



May 1, 2015

*Via Electronic Mail*

John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

*Re: Recommendations for U.S. Engagement on Accountability in Sri Lanka*

Dear Secretary Kerry:

President Maithripala Sirisena has made welcome assurances to address international crimes committed during and immediately following Sri Lanka's civil war. The United States has an opportunity to provide critical technical assistance<sup>1</sup> and support for those efforts. During your May 2, 2015 visit to Sri Lanka, we recommend that you take the following actions.

1. Encourage the Sirisena administration to immediately release the names and places of detention of those being detained. Sri Lanka's Missing Persons Commission has received over 20,000 complaints of disappearances, and news outlets have reported a secret detention camp in Trincomalee.<sup>2</sup>
2. Urge the appointment of a special prosecutor, autonomous from the attorney general, to investigate alleged war crimes. Sri Lanka's 1994 and 1998 disappearances commissions made the same recommendation.
3. Support the creation of specialized trial and appeals chambers, preferably with national and international staff, to investigate and prosecute war crimes.
4. Ask that the Sirisena administration actively consult with victims and survivors, community leaders, lawyers, and civil society to shape its transitional justice framework, which it has yet to do.
5. Recommend reforms of security and surveillance structures and the Prevention of Terrorism Act to protect those seeking truth and justice. The Terrorism Investigation

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<sup>1</sup> *Sri Lanka after the Presidential election*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., Discussion (at 3:55) (Feb. 11, 2015), <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/02/11/sri-lanka-after-presidential-election/i13p>.

<sup>2</sup> *Presidential Commission to Investigate into Complaints Regarding Missing Persons*, <http://www.pcicmp.lk/>; *Secret camp operated in Trincomalee naval base, Sri Lanka Tamil party alleges*, ColomboPage (Feb. 21, 2015), [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15A/Feb21\\_1424503390CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15A/Feb21_1424503390CH.php).

Department and Criminal Investigation Department should stop harassing, following and arbitrarily detaining those who participate in workshops or community meetings, incidents that continue to be reported today.

Sri Lanka has a real chance under President Sirisena to promote unity and healing, if it commits to truth, justice and accountability. The U.S. should continue its leadership on human rights in Sri Lanka and assist the Sirisena administration to take concrete steps in the right direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dixon Osburn".

Dixon Osburn  
Executive Director  
The Center for Justice and Accountability

cc:

Nisha Biswal, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs  
Tom Malinowski, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor  
Stephen Rapp, Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues