

## Censure Sri Lankan President : TGTE

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This week Maithripala Sirisena, the President of Sri Lanka, will attend the 72nd session of the U.N. General Assembly. His participation in meetings and gala events belie his true contempt of and utter disregard for the U.N. and what it stands for.

Last week, the Washington Post revealed the findings of a leaked U.N. report finding that Sri Lanka was helping North Korea evade Security Council sanctions. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/un-experts-nkorea-exported-270-million-illegally-recently/2017/09/09/a6433f74-95c0-11e7-8482-8dc9a7af29f9\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.1ebdba384824](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/un-experts-nkorea-exported-270-million-illegally-recently/2017/09/09/a6433f74-95c0-11e7-8482-8dc9a7af29f9_story.html?utm_term=.1ebdba384824)



Earlier this month, Sirisena proclaimed: “I state very clearly that I will not allow anyone in the world to touch Jagath Jayasuriya or any other military chief or any war hero in this country.” Sirisena’s pronouncement came following war crime lawsuits filed against this former commander and Sri Lanka’s current envoy to Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Peru, and Suriname.

Sirisena’s effective grant of immunity to Jayasuriya, once the Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of the Sri Lanka Army and other military leaders is the most emphatic and unequivocal recantation to date of the commitments Sirisena undertook in Human Rights Council Resolution 30/1 (2015). In that resolution, co-authored and co-sponsored with the U.S., the Sri Lankan government recognized that “accountability is essential” to the future of the country and committed “to establish[ing] a judicial mechanism with a special counsel to investigate allegations of violations.”

As pointed out in the High Commissioner of Human Right’s report this past February, “The fulfilment of [these] commitments ha[ve] however, been worryingly slow, and ... were inadequate to ensure real progress.”

Now, with Sirisena’s bold unapologetic grant of immunity to the senior commander with direct responsibility for the crimes of his subordinates under international law, the die of impunity has been irrevocably cast. Crimes that were captured on video, verified by satellite imagery, witnessed first-hand by U.N. staff, and established in a comprehensive investigation report conducted by an impartial panel appointed by the High Commissioner.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/OISL.aspx>

Sirisena, himself, was the Defence Minister during the final weeks of conflict when the gravest crimes occurred, making this a brazen act of self-interest as well.

For the tens of thousands of victims of unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, and sexual violence perpetrated by the Sri Lankan Army, justice is ever more remote. Sirisena's prideful grant of immunity and the complicity of the international community in the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of the gravest crimes, including genocide, committed this century, leaves the families of victims of these crimes with little faith in the international community's resolve and the emboldened military leaders in Myanmar with little to fear as they follow the roadmap of impunity so skillfully charted by the government of Sri Lanka.

When Sirisena raises his champagne glass during the gala dinners this week, he will no doubt silently and smugly toast his own deft manipulation of the international community.

Contact: [pmo@tgte.org](mailto:pmo@tgte.org)

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam  
TGTE  
+1212-290-2925  
[email us here](#)

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