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S. RES. 348

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 6, 2014

Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. CORNYN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

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

Whereas May 19, 2013, marks the four-year anniversary of the end of the 26-year conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) 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 oc-

occurred between 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;

Whereas the LLRC report acknowledges important events and grievances that have contributed to decades of political violence and 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; 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 decentralization 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 Government of Sri Lanka developed the National Plan of Action to implement just 82 of the 285 recommendations of the LLRC in August 2011, and although the Government of Sri Lanka has made some progress on rehabilitation, resettlement of displaced persons, and improvements of infrastructure in the North and East, there are still many issues of major concern;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has yet to reasonably address issues of reconciliation and accountability through internal processes;

Whereas the Department of State's 2012 Human Rights Report on Sri Lanka outlines ongoing concerns regarding landownership and property restitution, particularly in the Jaffna Peninsula, where large numbers of persons have not received restitution for land that remains part of government high security zones, and while citizens generally were able to travel almost anywhere in the island, there continues to be police and military checkpoints in the north, and defacto high-security zones and other areas remained off limits to citizens;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has not taken tangible steps toward demilitarization of civilian functions, particularly in the North and East, and continued military presence on private lands in the North is preventing the resettlement of internally displaced persons who desire a return to peaceful life;

Whereas the Department of State's 2012 Human Rights Report on Sri Lanka also includes reports of serious human rights violations such as unlawful killings by security forces and government-allied paramilitary groups, often in predominantly Tamil areas; torture and abuse of detainees by police and security forces; and arbitrary arrest and detention by authorities;

Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution supported by the United States and adopted by the UNHRC on March 21, 2013, expresses concern at the continuing reports of violations of human rights in Sri Lanka, including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, and violations of the rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, as well as intimidation of and reprisals against human rights defenders, members of civil society and

journalists, threats to judicial independence and the rule of law, and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief;

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

Whereas tangible progress on domestic and international investigations into reports of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other human rights violations during and after the conflict and promoting reconciliation would facilitate enhanced United States engagement and investment in Sri Lanka: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) commends the representatives of the United
3 States on their leadership on United Nations
4 Human Rights Council Resolution (UNHRC) 22/1,
5 adopted by the UNHRC on March 21, 2013, which
6 promotes reconciliation and accountability in Sri
7 Lanka;

8 (2) calls on the United States and the inter-
9 national community to establish an independent
10 international accountability mechanism to evaluate
11 reports of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and
12 other human rights violations committed by both
13 sides during and after the war in Sri Lanka;

1 (3) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to allow
2 unimpeded access for media, international aid agen-
3 cies, and human rights groups into all regions of the
4 country, as well as to detention sites that may hold
5 political and war prisoners;

6 (4) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to end
7 its media restrictions, including the obstacles to the
8 flow of information in the North and East, and
9 bring to justice those responsible for attacks on jour-
10 nalists and newspaper offices; and

11 (5) calls upon the President to develop a com-
12 prehensive policy towards Sri Lanka that reflects
13 United States interests, including respect for human
14 rights, democracy and the rule of law, economic in-
15 terests, and security interests.

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