

**Impunity for Sri Lankan security forces must end now**  
**Call for the international community to re-prioritize accountability and justice in Sri Lanka**  
*November 13, 2017*

We the undersigned organizations call upon members of the international community to re-prioritize accountability and justice for atrocity crimes committed during and after the armed conflict in their engagement with the Government of Sri Lanka. As a [recent report](#) from the Associated Press (AP) citing work from the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) highlights, perpetration of horrific acts of torture and sexual violence against Tamil victims is an endemic part of the Sri Lankan security forces' operations, continuing to date. Impunity for these acts and the lack of any meaningful security sector reform has enabled this system to continue.

The AP report is only the latest in a long line of credible reports from UN bodies, journalists and NGOs pointing out the systematic and widespread nature of gross human rights violations perpetrated by the Sri Lankan security forces during and after the armed conflict. We express deep concern and frustration that instead of continuing pressure on the government to hold the security forces to account, the international community has chosen instead over the last two years to build military-to-military relations and soften their approach towards Sri Lanka. As we release this statement, a number of countries including Canada and the United States are [participating](#) in a Military Golfing Championship held at the Sri Lankan Navy's Eagle Golf Links Resort in Trincomalee. This event implicitly endorses militarisation, in this instant, military taking part in running businesses, contrary to recommendations made by these countries in Sri Lanka's last Universal Periodic Review. It also signals to multi-national corporations that they too can engage with the Sri Lankan military. For example recently, Coca-Cola sponsored the Gajaba Super Cross 2017, which was [presided over](#) by accused war criminal, Major General Shavendra Silva.

The de-prioritisation of accountability processes and waning of pressure by the international community has only served to allow the government to place these issues on the backburner and also undermine any meaningful outcome from processes and institutions such as the Office of Missing Persons (OMP). The international community's 'soft diplomacy' approach to Sri Lanka simply has not worked. The Sri Lankan government has made it clear time and time again, that they do not have the political will to pursue accountability and justice in respect of the Sri Lankan security forces. President Maithripala Sirisena on the same day that the AP report was released [assured](#) the security forces that they would never have to testify before any "war tribunal".

Without a clear and credible accountability process with significant international involvement, there is little chance that the Sri Lankan security forces will face any accountability for their actions. Accountability and justice is not just a necessary step for reconciliation, but is more importantly necessary to put an end to the ongoing perpetration of such horrific human rights violations.

We call on the international community to put an end to any and all military-to-military relationship building with the Sri Lankan military until a credible accountability process on the lines agreed to in UNHRC Resolution 30/1 of 2015 has been set in motion with the establishment of a Special Prosecutor's Office. We also call on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to open a special investigation into sexual violence and torture perpetrated by the Sri Lankan security forces.

Signatories:

Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research (ACPR)  
Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD)  
Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Diocese Jaffna  
Jaffna University Employees' Union  
Jaffna University Teachers' Association  
Manitham – Sarva Matha Amayam, Tharmapuram  
Pupil Salvation Forum – Kalmunai, Amparai  
Tamil Civil Society Forum (TCSF)  
Vadamarachchi Christian Union