



**International Truth
& Justice Project
Sri Lanka**

Press Release: Sri Lanka Should Invite Special Rapporteur on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

12 January 2015

Johannesburg: The International Truth and Justice Project welcomes the announcement by the Government of Sri Lanka that it has endorsed the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. However ITJP calls on President Sirisena to demonstrate his commitment on this issue by immediately extending an invitation to the UN Secretary General's Special Rapporteur on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Bangura, to visit Sri Lanka.

The UN Secretary-General's most recent report on conflict-related sexual violence¹ said one of the major unaddressed issues in Sri Lanka was impunity for conflict-related sexual violence that had increased in the post-war period. It commented that allegations of sexual violence by the security forces against Tamils had been extensively documented but rarely addressed. The SG's report almost a year ago called upon the new Government of Sri Lanka to investigate allegations of sexual violence, including those against the security forces, and to provide services, including reparations, for survivors and those at risk.

The subsequent report of the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL)² found that sexual violence committed by Government Forces during and after the war was widespread and could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said one of the OISL report's most shocking findings was "the extent to which sexual violence was committed against detainees, often extremely brutally, by the Sri Lankan security forces, with men as likely to be victims as women". He said harrowing testimony indicated that incidents of sexual violence "were not isolated acts but part of a deliberate policy to inflict torture"³.

In September 2015 the Government of Sri Lanka pledged in a UN Resolution it co-sponsored "to issue instructions clearly to all branches of the security forces that violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including those involving torture, rape and sexual violence, are prohibited and that those responsible will be investigated and punished,"⁴. To date this has yet to happen.

Earlier this month, ITJP released a report, [Silenced: survivors of torture and sexual violence in 2015](#). It was based on sworn statements from twenty individuals all of whom suffered torture and sexual violence at the hands of the security forces during 2015 while President Sirisena was in office.

¹ UN Document: S/2015/203 (March 2015).

² UN Document: A/HRC/30/CRP.2 (September 2015).

³ *Zeid urges creation of hybrid special court in Sri Lanka as UN report confirms patterns of grave violations*, Available at [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?LangID=E&NewsID=16432](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?LangID=E&NewsID=16432#sthash.gAOpWz7C.dpuf)

⁴ UN Resolution, A/HRC/30/L.29, Op 17, *Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka*, 29 September 2015. The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister also pledged at UN Human Rights Council on 14 September 2015, "to issue instructions clearly to all branches of the security forces that torture, rape, sexual violence and other human rights violations are prohibited and that those responsible will be investigated and punished", available at <http://www.news.lk/fetures/item/9742-statement-by-mangala-samaraweera-at-the-30th-session-of-the-unhrc-geneva>.