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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

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.

[02 February 2020]

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

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Non-governmental organisations and how they attempt to intervene in the social changes in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka too, the GONGOs, QUANGOs and INGOs are engaged in meddling with political matters. This essay looks briefly at some of these NGOs.

Amnesty International (est.1961)is a London-based non-governmental organization focusing on human rights. It has branches in dozens of countries including India, but not in Sri Lanka. It has a high profile and is well known, but it is no longer highly regarded.

Amnesty International has been described by one of its former officials as ‘highly political, highly coercive. If you get out of line, they get rid of you. You can’t trust them’. Amnesty International’s founder resigned in 1967, saying Amnesty International had been infiltrated by British intelligence agents. Others said the Central Intelligence Agency was also inside it.

Amnesty International’s agenda fits nicely with the political needs of the United States and Great Britain, said critics, contemptuously. AI draws attention to Human rights violations in countries that are not allied to USA or UK. But it is extremely reluctant to draw attention to Human rights violations by USA or UK.

Amnesty International is the only human rights organization in the entire world to have refused to condemn apartheid in South Africa, said critics. Amnesty International has not supported Palestine and has not charged Israel with war crimes.

Amnesty International regularly issued adverse statements on Sri Lanka. The most serious critique of Sri Lanka at the 6th session of UN HR Council session at Geneva in 2007 was by Amnesty International. Amnesty launched its “Sri Lanka, Play by the Rules” campaign, timed to coincide with the 2007 cricket World Cup held in the Caribbean islands, to focus on Sri Lanka’s alleged human rights violations. In 2006 and 2007 it said that human rights were affected, the government was attacking civilians, there was no mention of LTTE.

Amnesty International has openly supported the LTTE. Adelegation of Amnesty International came to Sri Lanka on invitation from LTTE for a two week visit in 2002 government of Sri Lanka facilitated the meeting. They met in the Vanni.LTTE and Amnesty International had discussed training for ‘Thamil Eelam police’, and ‘Thamil Eelam judiciary’. Amnesty International said that LTTE must be ready to take over law and order operation as soon as the ISGA came in.

Transparency International is an international non-governmental organization focusing on corruption. It has local chapters to carry out this work. In USA, Transparency International funded by multinational corporations, such as Citigroup, ExxonMobil, General Electric, Lockheed Martin. Transparency International gave its Integrity Award to Hillary Clinton in 2012. Transparency International has its own transparency issues with respect to donor funds. It accepted money from Siemens, while Siemens was under investigation for corruption.

Transparency International, Sri Lanka, received USD 79,000 from NORAD to look into the work of the Sri Lanka Police. It thereafter issued a report titled ‘The Police of Sri Lanka, which critics charged, affected national security.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is an international non-governmental organization, headquartered in New York City, dealing with Human rights around the world. HRW was formed from the earlier America Watch, Asia Watch, Africa Watch and Middle East Watch. HRW is seen and heard ever where, but it is not highly regarded. HRW has carried out information and propaganda work for USA and NATO, charged critics. It helped to break up Yugoslavia. Milosevic was brought before Hague on the uncorroborated evidence of HRW. HRW has sanitized Israel war crimes.

HRW has loudly supported Eelam in Sri Lanka. HRW supported the UNHRC resolution on Sri Lanka and in March 2019 wanted a time-bound plan for implementing it. HRW Annual Report of 2008 was critical of Sri Lanka.

Government of Sri Lanka responding observed that the HRW had failed to distinguish between a democratically elected government and the LTTE. Further that it is the government

that is running the schools in north and east, paying salaries of teachers, there are no private schools in the area. State hospitals are run by the state that funds them. Sri Lanka armed forces are fully trained to take every precaution against harming civilians. The government is actively delivering all essential services in the LTTE controlled areas even today the GA of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu are actively deliver in all essential services. The salaries and pensions are fully met with by government.

