

“Vital to end the capacity of the LTTE and its fronts to raise funds and engage in propaganda in the West” - Dr. Kohona

Dr. Palitha Kohona, Secretary of Foreign Affairs has said "at a time Sri Lanka is engaged in the arduous task of putting an end to terrorism in the North of the country, it was vital to also end the capacity of the LTTE and its front organizations to raise funds and engage in propaganda in Western countries".

Dr. Kohona made this observation, when during a visit to Brussels on 5 September 2008, he met with Ambassador Xavier Demoulin, Actg Secretary General of the Belgian Foreign Ministry, Mr Joao Aguiar Machado, Deputy Director General of the European Commission, and Ambassador Tomasz Koslowski, Chief of Task Force on Asia of the European Council.

He called on his interlocutors to support Sri Lanka's request to ban the TRO and associated LTTE front organizations which contributed to the perpetuation terrorism. He emphasized the need to separate terrorism related obligations of the international community and human rights.

In his meetings, Dr. Kohona provided a briefing on the operations currently being carried out in areas in the North to end terrorism and noted that the Government of Sri Lanka has adopted a range of measures to mitigate difficulties encountered by IDPs, including collaborating with UN and international agencies who were working with the Government.

He also appraised his interlocutors on the progress in the APRC process including the implementation of its interim recommendations with respect to the full implementation of the 13th amendment. He reiterated the government's committed to a political solution to the present conflict and detailed the series of measures taken in the East in pursuance of this goal.

He requested the assistance of the European Union as well as the Belgian Government towards the development of the Eastern Province to ensure the long term sustainability of democracy and peace. Dr. Kohona also informed European & Belgian senior official the measures taken by the government to ensure the protection of human rights of all Sri Lankan citizens and action taken to bring the perpetrators of alleged violations to justice.

Informing his interlocutors that Sri Lanka would be presenting its application for the renewal of GSP+ benefits for the period 2009-2011, he expressly stated that Sri Lanka would satisfy the requirements of an objective review. Both Belgian and European officials congratulated Sri Lanka on utilizing this scheme to achieve substantial desired results, including better standards of living for the people, and encouraged Sri Lanka to make a strong application for the renewal of the scheme.

During his meeting with the Actg. Secretary General of the Belgian Foreign Ministry, Dr. Kohona expressed the Government's appreciation to the Belgian Authorities for the recent relaxation of the travel advisory on Sri Lanka. He expressed the need to further enhance bilateral ties through the increase of investment, trade, and tourism.

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg & the EU Ravinatha Aryasinha, Saroja Sirisena, Counsellor and Senarath Dissanayake, First Secretary of the Sri Lanka Embassy in Brussels, were associated at these meetings.

08 September 2008