

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 2: General Debate on oral updates by the High Commissioner
Date: 13 September 2022
Speaker: Harini Sivalingam

Oral Statement to the 51st Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), NGO in special consultative status

Economic Collapse and Disregard of Civil Liberties in Sri Lanka Concern for Women Jurists in Afghanistan

President,

We reiterate the High Commissioner's conclusions that international monetary relief to Sri Lanka must be linked with accountability and reconciliation for past international human rights violations. Sri Lanka is at a crossroads, and there is no recovery or reform possible without justice, accountability, and upholding the rule of law.

Over the past few months, the political and economic situation in Sri Lanka has deteriorated due to the failure of leadership in the highest offices. For decades successive governments in Sri Lanka have trampled on the rights of Tamil peoples, Muslim communities, and dissidents who dare to speak out against the government.

For more than 2,000 days, families of the disappeared who have been on the streets demanding justice have been subjected to increased harassment and surveillance by security forces.

We reiterate the High Commissioner's call for fundamental constitutional reform in Sri Lanka, and we call upon Member States to adopt a new resolution reflecting the recommendations of the High Commissioner's report. We must ensure Sri Lanka remains on the international agenda for there to be meaningful change as Sri Lanka navigates this economic and humanitarian crisis.

In Afghanistan, the plight of women jurists should be of grave concern for Member States. The Taliban's banishment of women from the legal sphere denies Afghan women avenues to seek legal recourse and remedies for the erosion of women's rights in the country. We urge Member States to ensure that Afghanistan takes concrete action to uphold their international human rights responsibilities.

Thank you, President.