

34 th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Clustered Interactive Dialogue with SR on Truth and Justice and SR on Freedom of Religion and Belief

Geneva - 6th March 2017

Thank you Mr. President,

Franciscans International, Dominican for Justice and Peace, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd welcome the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Truth and Justice.

Based on field visit we undertook to different parts of Sri Lanka earlier this year and communication with our partners there, we were disappointed to note the very limited progress the government had made in relation to transitional justice commitments made through UN Human Rights Council resolution 30/1 in October 2015.

We visited and heard the deep frustration of communities whose traditional villages are still occupied, such as in Mullikulam and Kepapulavu, in the Northern Province. Though some parts of lands have been released in previous two years and earlier this month due to protests, other communities are desperately waiting for the military to leave and allow them to go back to their homes, lands, livelihoods and lifestyle. Even the people who were resettled in areas like Valalai and Mavittapuram of the Vallikamam North are living amidst military camps and have not been provided adequate facilities and reparations for up to quarter century of military occupation and use of their lands and houses.

Mr President,

During our field visit to the North, we also saw and repeatedly heard of heavy military presence, and military's engagement in range of civilian activities such as shops, restaurants, hotels, tourism, farms, pre-schools etc. When we visited people's peaceful protests, we observed that we and people protesting were subjected to surveillance by the Sri Lankan military.

We urge the Sri Lankan government to commit to a time bound and urgent plan to end the military's surveillance and involvement in civilian and economic activities. Government should also commit to an urgent time bound plan to resettle displaced people back to their own lands, and offer adequate infrastructure facilities as well as reparation for use of their lands, houses and other resources by the military. Till then, reconciliation will remain elusive.

I thank you.

Joint Oral Statement delivered by

Franciscans International

Co-signed by

Dominicans for Justice and Peace : Order of Preachers

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd