

Joint Statement Delivered to the UN Human Rights Council

17 March 2009

FORUM-ASIA and ALRC would like to call for the attention and urgent action of the Human Rights Council on the human rights catastrophe in Sri Lanka. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Pillay expressed in her press statement dated Friday 13 March 2009, we know enough to be sure that the situation is absolutely desperate. The world today is ever sensitive about such acts that could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. ()

We call upon this Human Rights Council to include the human rights situation of Sri Lanka into its agenda on a regular basis and immediately send an international mission to assess the needs of those civilians in the conflict affected areas with any unhindered access. On the same front, FORUM and ALRC strongly urge the Human Rights Council to hold a Special Session on the current human rights situation in Sri Lanka. As recognized by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in her latest press statement, 2,800 civilians have been killed, more than 7,000 injured since 20 January 2009, and currently a total of 150,000 to 180,000 civilians remain trapped in the Vanni region. The grave situation and plight faced by the civilians has been further intensified with the lack of access and independent monitors, humanitarian workers and the media. It is of paramount mandate for the Council to respond promptly to human rights emergencies. The crisis in Sri Lanka has been repeatedly highlighted by the UN Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Special Procedures mandate-holders and Nobel Laureate Jose Ramos Horta, President of Timor Leste as well as by the various UN agencies, and by the ICRC. What further grounds does the Human Rights Council still require in order to convene its Special Session?

Full text of the statement:

http://www.forum-asia.org/news/press_releases/pdfs/HRC10-Item4-GD-SriLanka.pdf