

113TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 247

Expressing support for internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 4, 2013

Mr. GRIMM (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. LANCE, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing support for internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace.

Whereas it has been 4 years since the end of the 26-year long conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which was declared a foreign terrorist organization in 1997, and the Government of Sri Lanka;

Whereas the people of Sri Lanka suffered greatly as a result of this conflict, the impact, and aftermath of which has been felt especially by women, children, and families;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka established a Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) to report whether any person, group, or institution directly or indirectly bears responsibility for incidents that occurred be-

tween February 2002 and May 2009, and to recommend measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future and promote further national unity and reconciliation among all communities;

Whereas the LLRC report was presented to the Sri Lankan Parliament on December 16, 2011, and officially translated into Sinhala and Tamil on August 16, 2012, and took note of the LLRC report's possible contribution to the process of national reconciliation in Sri Lanka;

Whereas the LLRC report acknowledges important events and grievances that have contributed to decades of political violence and civil war in Sri Lanka and makes constructive recommendations on a wide range of issues, including the need to credibly investigate widespread allegations of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and intentional targeting of civilians and noncombatants, demilitarizing the north and the country as a whole, reaching a political settlement with minority communities on the meaningful devolution of power, and promoting and protecting the right to freedom of expression for all through the enactment of a right to information law and additional rule of law reforms;

Whereas the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, India, and other governments and intergovernmental organizations have called on the Government of Sri Lanka to implement the recommendations of its own LLRC Report;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka expressed its commitment to address the needs of all ethnic groups, notably the Tamils and Muslims, and has recognized, in the past, the necessity of a political settlement and reconciliation for a peaceful and just society;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has developed the National Plan of Action to implement some of the 285 recommendations of the LLRC;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has made progress on rehabilitation, resettlement of displaced persons, and improvement of infrastructure in the north and east;

Whereas the LLRC noted that the failure of successive governments to implement the “critical recommendations of past commissions gives rise to understandable criticism and skepticism regarding Government appointed Commissions from which the LLRC has not been spared”;

Whereas progress on investigations into reports of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other human rights violations during the conflict and promoting reconciliation would facilitate enhanced United States engagement, bilateral trade, and investment in Sri Lanka and coincide with United States policy that such commissions of inquiry have been instrumental in providing accountability and redressing wrongdoing during periods of internal strife;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka’s failure to conduct a credible investigation into alleged war crimes and human rights abuses committed by all sides and to implement its own stated priorities of post-conflict reconciliation, accountability, and reform as set forth by the LLRC precludes a lasting settlement and encourages continued national strife that has the potential to further destabilize a region vital to United States diplomatic and strategic interests;

Whereas a firm statement advocating for truth, justice, and accountability into continued reports of militarization,

kidnapping and intimidation, and extrajudicial killings since the cessation of conflict in 2009 comports with statements and recommendations by key figures, experts, and institutions in the international community as exemplified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay’s February 11, 2013, report calling for an “independent and credible international investigation into alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law”, and also reaffirms central rhetorical and institutional commitments supported by the United States and its allies, particularly the March 21, 2013, United Nations Human Rights Council resolution echoing the conclusions of Commissioner Pillay’s report and advocating for the “establishment of a truth-seeking mechanism as an integral part of a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to transitional justice”;

Whereas a statement urging the Government of Sri Lanka to follow through on its own recommendations in a transparent, timely manner conforms with the obligations of the United States and all nations to advocate for peace and stability in the international community without infringing upon the sovereignty of the Government of Sri Lanka or expressing a sense of support for any party in the conflict; and

Whereas the United States is home to a large community of ethnic Sri Lankans and expatriates outside of Sri Lanka, many of which have a salient, emotional interest in a meaningful resolution to the country’s violence and political turmoil: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1           (1) calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to  
2           build on its establishment of the Lessons Learnt and  
3           Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) and that Com-  
4           mission's constructive recommendations on issues of  
5           paramount importance to Sri Lanka in a credible,  
6           transparent, and expeditious manner;

7           (2) recognizes that the LLRC report did not  
8           adequately address issues of accountability for both  
9           the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Ti-  
10          gers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), for credible allega-  
11          tions of war crimes and crimes against humanity;

12          (3) calls for the establishment of a credible,  
13          international, independent accountability mechanism  
14          to look into allegations of war crimes, crimes against  
15          humanity, and other human rights violations com-  
16          mitted by all sides during and after the war in Sri  
17          Lanka, and to make recommendations regarding ac-  
18          countability;

19          (4) encourages the Government of Sri Lanka to  
20          allow for greater media freedoms and ensure the  
21          protection of journalists;

22          (5) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to allow  
23          humanitarian organizations and international human  
24          rights groups greater access to the war-affected, in-

1 including rehabilitated ex-LTTE cadres, and those de-  
2 tained;

3 (6) acknowledges the end of the war and calls  
4 on the Government of Sri Lanka to prioritize a proc-  
5 ess of demilitarization throughout the country; and

6 (7) acknowledges the importance for parties to  
7 reach a political settlement on the meaningful decen-  
8 tralization of power and power-sharing.

