

UN Human Rights Council 46: Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Sri Lanka

Thank you, Madam President.

The United Kingdom welcomes the High Commissioner's detailed and most comprehensive report on Sri Lanka.

We share the concerns regarding the reversal of progress on issues of accountability, and also the current human rights situation, and the risk and recurrence of past violations.

We are also concerned at the increase in surveillance and indeed harassment of civil society actors, the militarisation of these civilian governmental functions, and the impact of the government's forced cremation policy on different communities in Sri Lanka, particularly the Muslim community, who continue to face persecution.

We also regret the Government of Sri Lanka's decision to withdraw support for resolution 30/1, and note that previous domestic initiatives have all failed regrettably to deliver meaningful accountability. The appointment of senior military officials allegedly implicated in war crimes and crimes against humanity also calls into question Sri Lanka's commitment to accountability and justice.

Therefore the Human Rights Council must continue to consider the situation in Sri Lanka and press for progress on justice, reconciliation and accountability, and improved respect for human rights. Enhanced monitoring by the Office of the High Commissioner is critical to support this. Together with our Core Group partners, we will present a new resolution to continue the Council's engagement on these important issues, and have indicated our desire to work with the Government of Sri Lanka in support of accountability and lasting reconciliation for all communities.