

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

POSTAL ADDRESS - ADRESSE POSTALE : UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. 10017

CABLE ADDRESS - ADRESSE TELEGRAPHIQUE : UNATIONS NEWYORK

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

Sri Lanka

REFERENCE:

25 May 2010

Excellency,

I wish to refer to your letter of 12 May 2010, addressed to the Secretary-General, which drew our attention to a news report by Inner City Press dated 11 May 2010.

As you will understand, the United Nations is not in a position to officially comment on an anonymous quote in a press report.

I would also like to assure you that United Nations officials have and will continue to carry out their functions in an impartial and professional manner in all matters pertaining to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The United Nations will continue to engage closely with the Government and work to support humanitarian, reconciliation, reconstruction and development efforts to ensure a better future for the people of Sri Lanka. We will also continue to share with you our views on the Commission on Lessons Learned and Reconciliation or any other matter of common interest in a candid and trustful way, as has always been the case.

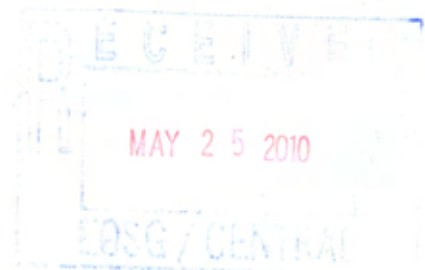
Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Vijay Nambiar

Vijay Nambiar
Chef de Cabinet

His Excellency
Mr. Palitha T. B. Kohona
Permanent Representative
of the Democratic Socialist Republic
of Sri Lanka to the United Nations
New York

10-04698/10-05038



United Nations



Nations Unies

Executive Office of the Secretary-General
Cabinet du Secrétaire général

To: Mr. Nambiar,

Please find attached for your approval and signature a letter addressed to Amb. Kohona, PR Sri Lanka, in reply to his letter dated 12 May regarding the news item in the Innercity Press of 11 May written by Matthew Russell Lee.

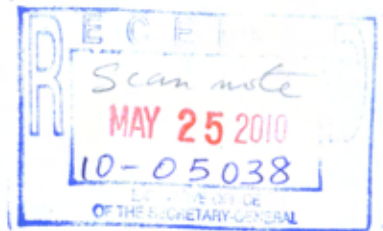

Nicholas Haysom
25 May 2010

Cc: KWS

10-05038

15:57

ACTION NH
COPY VN (v/amb.)
MRM



Note to Mr. Nambiar

LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SRI LANKA ✓

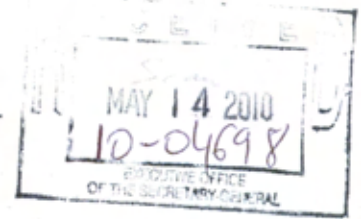
10-04698

1. Please find attached a draft-response to the letter of 12 May 2010 from the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka addressed to the Secretary-General and received in APD/DPA on 19 May 2010. The letter alleges that a UN "senior official" had characterized the recently announced Sri Lankan Commission on Lessons Learned and Reconciliation as a "sham".
2. I would like to note that while the official title of the Sri Lankan Commission is "Commission on Lessons Learned and Reconciliation", the communications from the Sri Lankan Permanent Mission to the United Nations do not use its official name, but instead refers to it as the "Commission of Inquiry". We should refer to the Commission by its official name.

B. Lynn Pascoe
25 May 2010



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA TO THE UNITED NATIONS



Tel: (212) 986-7040
Fax: (212) 986-1838
E-Mail: mail@slmission.com

ACTION
COPY

Mr. P...
V.A.
M.H.
M.H.

630 THIRD AVENUE (20TH FLOOR)
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

POL/G/190A

12th May, 2010

Secretary-General
United Nations
New York.

Excellency,

I would like to draw your attention to the attached news item in the Innercity Press of 11th May written by Mathew Russel Lee.

I am alarmed at the quotation attributed to "a senior Ban official" referring to the accountability and reconciliation mechanism announced by the Government of Sri Lanka. This senior official is reported to have said "It will be a sham". Then it goes on to say "She (Dr. Susan Rice) welcomed it but listed expectations which they will never meet". It is a matter of serious concern that "a senior official" of the United Nations with whom Member States of the organization could expect to deal with confidence and transparency should have made such a statement to a blogger, albeit under cover of anonymity. More importantly, some interlocutors in the Secretariat seem to harbour such sentiments. This brings into question whether Member States of the United Nations could deal honestly and sincerely on matters of sensitivity with such officials occupying senior positions, whose primary responsibility should be to the Organization and its Member States.

On behalf of my Government, I would strongly request that an investigation be conducted to determine who this official is and steps taken to ensure that such officials do not continue to serve the UN in positions which require extreme sensitivity and discretion.

If it turns out that this quoted statement is unfounded, I would be grateful if measures are taken against the writer for abusing his privileged position of access and casting doubts on the credibility of the UN and its officials.

I shall be grateful for an opportunity to discuss this matter with you.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Palitha T.B. Kohona
Ambassador & Permanent Representative.

On War Crimes Experts, UN Waits for "Sham" Sri Lankan Panel, Hiding Behind Rice

By Matthew Russell Lee

UNITED NATIONS, May 11 -- The UN's statement on May 10 that on naming a panel of experts on war crimes in Sri Lanka Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's wheels are turning -- or spinning -- was amplified to Inner City Press on Tuesday by a senior Ban official. "Now they've come out with theirs," the UN official said, referring to the Rajapaksa administration's announcement of a "mechanism."

"It will be a sham," the UN official continues. Inner City Press asked, but how long will it take the UN to reach that conclusion? The UN official shrugged. "They have to appoint the members." He paused. "Susan Rice did a very good thing," he said, referring to US Ambassador Rice's May 10 statement on Sri Lanka.

"She welcomed it but listed expectations which they will never meet," the UN official said.

Inner City Press asked the official, as it has now asked the US State Department, what ever came of the committee the Rajapaksa administration named in November 2009. The official shrugged. "There is an EU statement coming," he said.

Earlier on May 11, as US Ambassador Susan Rice entered the Security Council for a meeting on terrorism sanctions, Inner City Press began to ask for a question about the statement issued in her name the previous day - what does it mean for the U.S.' support of Ban Ki-moon intention announced on March 5 to name a panel of experts to advise him on accountability in Sri Lanka?

Ambassador Rice indicated she was busy. Later a genial Mission staffer came to asked what the question was -- Inner City Press rephrased it -- and said he would go in and get an answer. But leaving the Council along with Ambassador Rice, he said he'd have to check with the "Sri Lanka people."

Hours later in the UN's North Lawn building he again promised an answer. But still as of close of business and deadline, none was provided. Inner City Press sent this and other questions to an Assistant Secretary of State in Washington. Watch this site.