, until 2033.”

This statement is vague and speculative while it appears to have been taken from an unofficial source, without being substantiated. Therefore, it is requested that this statement be deleted.

Paragraph 15

30. The Government expects to gazette a new counter terrorism legislation repealing the existing Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) by September 2025. An inter-ministerial committee chaired by a senior President’s Counsel has been appointed with Cabinet approval for this purpose and discussions continue. The Committee includes officials representing the Attorney General’s Department, Department of Legal Draftsman, Ministry of Justice and National Integration, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism, the Police Department and representatives of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka. The objective is to introduce an effective legislation that aligns with international standards on countering terrorism while upholding human rights. Comments from the public for the proposed law have been called by paper advertisement, social media and the official websites.

Paragraph 16

31. In May 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a joint proposal by the Ministries of Health and Mass Media, Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs, and Justice and National Integration to appoint a multi-sectoral committee to amend the Online Safety Act. This Committee will submit proposals for amendments to the Bill, incorporating both already identified proposed amendments and those emerging from ongoing public consultations.

Paragraph 18

32. A policy directive has been obtained from the Cabinet of Ministers regarding the proposed amendments to the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA). The Cabinet of Ministers has highlighted the necessity for further consultations and the Ministry of Justice and National Integration will obtain the views and comments of the general public for the improvement of the said Act. In addition, the advisory committee to reform the MMDA will be reconvened.

Paragraph 20

33. On torture and ill-treatment and custodial deaths, the GoSL reiterates that it maintains a zero tolerance policy on such acts and remains committed to bringing perpetrators to justice. Strict instructions have been issued to law enforcement agencies in this regard and the Sri Lankan judiciary continues to provide redress to victims of such acts.

34. The Police has issued two circulars in 2015 (Circular No. 2539/15) and 2023 (Circular No. 2747/2023) on preventing custodial and encounter deaths. These circulars are included in the training and the curriculum of the National Police Academy.

35. In addition, on 2025.05.21, the IGP has circulated among all police stations the General Guidelines and Recommendations No. 1 of 2025 to Sri Lanka Police on preventing custodial and encounter deaths issued by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka.

Paragraph 21

36. With regard to the reference made to alleged incidents of arrests and detention in relation to memorialization and protests, the following observations are made:

As acknowledged by the High Commissioner¹⁰, the Government has guaranteed that people in any part of the country are able to memorialise loved ones without any hindrance. Memorialisation has also been recognized in the Office for Reparations Act as a form of individual or collective reparation. There are no restrictions whatsoever for family members to memorialise loved-ones. The only restriction placed by law in this regard is that such acts should not amount to glorification of a proscribed terrorist organisation. This year (2025), many events to commemorate those who have lost their lives during the conflict were held all over the country including in the North and the East.

In addition, it may be noted that the Inspector General of Police has issued instructions whereby there is a de-facto moratorium on arrests being made under the PTA. Law enforcement officials have been instructed to follow due process in the conduct of investigations under the PTA and to use this legislation only in instances of extreme necessity. (The Police circular on PTA related arrests (RTM 540/CRTM 364) was issued on 2022.05.23.)

Paragraphs 23 and 24:

37. With regard to the Paragraphs 23 and 24, the following update may be considered:

Regarding the draft Bill referred to in paragraph 23, the National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organizations has held consultations with the National Collective of CSOs and NGOs which represents more than 400 NGOs operating all over the country. So far, six discussion rounds have been conducted to get their feedback on the new law. A draft of the new law was shared with the National Collective and their observations received in 2024. On 11 June 2025, a meeting chaired by the Deputy Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs was held with the NGO Collective to receive their views on the final draft bill and a time period of three months was given for further observations.

Paragraph 25 and 26

38. With regard to **allegations of intimidation/harassment of human rights defenders**, it is emphasized that the Government remains committed to ensuring a free civil society space and that complaints received on alleged attacks against human rights defenders and civil society are duly investigated.

39. All parties alleged to have experienced harassment can submit their complaints to different national mechanisms that have the competence and jurisdiction to receive and investigate such complaints. These include law enforcement authorities as well as independent institutions such as the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka and the National Police Commission.

¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/06/turk-ends-mission-sri-lanka>.

40. In addition, individuals can also file Fundamental Rights (FR) applications, as these fall within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. This provides an additional legal avenue for those seeking redress for violations related to human rights.

41. Assistance To And Protection Of Victims Of Crime And Witnesses Act No. 10 of 2023, which prioritizes assistance to and protection of victims of crime and witnesses, was passed by Parliament as an update to the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of *Crime and Witnesses Act, No. 4* of 2015. This revised Act has been enacted with effect from 15th September 2023.

42. Furthermore, as a proactive step, Sri Lanka Police has recently circulated a Message to all police stations, instructing compliance with the guidelines of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka with regard to the human rights defenders, reflecting a continued commitment to uphold human rights standards and providing institutional safeguards against reprisals.

Paragraph 27

43. Since taking office, the Government has taken steps to reopen several roads in the Northern Province, as outlined below:

- (i) Oddapuram to Wasavilan stretch of Achchuveli - Arali Road is opened from 01.11.2024
- (ii) Palalai- Jaffna Road (AB 18) has been opened for the use of civilians from 10.04.2025
- (iii) Wasavilan (Tyre Junction) to T Junction Road is opened on 10.04.2025
- (iv) Road towards the Jinnapuram-Kokilai road in Trincomalee on 10.04.2025

Paragraph 28

44. It may be noted that delays in land release are occasioned by the need to verify the rightful owner pursuant to a due inquiry according to law, which requires careful scrutiny of the claims of multiple claimants.

Paragraph 29

45. Gazette notification No. 2430 dated 28 March 2025 was issued with the intention of ascertaining the rightful owners of the lands, as per the relevant laws and regulations. The Cabinet of Ministers by the decision 23 June 2025 had decided to recall the said Gazette.

46. It may be recalled that during the High Commissioner's debriefing with the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs on 26 June 2025), it was informed that the Cabinet of Ministers has already taken a decision to recall the said Gazette.

Paragraph 30

47. The Government is committed to ensuring that any person alleged to have committed any unlawful act is investigated, prosecuted and brought before courts through an independent national process, irrespective of their societal standing, background or any other ground, as reflected in H.E. the President in his statements as well as the statement of Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the HRC in March 2025.

48. It is further brought to the attention that the Independence of the judiciary has been manifested in the several judgements in the recent past. In this context recent judgments of the Supreme Court.

At the time of sharing these responses of the GoSL, the Parliament of Sri Lanka has adopted a motion presented to remove former Inspector General of Police Deshabandu Tennakoon from office, based on the findings of a Committee of Inquiry that investigated allegations of gross abuse of power against suspended IGP Tennakoon found him guilty of all charges brought against him. On 23 July 2025, the Supreme Court declared that then President Ranil Wickremesinghe had violated fundamental rights by ordering the military to disperse protesters on 17 July, 2022, from Galle Face, in terms of the Emergency Regulations under the Public Security Act. On 24 July 2025, the Supreme Court, in a landmark ruling, directed the owning and operating companies of the MV X-Press Pearl vessel to pay USD 1 billion as compensation for the environmental and economic damage caused by the 2021 maritime

disaster. Several high profile figures have been either summoned or arrested, and judicial processes are ongoing, demonstrating clear manifestation of the policy of the present government to address such situations.

49. Further investigations continue to be undertaken into the Easter Sunday attacks. In July 2025, the National Police Commission officially terminated the service of former Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police (SDIG) Nilantha Jayawardena, following a disciplinary inquiry related to the 2019 attacks. In 2023, the Supreme Court found that former President Maithripala Sirisena, former Defence Secretary Hemasiri Fernando, former IGP Pujith Jayasundara, former National Intelligence Chief Sisira Mendis and former Chief of State Intelligence Nilantha Jayawardena have violated fundamental rights by failing to take action to prevent the Easter Sunday attacks and ordered them to pay compensation to the victims of the attacks cumulatively amounting to over Rs. 300 million. Judicial processes in respect of the disappearance of Eknaligoda continues as do the investigations, under the judicial oversight into the matters pertaining to the deaths of Lasantha Wickramathunga and Waseem Thajudeen.

