



Statement of Ireland

40th session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive dialogue on the report of the OHCHR on Sri Lanka

20 March 2019

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union.

Mr (Vice) President,

Ireland thanks the Office of the High Commissioner for its report on Sri Lanka.

In our last statement on Sri Lanka in this forum at the 34th Session, Ireland welcomed the commitment of the Government of Sri Lanka to undertake a comprehensive approach to dealing with the past and to promote reconciliation, accountability and human rights under the terms of resolution 30/1, which was co-sponsored by Sri Lanka and adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 1 October 2015. This was later extended by HRC resolution 34/1 on 23 March 2017.

Ireland is pleased to note the steps taken by the Government of Sri Lanka to implement Resolutions 30/1 and 34/1. We appreciate that the Government has continued to engage constructively with UN human rights mechanisms in the period under review. Although progress has been made, much remains to be done. We call on Sri Lanka to ensure that a full investigation into allegations of harassment of human rights defenders and prosecute those found responsible.

The political crisis in Sri Lanka in late 2018 tested Sri Lanka's democratic institutions. We welcome the peaceful and democratic resolution of the crisis in accordance with the Constitution. This demonstrates the progress that has been made in building stable institutions. However, Ireland is concerned at proposals for a counter-terrorism law that include the possibility of the death penalty as a punishment. We strongly encourage Sri Lanka to uphold the moratorium on the death penalty and to consider the prohibition of the death penalty in all circumstances.

High Commissioner,

We are pleased to note the strength of democratic institutions in Sri Lanka displayed during the recent constitutional crisis. What recommendations would you make to the international community to support a continued strengthening of these institutions?

Thank you.