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## Foreign Minister addresses UNHRC

(ColomboGazette.com) - Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera told the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Sri Lanka is determined to address concerns on human rights. He said this while addressing the high-level segment of the 34th session of the UNHRC in Geneva on Tuesday. The Foreign Minister said that Sri Lanka has made progress on several fronts over the past two years. The Minister also said that some elements are attempting to derail the ongoing reconciliation process. He said that among the notable improvements was the implementation of the Right to Information Act, cabinet approval for a National Action Plan on Human Rights and approval for an Office on Missing Persons. "Another important undertaking that was successfully concluded during this period, is public consultations carried out by the

Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms, the first of this nature carried out in the country. Over 7000 written submissions were received from persons from all walks of life, many of them victims of human rights violations who came forward to give their views. The Report of the Task Force is presently being studied in the context of designing the relevant Mechanisms for Truth-seeking, Reparations, Justice, and other reconciliation processes," he added. The Minister also said that while taking the allegations of continuing incidence of torture seriously, it is reiterated that the Government maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards torture as also demonstrated by the President's participation against torture last year. "Although the National Human Rights Commission has recently indicated to us that there is a downward spiral of incidents, even one incident of torture is

one too many. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, the Police Commission, the Ministry of Law & Order and other relevant agencies are working together to prevent and combat torture. As in many other areas, this too is an area in which we require technical assistance, and I hope that countries with experience in this area will come to our assistance," he said. The Minister said Sri Lanka's resolve to see the transitional justice process through, has not diminished and with the help of all Sri Lankans in all walks of life, friends and partners in the international community, and Sri Lankans overseas; with patience, understanding, and constant and consistent effort and perseverance; the Government strongly believes that Sri Lanka can make the reconciliation process a success, and establish a progressive and united society, working in harmony to take the Nation towards new heights of socio-economic



Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera development. For the full speech in text and video, please see: [WWW.NEWSLANKA.NET](http://WWW.NEWSLANKA.NET)

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### UK says give Sri Lanka time to fully implement resolution

The British Government told the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) today to give Sri Lanka time to fully implement the October 2015 resolution. British Minister for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Alok Sharma, told the Council during the high-level segment he welcomes Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera's constructive engagement at the UNHRC. "We must give Sri Lanka time to fully implement the October 2015 resolution and post-conflict measures required to

embed stability, reconciliation and justice," he said. Sharma later had talks with Samaraweera on the sidelines of the 34th session of the UNHRC underway in Geneva. "Discussed the need to embed stability, reconciliation & justice in #SriLanka," Sharma tweeted on his meeting with Samaraweera. In his speech to the Council, Sharma said it was a privilege to be the first British Minister to address the Council since the United Kingdom's re-election.

"To serve on the UN Human Rights Council is a great responsibility," he said. He said he wants to see the UN and its States deliver on the shared obligation to promote and strengthen human rights. The Minister said UK will work in partnership with all those who want to make positive reforms adding that the UK also stands ready to call out those responsible for the worst violations and abuses of human rights.



British Minister for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Alok Sharma and Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera

of the resolution. I am sure that will be supported by majority of the member states. It is pertinent to be reminded of the Foreign Minister's speech ... SEE P4

### "We are hopeful of a political solution" - GTF

(DailyMirror.lk) - With the commencement of the UNHRC session featuring Sri Lanka's case among others, Suren Sirendiran, the spokesperson for Global Tamil Forum, a leading Tamil Diaspora Organisation, articulates the implementation of its resolution, action regarding alleged war crimes and the way forward.



Suren Sirendiran, Global Tamil Forum

The interview was conducted by email: **Ahead of the UNHRC session, how do you analyze the progress made by the government in addressing your aspirations?** Progress is dead slow and minimal. It is now obvious that Sri Lanka wouldn't have made any significant progress by March 2017 in implementing the UNHRC resolution that it co-sponsored. Therefore, it is inevitable that Sri Lanka will request an extension to the timeline. It will only be conceivable that the member states will agree to extend, through a new rollover resolution. Status of implementation of the Resolution A/HRC/30/L.29 by the Government of Sri Lanka will still be work in progress. Therefore, until full implementation of the resolution, somehow Sri Lanka must remain in focus for the Human Rights Council. If that formal focus and monitoring can only be delivered via another resolution, then that is what should happen. As the co-sponsor of the resolution and the responsible government to implement

By **Kelum Bandara**  
the resolution on behalf of its people, one would hope that Government of Sri Lanka would bring a resolution to extend the timeline without renegotiating the content

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