

## **GOSL Reaction on US State Department Report to the US Congress on Sri Lanka**

The United States has forwarded to the Sri Lanka authorities a document captioned Report to Congress on Incidents During the Recent Conflict in Sri Lanka, which contains a report from the US State Department to the Appropriations Committees of the US Congress.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka wishes to point out in this regard that the document relates to a period when the Security Forces of Sri Lanka were engaged in a humanitarian mission through operations in the North and in the East of the island, to free the members of the Tamil community and the members of other communities living in those areas, from the clutches of the terror of the LTTE. The great relief with which the populace in those areas greeted the success of the operations was manifest when, within the space of a few days between the end of April and the start of May this year hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who were being used as human shields by the LTTE, escaped towards the security afforded by the Armed Forces, once the Army breached the LTTE lines.

During the security operations, the message by the President of Sri Lanka to all ranks of the Armed Forces, was that the military endeavour must at all times be directed against the armed terrorism of the LTTE. Therefore, the Sri Lanka Armed Forces were scrupulous in affording protection to the civilians and safeguarding their welfare.

At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to point out that Sri Lanka has since gaining independence, maintained an unbroken commitment to democratic governance, with the rule of law remaining paramount. Hence, the practice of the Government of Sri Lanka is always to subject to investigation under domestic law and processes those allegations that prima facie appear to be credible and well substantiated. Moreover, Sri Lanka's domestic jurisprudence provides all the necessary scope for those perceiving themselves subjected to a violation of their human rights, to obtain redress through judicial directives to the concerned authorities.

However, it must also be said that the allegations against the Government of Sri Lanka in the document Report to Congress on Incidents During the Recent Conflict in Sri Lanka, appear to be unsubstantiated and devoid of corroborative evidence. There is a track record of vested interests endeavouring to bring the Government of Sri Lanka into disrepute, through fabricated allegations and concocted stories. Thereby these interests hope to fan, once again, the flames of secessionism and to undo the concerted efforts of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, for rehabilitation and national reconciliation. The people of Sri Lanka therefore have every reason to be concerned that this report to the US Congress, may be abused for a similar end.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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