



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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### Human rights bodies and mechanisms

## **Joint written statement\* submitted by African Green Foundation International, International Buddhist Relief Organisation, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[31 January 2020]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **Bias of the UNHRC or misguidance of the UNHRC**

Nearly 14 years ago, on 15th March 2006, the United Nations (UN) set up the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to promote and protect human rights around the world. It seeks the assistance and cooperation of States and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to monitor, report, advice and contribute best practice to ensure that its impartial vision is untainted and objectively exercised in its global mission. However, over the years various countries, States, ethnicities, religious and lifestyle groups have begun to accuse the UNHRC of bias and partisanship. It is also accused of being hijacked as the executive organ of certain powerful States and political entities. It is strongly suggested that these global NGOs are funded by the said agencies to serve as their advisors and attorneys.

### **Petitioners against the UNHRC**

The main accusers of bias within the UNHRC and its related organisations are global minority ethnic groups such as the Jews of Israel and their global diaspora, the Buddhists of Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Sri Lanka etc. with claims to historical homelands. Their main fear are the loss of their own fundamental human rights including the traditional and historical homelands to recent settlers brought by the almighty European adventurers of the last few centuries. They also fear that even though European imperial rule is no more, the very fundamental attitudes of former imperialists are evident within the functional arms of the UN.

The UNHRC is today accused of being a covert front to satisfy the former imperial powers to continue global domination through their proxies placed in networked nerve centres of which the UNHRC takes priority. Therefore, global opinion today is polarised on the very functionality of the UNHRC and the path it seems to be misdirected in the name of human rights. On the one hand, countries such as Israel express deep dissatisfaction on matters such as the allocation of Country Rapporteurs who deem to have made public statements with anti-Israeli bias as well as focusing disproportionately on the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The very purpose of the UNHRC is questioned with regard to its tangible mission achievements.

Viet Nam is another example of a country attempting to reinstate its human values after being brutalised for over 20 years on a 'scorched earth' policy just a few decades back by military adventurers of this world.

### **The Influence of the INGOs on the UNHRC**

Today the INGOs are well funded, their grants and fund distribution are competitive with an ever-increasing army of well trained and educated human resources base available. This offers opportunity for patrons of diverse interests to hire the services of these people. There are some noteworthy giants among the global NGO community to specialise on human rights and be involved with the UNHRC. Three of the frontline NGOs that are universally mentioned in relation to global human rights at the UNHRC are (i) Amnesty International (AI), (ii) International Crisis Group (ICG) and Human Rights Watch (HRW). These non-governmental organisations have considerable funds and human resources which enable them to employ thousands of human rights specialists in almost all the countries in the world.

### **The Influence of International Journalists and the Media on the UNHRC - The Pied Pipers of Human Rights**

It is a fact that freedoms and privileges of investigative journalism are unparalleled in other professions. Theirs is a license to publish whatever they consider as of interest to the public. Embedded journalists within warring factions and the theatre of war have opportunities to broadcast to the world alleging violations of human rights by one party or both parties in conflict. They also have the power to sway public opinion locally, regionally and internationally. Their documentary and audio-visual records may be used as evidence not only to swing the final outcome of a war but also for post-war enquiries by global guardians of human rights, such as the UNHRC. They may also be credible evidence in international trials on war crimes including any signs of genocidal intents by any party in military combat. However, among these are individuals who have sincerely stood up for human rights during

war. There have been classic examples such as those in the Viet Nam War where Eddie Adams's photograph of a suspected Viet Cong man being shot in public by an ARVN officer or the 1972 photo by Nick UT where a little naked South Vietnamese girl screaming in pain due to Napalm bombs of the United States of America (USA) running away from bombings. Today vast progress made in Information Technology (IT) with a diverse range of audio-visuals supplied to members of the UN and its HRC. They can sway opinion and the process of justice for violators of human rights anywhere.

### **Bias of the UNHRC or misguidance of the UNHRC**

As discussed above, there clearly are a diverse range of interested parties which petition the UN and its HRC in the name of safeguarding global human rights. There are parties who supply information and evidence which are expected to justify their seeking justice through the UNHRC with due punishment to the perpetrators of such heinous crimes. Indeed, the predisposition to some wars and crimes therein are with the intention to commit genocide. The ever-increasing diversity of participatory agencies as discussed above and the actors in this theatre of global inquisition and clamour for international jurisdiction necessitates an absolute

On 20th June 2018, the BBC broadcast that "The US has pulled out of the United Nations Human Rights Council, calling it a "cesspool of political bias". Nikki Haley, the US envoy to the UN, said it was a "hypocritical" body that "makes a mockery of human rights". <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/44537372>. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres responded to the US decision to quit the council by saying he would have "much preferred" the US to remain a member. The UN's human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini called the US withdrawal "disappointing, if not really surprising, news". Israel, meanwhile, praised the decision."

### **Is there Bias against Sri Lanka in the UNHRC**

The above discussion presents a resumé of the broader yet essential rationale on potential agents and beneficiaries from a bias against any country at the UNHRC. The potential for grave dangers of disaffection leading to disharmony among the global nations if the UNHRC is seen to be biased can never be understated, especially when members such as the USA make such clear and defined accusations of bias within the UNHRC. The UNHRC must address the very causes of such bias if the world at large is to have confidence and respect for the UNHRC.

The Sri Lankan experience with the UNHRC so far has been not much different from similar Asian countries in the bias apparently created by powerful NGOs, their paymasters as well as the global media giants and their local in-country agents. Whatever the origins of international partisanship towards the Tamil "cause" were four decades, much false information has been corrected in the post-war decade. Today the official missives from the High Commission in Colombo to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London are quoted in the Upper House of Parliament by Lord Naseby contradicting the false allegations and nature of alleged war crimes and casualties caused by the Sri Lankan State during the last stages of the Eelam war. The vast injustice done to the government, the defence forces and the very people of Sri Lanka by diverse agents of partisanship discussed above, has to be corrected through an unbiased approach to the overview leading to Resolutions such as 30/1 passed by the UNHRC to Sri Lanka. Neither is it necessary to list the articles therein as it is available publicly, nor is there any need to present a discourse on the motives of bias and falsehoods underscoring such demands from Sri Lanka.

As truth emerges and false accusations are corrected, those wishing to benefit from procedures at the UNHRC presently against Sri Lanka are becoming restless and disgruntled. For example, Dharisha Bastians (<http://telo.org/?p=176831> The Geneva 'Disconnect') quotes Alan Keenan, Senior Analyst of the International Crisis Group "...The world was desperate for a success story and when Sri Lankan voters overthrew Rajapaksa, the country appeared to offer them one, ....Sri Lanka has become the golden child of the UNHRC, a triumph that member states are desperate to hold on to, in dark and uncertain times for global human rights

activism and questions about the usefulness of the Council itself...” That summarises the expectations of those who drive the UNHRC into bias against Sri Lanka. Essentially, they want Sri Lanka to be the whipping boy at the disciplinary hands of the UNHRC. The UNHRC must ensure not to entrust inquiries to officials with ethnic roots or affiliations to any respondent or prosecuting parties. Such precautions will preserve the clear springs of impartiality and objectivity within this much needed august global guardian of human rights.

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Global Srilankan Forum Excom, and Global Srilankan Forum United Kingdom NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.