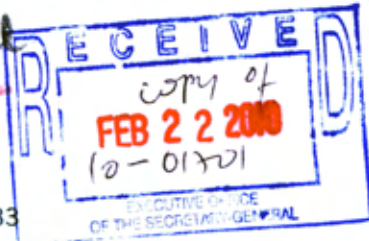


Amnesty International



Ref.: IOR 40/2010.033

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
Secretary-General's Office
Room 3019
North Lawn Building
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

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18 February 2010

Dear Secretary-General

We wrote to you on 8 January about your important work to address the humanitarian and human rights situation in Sri Lanka. In our letter we highlighted the government's failure to implement the promises made to you personally in the joint statement of 23 May 2009 to address accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the recent armed conflict. We appreciate that you are closely following recent developments with concern and maintain contact with the government at the highest level.

Since the re-election of President Mahinda Rajapakse on 26 January, the human rights situation has deteriorated further, characterized by a crackdown on freedom of expression. More journalists, political activists and trade unionists have been assaulted, threatened, or arrested under emergency legislation. Amnesty International has received a list of 56 journalists believed by colleagues to be at extreme risk. Many, including several newspaper editors, have received death threats. Sri Lankan journalist Prageeth Ekanaligoda, who had publicly supported the President's chief opponent in the elections, General Sarath Fonseka, disappeared on his way home from work on 24 January 2010 and remains unaccounted for. Moreover, as you know, on 8 February 2010 General Sarath Fonseka himself was arrested, accused of plotting the President's assassination after he had announced earlier that day that he was willing to testify before an international court on charges that war crimes were committed during the conflict. Your call on the President that General Fonseka be granted all due process guarantees is timely.

These recent developments demonstrate an increase in political repression and a total disregard of the promises made to you by President Rajapakse on 23 May 2009, including the government's stated commitment to the protection of human rights and to accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Amnesty International is convinced that without addressing accountability for the grave abuses committed by both parties during the conflict, there will be no lasting peace in Sri Lanka. Nor will there be an improvement in the increasingly desperate human rights situation, which is particularly disappointing at a time when the government is in a strong position to take meaningful action to improve its human rights record and to address the grievances of the Tamil minority.

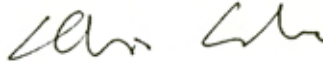
As we wrote to you on 8 January, it has now become clear that the government is unwilling or unable to implement the promises it gave to you. It now falls squarely on the United Nations to ensure that the allegations of serious violations of international law committed by both sides during the conflict in north-eastern Sri Lanka are effectively and independently investigated.

FEB 23 2010

Amnesty International urges you to establish an international independent fact-finding body to collect information from all relevant sources as a first essential step to establish accountability for serious violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, including allegations of war crimes, committed by both sides during the military conflict in Sri Lanka.

We appreciate your personal attention to this matter and would welcome your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudio Cordone', written in a cursive style.

Claudio Cordone
Secretary General (ad interim)



Ref.: UN/NYT/011/2010

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18 February 2010

Dear Secretary-General,

I enclose the letter sent to you by Amnesty International's Secretary General (ad interim) on the situation in Sri Lanka.

I am sending copies of this letter to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to Mr Lynn B. Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs, to Mr John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and to Ms Patricia O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General, the Legal Counsel.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Terlingen
Head of Amnesty International Office at the United Nations