



19 March 2018

Agenda Item 6: UPR Outcomes: Sri Lanka

The Advocates for Human Rights

Delivered by Lisa Borden

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Mr. / Madam (Vice) President:

We welcome Sri Lanka's acknowledgement during the interactive dialogue that it is abolitionist in practice and we salute its commitment to consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, as recommended by Uruguay, and to consider abolishing the death penalty, as recommended by Italy and Timor-Leste.

We note with concern, however, that Sri Lanka did not accept recommendations that it do more than simply "consider" such steps, but actually take those steps, as recommended by Australia, the Holy See, Montenegro, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Namibia, Slovakia, and Spain. Further, Sri Lanka noted Norway's recommendation to "take concrete measures to abolish the death penalty."

We fear that perhaps Sri Lanka's commitment to "consider" abolition is merely lip service, and Sri Lanka does not intend to take any concrete action toward abolition. We urge the Sri Lankan government to ensure that its "consideration" of abolition over the next four years is genuine, thoughtful, constructive, and includes concrete measures. Those measures should include parliamentary debates, transparent and thorough responses to the Human Rights Commission's formal review of the death penalty, consultations with civil society organizations, and a public education campaign about human rights, including alternatives to the death penalty. We urge Italy, Timor-Leste, and Uruguay to support the Sri Lankan government in these measures and to press the government to report back during the next interactive dialogue on the steps it has taken to honor its commitments before this body.

Thank you.