

Sri Lanka tells Europol Seminar “its time for EU to act against LTTE front organizations”



Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the EU, Belgium and Luxembourg Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha has said, sufficient evidence was available that the operations of front organizations are an integral part of the LTTE, as seen in recent action against the LTTE fronts in the US and Canada. Taking concerted action against such entities who act for, or on behalf of, or at the behest of terrorist organizations, is an obligation countries have voluntarily undertaken under the numerous UN conventions on terrorism. Doing so also casts on countries the obligation to implement these provisions equally, to all terrorist entities across the globe.

Ambassador Aryasinha was addressing a Europol seminar, organised within the framework of EU-US cooperation, held on 09 and 10 December in the Hague, Netherlands, on the theme “Time to Act: The LTTE, its Front Organizations, and the Challenge to Europe”. The seminar brought together representatives from 15 EU Member States, as well as from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, USA, Switzerland and Interpol, as well as representatives from other European Institutions; Eurojust and SitCen (the European Union (EU) Joint Situation Centre), for an assessment of the activities of the LTTE and its front organizations.

He observed that this was probably the first time such a wide-ranging international group of experts had chosen to devote an entire two day seminar which focused on the worldwide activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This underlined the seriousness with which the law enforcement and criminal justice communities in these countries are watching developments relating to the activities of the LTTE and its front organizations.

In a detailed analysis of the origins of the LTTE, the trajectory taken by the group in its global operations, he said the actions of LTTE front organizations: the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO); the World Tamil Movement (WTM); the Tamil Coordinating Committee (TCC); and others, form an integral part of the LTTE overseas infrastructure directed by the LTTE's international Secretariat in the Wannai. While acknowledging the action taken in the US and Canada to proscribe LTTE front organizations, the TRO and the WTM, respectively, Ambassador Aryasinha said the government of Sri Lanka regretted that at present sufficient attention was not being paid in Europe to the activities of the LTTE front organizations, despite their activists being arrested and scheduled to stand trial in France, the UK and Italy, and TRO accounts being frozen in the UK and Denmark.

Elaborating on front organization involvement in fund raising, money laundering, criminality, “Thamil Cholai” schools, Satellite TV/ Radio and internet networks, telephone card business, he said it was vital for the international community, including the EU, to interdict these activities. Furthermore, with respect to engagement in propaganda, glorification of terrorism and martyrdom, The Ambassador

said, it was imperative that the EU come to an early determination as to where the right of freedom of expression ends and the European Council's recently sanctioned regulations to curb terrorist related acts of glorification of terrorism and martyrdom begins. He called for the early EU listing of the TRO and other LTTE front organizations in Europe, greater vigilance, cooperation in intelligence sharing and cooperation in the field of criminal justice.,

Emphasising his theme "Time to Act", Ambassador Aryasinha cautioned that failure to take timely action to curb LTTE and front organization activity in Europe could have several ramifications: it could render the sacrifices being made on the ground to eradicate terrorism in Sri Lanka wasted and leave open the possibility for the renewal of the conflict; the loss of dominance of control in the Wanni could also result in the LTTE resorting to use greater pressure on the diaspora to continue funding the organization which is bound to intensify conflict within the diaspora with those who opt for peace and reconciliation, further networked and trained as they are, in order to survive, members of the LTTE are also likely to continue to engage in clandestine businesses or engage in criminal activities in their host countries.

The Sri Lanka delegation to the seminar, included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Attorney General's Dept and Ministry of Defence.

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