50. In view of the above, the GoSL disagrees with the statement in the report that *“impunity remains entrenched, and structural conditions that led to past violations persist”*.

The GoSL is of the view that during the short period since its assumption of office, decisive action on justice and rule of law has been taken as outlined above, demonstrating Sri Lanka’s commitment and capacity to carry out credible and independent national processes to justice for rights violations.

Paragraph 31

51. It is requested to delete the reference to ‘mistrust among affected communities’ with regard to the OMP, as has been clearly demonstrated, public confidence in the OMP continues to grow as has been clearly demonstrated and the ground reality reflects a contrary position.

Paragraph 32

52. The statement made by the Hon. Prime Minister appears to be sourced from a website and not from the official record. The OHCHR is urged to pursue credible and official sources of information in its reports. The Hon. Prime Minister has emphasized the commitment of the GoSL to empower and further strengthen these domestic mechanisms dealing with reconciliation and it is a further reiteration of the GoSL position.

The institutional independence of the OMP has been guaranteed by the OMP Act whereby members of the Office are based on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council which consists of a wide spectrum of representatives covering both the government and the opposition as well as members of the civil society and academia. The Government does not in any manner attempt to interfere in the work of the Office and continues to strengthen resource allocations to the office as explained in Sri Lanka’s response to the OHCHR questionnaire.

Paragraph 33

53. GOSL notes the factual inaccuracies related to references made to “mass graves” and the locations under reference in respect thereof.

54. With regard to the reference made to OMP’s collaboration with the ICRC and the reference to the ‘serious concerns remain relating to the preservation and exhumation of mass graves, the lack of forensic capacity...’, the following may be noted:

In the context of forensic capacity building for identifying missing persons, the OMP has received technical support from the ICRC. This assistance aims to enhance the expertise of the medicolegal community, strengthen forensic methodologies, and contribute to policy discussions on forensic related issues. By fostering professional and dignified management of human remains in cases of armed conflict, natural disasters, or migration, this collaboration ensures more effective identification and documentation of missing persons.

In Chemmani, investigations are being carried out under judicial oversight. As may be recalled, the High Commissioner for Human Rights also visited the Chemmani site during his visit under an order given by the Jaffna Magistrate Court.

Pursuant to its authority under section 12(d) of the Act, the OMP has the mandate to apply to the appropriate Magistrate Court having the territorial jurisdiction, for an order of Court to carry out an excavation and/or exhumation of suspected grave sites, and to act as an observer at such excavation or exhumation, and at other proceedings, pursuant to the same. Accordingly, the OMP has observed investigations ensuring the preservation, exhumation, and identification of remains according to international standards. For this, the OMP has developed guidelines on searching, case management, and tracing.

Therefore, there is no basis for raising serious concerns regarding the preservation and exhumation of mass graves.

Paragraph 40

55. The name of H.E. the President should be corrected as ‘Anura Kumara Disanayaka’

Paragraph 42

56. Paragraph 42 refers to ‘significant underreporting’ which is prejudicial and is not accurate as the number of Tamil speaking police officers appointed to the Northern and Eastern provinces has increased.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

57. The GoSL notes the opportunity that the High Commissioner has identified with regard to Sri Lanka to “to implement transformative reforms¹¹”. The Government urges the OHCHR and the HRC to afford the space that is required to make use of this opportunity and advance the rights and wellbeing of all Sri Lankans. In this regard, Sri Lanka observes that external initiatives will only serve as hindrances to the ongoing national efforts and serve to polarise the population. The GoSL does not agree with the conclusions and recommendations in the report with regard to international action.

58. The Government has the mandate to and is firmly and sincerely committed to working towards a country that respects and celebrates the diversity of its people with no division or discrimination based on race, religion, class and caste. The Government is resolved not to leave room for a resurgence of racism or extremism in Sri Lanka. As Sri Lanka moves forward on this path through its domestic processes, the understanding, encouragement and support of the international community is welcomed and appreciated.

¹¹ Paragraph 57 in the A/HRC/60/21- Advanced report of the High Commissioner.