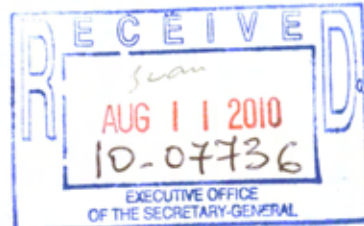




Sri Lanka

# DR. JAYALATH JAYAWARDENA

MBBS, FICS, MD  
Member of Parliament  
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ACTION Mr. Dias  
COPY NH

Mr Ban-Ki Moon

9.6.2010

Secretary General of the United Nations

Office of the United Nations

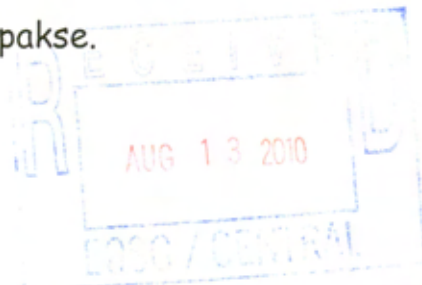
New York, USA

Dear Secretary General,

EXPRESSION OF GRAVE CONCERN AND PROTEST AGAINST  
THE IMMORAL AND UNETHICAL ACTION BY A SRI LANKAN CABINET  
MINISTER AGAINST THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL

Greetings from Sri Lanka !

I would like to express my grave concern and protest against the unethical and immoral hunger fast led by Mr Wimal Weerawansa, M P, Minister of Housing and Construction, who is a Member of the Cabinet of Ministers of President Mahinda Rajapakse's Government and the leader of the National Freedom Front which is a political party of the ruling UNF political alliance headed by President Mahinda Rajapakse.



Mr Wimal Weerawansa has started a protest just opposite the UN Resident Representative's compound in Colombo 7, Sri Lanka demanding that Mr Ban-Ki Moon, Secretary General of the UN should withdraw his decision to appoint a Panel of Experts to advise him on the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka. This Committee has already been established and announced both locally and internationally.

A crowd led by Mr Wimal Weerawansa started this protest campaign even without listening to the Police Officers who had gathered at the place to maintain law and order. The crowd tried to obstruct the UN Officials from leaving the UN compound and also they tried to enter the UN compound complex.

The Government of Sri Lanka had to send its Secretary of External Affairs, Mr Romesh Jayasinghe to the UN complex and got him to request the protestors not to enter the UN compound complex and to allow UN Officials to move out of the UN Office. Mr Romesh Jayasinghe had after much effort was able to get the UN Officials who were working at the UN Office in Colombo, Sri Lanka to leave the Office safely.

The UN Office in Colombo is functioning with a limited number of staff as the protestors have started a hunger fast just opposite the entrance gate of the UN Office Complex.

Minister Wimal Weerawansa has been making several shocking statements against the UN Secretary General. Even though the Government of Sri Lanka maintains the fact that the UN Officials working in Sri Lanka were not harmed physically, I strongly feel that both the local and international UN staff serving in the UN complex in Colombo are being mentally tortured and that they are under severe mental stress because of this unethical and immoral protest led by a powerful Minister of the present government of Sri Lanka.

The UN compound complex is situated in a high security zone in the heart of Colombo next to the Sri Lanka Air Force Office and close to the official residences of the Secretary of Defence, Governor of the Central Bank and residences of the Prime Minister and several other senior Ministers of the Government of Sri Lanka.

The Hon Ranil Wickremesinghe who is the leader of the Opposition and the former Prime Minister, who is also the leader of the United National Party to which I belong , has made a statement in Parliament as well as to the media about this unethical act by a powerful Government Minister, I am herewith attaching copies of some of the relevant articles which appeared in the Sri Lankan media.

I too as a former Minister and a senior Parliamentarian of the Opposition and the Assistant Secretary of the United National Party in



charge of Relief and Human Rights had a Press Conference in Colombo to express my protest and concern over this unethical act.

I am sure that by now the Headquarters of the UN must have received all this information from the Resident Representative of the UN in Sri Lanka Mr Neil Buhne. I have met Mr Neil Buhne, the UN Resident Representative in Sri Lanka in Parliament in person, and extended my solidarity to him and also expressed my concern over this incident.

I met Prof. G. L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka and expressed my concern to him as well. He informed me that according to the Constitution of Sri Lanka, any citizen could organize any protest within the democratic principles and he also told me that the UN Officials were allowed to leave the UN compound unharmed by the protestors, and that also none of the UN Officials were physically harmed.

He informed me that there are two sides of the coin - that the government is obliged to protect the democratic rights of the people of Sri Lanka according to the Constitution and also that the government will facilitate the functions of the United Nations Office in Sri Lanka.

The Government of Sri Lanka has signed several UN International Conventions including the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. The Government has also over a period of several years, has received so much of assistance and cooperation from the UN Agencies, such as the WHO, WFP, FAO, IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, etc., etc.,

During my tenure of office as the Minister of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees, I have met the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, etc., Also, during my tenure of office as a Minister under the then Prime Minister Hon Ranil Wickremesinghe, we were responsible for allowing to set up an office of the UN Senior Advisor of Human Rights in Sri Lanka, which is still functioning.

I strongly feel that the Government of Sri Lanka has to abide by the UN International Conventions which have been ratified by the Government of Sri Lanka. The track record of human rights have been questioned by the International Community including the European Union. The European Union has requested the Government of Sri Lanka to withdraw the GSP-Plus concessions because of the track record of human rights in Sri Lanka.

On behalf of the Opposition, I have been pleading with the Government to honour the International Covenants, especially with regard to Human Rights and Fundamental Rights. The Government of Sri Lanka has not taken steps even to appoint the Chairman and Members of the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission which was established under the Parliamentary Act No 21 of 1996 which is the state body to protect the human rights of the citizens of Sri Lanka.

I, myself as a human rights defender ,a humanitarian activist and the Assistant Secretary of the UNP which is the main Opposition party in the Parliament, in charge of Relief and Human Rights, has taken cases of several

Members of Parliament of the Opposition with the Human Rights Committee of Parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva . The Human Rights Committee in Geneva has even made a couple of declarations announcing the fact that the lives of at least 10 Members of Parliament of the Opposition including myself are in danger. Once again, let me express my grave concern and protest against this unethical act by a Minister of the present Government of Sri Lanka.

I am of the opinion that if the Government of Sri Lanka or its Ministers wanted to express their concern against this expert panel of the UN to advise the UN Secretary General regarding the human rights in Sri Lanka, the most and decent and acceptable way was to make use of diplomacy and to take up this issue through the proper channels and a proper forum with the United Nations.

The Government could even sent its External Affairs Minister to have discussions with the United Nations along with any other Ministers of Sri Lanka, who have shown their concern about this UN Expert Panel. The Government of Sri Lanka being a member of the UN has a Permanent Representative of the United Nations in New York.

The External Affairs Secretary of Sri Lanka should have made their concern or protest against this UN Panel of Experts. Unfortunately, without considering this civilized and decent avenue, it is very sad that a powerful



Sri Lankan Minister of the Government headed by President Mahinda Rajapakse was to show his protest against the UN Panel of Experts by using unethical and immoral methods. I vehemently condemn this act.

I would like to express my solidarity to the United Nations to continue the yeoman services to its member nations including Sri Lanka.

I do respect and accept Sri Lanka's independent territorial integrity and sovereignty as a sovereign country. I also do respect the democratic and fundamental rights of the citizens of Sri Lanka.

Assuring you of my best services and attention at all times,

Yours sincerely



Dr Jayalath Jayawardane, M P

Assistant Secretary of the UNP for Relief & Human Rights