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SL Parliament to decide on participation

UN war crimes probe

By Shamindra Ferdinando

(Island.lk) - The parliament would decide on Sri Lanka's participation in proposed UN probe on atrocities allegedly committed by the military and the LTTE on the Vanni east front, during eelam war IV, ministerial sources said yesterday. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) Central Committee (CC) presided over by President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Temple Trees on Monday night. Parliament will meet next Tuesday (June 17). Soon after the Geneva-based United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted a US-led resolution 25/1 in March 2014, the government declared that it wouldn't cooperate with the external

probe under any circumstances. The government took up the position that the proposed investigation had no mandate to inquire into accountability issues here. Authoritative SLFP sources told 'The Island' that its CC had decided to consult parliament after having received a

*** Advisory Group to provide 'independent verification' of UN investigation**
*** Final report to be presented to UNHRC in March 2015**

detailed briefing by External Affairs Minister, Prof. G. L. Peiris regarding the planned investigation. Having liberated the Eastern Province by June 2007, the military concluded the Vanni offensive in May 2009.

Responding to a query, sources said that Prof. Peiris had explained contents of a letter received by him from the outgoing UN Human Rights Chief Navanethem Pillay late last week. This was consequent to Pillay's staff meeting Sri Lanka's Permanent representative in Geneva,

Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, on May 30th. Prof. Peiris dealt with Ms Pillay's missive, highlighting crucial points pertaining to the setting up of a comprehensive investigation into serious violations and abuses of human rights and

related crimes. Pillay's letter was dated June 5th.

Sources said that political parties, including constituents of the SLFP-led ruling coalition represented in parliament would be able to freely air their opinion on the issue. Sources said that the government would abide by whatever the majority in Parliament decided up on. Depending on the majority decision of the House, the investigation team would receive access to the country during July-November period as requested by Pillay, sources said.

Prof. Peiris informed the CC of the appointment of Ms Sandra Beidas as coordinator of what ... **CONT ON P14**

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