The International Crisis Group is a transnational non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 1995 by George Soros. It is supported by the governments of UK, Norway, Sweden, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany and Australia as well as Ford and Carnegie. 23% of the ICG's budget comes from the government of Qatar in 2019.

International Crisis Group sent a petition to the UN Secretary General in September 2008 that was deeply critical of the Sri Lanka government. In May 17 2010, it published a monograph on 'war crimes in Sri Lanka.'

FORUT is a Norwegian aid organization for social work. FORUT has project activities in Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Zambia. FORUT has a framework agreement with NORAD, The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, which ensures long-term financing of the programmes and projects in each country. The work and commitment to Sri Lanka's development has always been the largest part of FORUT's portfolio.

Until 2012, FORUT had its own organization called FORUT-Sri Lanka. FORUT Sri Lanka has helped create several smaller local organizations in all parts of the country. These organizations have since become independent 'and fully dedicated to the development of Sri Lanka'. Some of these organizations have signed partnership agreements with FORUT-Norway. Wikileaks has established the link between the FORUT and Solidar. These two organizations seem to have been engaged in plotting against the Sri Lanka government, said critics.

Rajiva Wijesinha reported that R.Tveitnes, former country director for FORUT had told the American ambassador that FORUT and a number of other INGOs had local staff on the ground [in the war zone], with satellite telephones, providing brief but consistent situation reports. Tveitnes also would text specific questions to the contact and receive response.

In August 2008, three FORUT vehicles were detained in Omanthai checkpoint by the LTTE till it was dark. Then they left, proceeding at high speed to Kilinochchi. Soon after they left the checkpoint, the middle car was caught up in a claymore blast. Wijesinha thought that this was a trick to launch a massive attack on the military, using harm to NGOs as the cause.

The INGO officers were a sort of cabal, drifting between the US bureaucracy, UN agencies and the INGO circuit, observed analysts. Almost without exception INGOs recruits were trained operatives who had earlier lived in a developing country under NGO, UN or journalist cover. Human Rights Watch officers often had a previous UN involvement, usually in Cambodia and Indonesia. Charulata Hogg was a former HRW staffer. She had worked in Sri Lanka as a foreign reporter for media organizations like BBC.

Gareth Evans, and Charulata Hogg, knew each other. Louise Arbour has taken over from Evans at ICG. Suzanne Nossel was Deputy assistant Secretary for international organizations at the US Department of State before she became Executive Director of Amnesty International. Attitudes and values are also relevant. Gareth Evans, CEO International Crisis Group had earlier supported Suharto, downplayed Jemmah Isalamiyah and backed immunity for Khmer Rouge. He signed the Timor Gap Treaty which allowed international oil companies to exploit the seabed off East Timor.

INGOs and NGOs clearly supported the Eelam War. That is why they were there in Sri Lanka in the first place. NGOs were functioning in the Wannai along with UN agencies during the Eelam war. Most of them worked primarily through local staff, reported the media. INGOs played a role during the Vanni offensives in 2009. .

In 2008 a Select committee of Parliament for investigation of the operations of NGOs and their impact was set up. This committee said in its interim report that many NGO were

working for Tamil Separatism and the LTTE. They said that International Alert had published a map which shows half the country as belong to Tamils. In this map they have marked a large are of land in the central hills and in the south as Tamil areas. This extent is even larger than in the map prepare by the LTTE.

ZOA and World Vision had in 2005 built 400 houses and these had been distributed to the elite cadres of the LTTE. Ministry of Defence had received credible intelligence reports that Medicine Sans Frontiers, Medicine du Monde, and Doctors of the world (U.S.A.) carried out acts which have threatened National Security and state policies. A certificate issued by MDM at a health education project, had the emblem of the government as well as LTTE.

‘Sri Lanka Kolping Society’ , A Catholic society with a parent organization in Germany, a social commitment, had provided the LTTE with funds during 1996-1999.

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