Resolution on the situation in Sri Lanka

2011/2684(RSP) - 12/05/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Sri Lanka.

The resolution was tabled by the GUE/NGL, ECR, S&D, EPP, ALDE, and Greens/EFA groups.

It recalls that the long-running conflict in Sri Lanka came to an end in May 2009 with the surrender of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the death of their leader, and with large numbers of Sri Lankans living as internally displaced persons, especially in the north of the country. Members express concern at the serious nature of the allegations in the UN report, which was published on 25 April 2011, and found to be credible allegations that both government forces and the LTTE conducted military operations ‘with flagrant disregard for the protection, rights, welfare and lives of civilians and failed to respect the norms of international law’. Parliament stresses that those allegations, and the issue of accountability for them, must be properly addressed before lasting reconciliation can be achieved in Sri Lanka. It acknowledges that the panel of experts appointed by the UN Secretary-General found to be credible allegations which, if proven, indicate that a wide range of serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law was committed both by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, some of which would amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The resolution notes that the panel has recommended that the UN Secretary General should immediately proceed to establish an independent international mechanism, but that the latter has been advised that this will require host country consent or a decision by member states through an appropriate intergovernmental forum. Members take the view that, in the interests of justice and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, the allegations contained in the UN panel of experts' report **warrant a full, impartial and transparent investigation,** and they encourage the Government of Sri Lanka to respond constructively to the recommendations made by the panel of experts. They further call on the VP/HR, the Council and the Commission to **support further efforts to strengthen the accountability process in Sri Lanka and to support the UN report.**

Parliament urges the Sri Lankan Government to implement the panel's recommendations, starting with the ‘immediate measures’, and immediately to commence genuine investigations into the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law allegedly committed by both sides involved in the armed conflict. It is deeply concerned about the worrying lack of independence of the judiciary, which could play a complementary role to an independent investigation body; urges the Sri Lankan Government to ensure restorative and retributive justice. It also urges the Sri Lankan Government to take active measures in terms of political devolution and to encourage Tamil recruitment to the government service and to the police and the armed forces, so that the Tamil peoples feel reassured and will recognise the defeat of the LTTE as a liberation and look forward to a bright and prosperous future, on equal terms with their Sinhalese fellow citizens.