

**United Nations Human Rights Council
37th Regular Session
Agenda Item 6**

**Oral Statement of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)
On the Universal Periodic Review outcome for Sri Lanka**

19 March 2018

Mr. President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) welcomes the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka stated that it maintains zero tolerance for hate speech and religious violence, and that the National Human Rights Action Plan 2017–2021 contained a firm commitment to enforce section 3(1) of the ICCPR Act. The ICJ further notes that a circular was issued requiring all police officers to take immediate action in this regard. Despite these commitments, recent events demonstrate renewed conflict owing to communal violence directed at the Muslim minority. A state of emergency was proclaimed following inaction from law enforcement, and its inability to contain the violence, and emergency regulations were brought into operation.

The ICJ urges the government to demonstrate through action, its willingness bring to account those who have incited communal violence, in line with the ICCPR Act. Pervading impunity has emboldened perpetrators to incite violent hatred publicly. Justice must follow recent arrests, ensuring impartial and effective investigations and trials, in line with human rights.

The ICJ also notes the limited progress made on implementing HRC resolution 30/1. Of the reconciliation mechanisms promised, only the Office on Missing Persons is operational. There is little transparency with regards to the other proposed mechanisms, in particular on accountability, as well as efforts to repeal and replace the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Any new counterterrorism law must comply with international human rights.

The ICJ urges Sri Lanka to accept and implement the UPR recommendations without delay, before the opportunity for reform is lost.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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