



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on Sri Lanka

*2942nd GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 18 May 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- “1. The EU has monitored the events of the last 48 hours and is appalled by the loss of innocent lives as a result of the conflict and by the high numbers of casualties, including children, following recent intense fighting in northern Sri Lanka.
2. As the fighting draws to an end, the EU reiterates its call on the Government of Sri Lanka urgently to proceed towards a comprehensive political process. It therefore calls on the President of Sri Lanka to outline a clear process leading to a fully inclusive political solution, based on consent, equality and the rule of law. Long-term security, post-conflict reconstruction and prosperity in Sri Lanka can only be achieved through such a process, to address the legitimate concerns of all Sri Lanka's communities. The EU expects all parties to engage without delay and stands ready to support this process.
3. The EU calls on the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to take all necessary steps to prevent further loss of life, welcoming the reported escape out of the combat zone of a significant number of civilians. The EU reiterates the need for all parties to a conflict to fully respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. The EU calls for the alleged violations of these laws to be investigated through an independent inquiry. Those accountable must be brought to justice.

P R E S S

4. The EU acknowledges steps already taken by the Government of Sri Lanka to address the humanitarian situation of those it is holding in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), but significant obstacles remain. The civilian nature of the camps, freedom of movement and early return for IDPs should be ensured. Full and unhindered access to all IDPs must be guaranteed and current restrictions on the humanitarian aid agencies, such as visa and checkpoint problems, should be removed. The EU calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to give the ICRC a monitoring role and share with them lists of persons screened by the Government while leaving the conflict zone.
5. The EU calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to take, without delay, all necessary steps to facilitate the evacuation of civilians, as well as the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance to them, in line with its obligation to protect all people under its jurisdiction. The EU underscores that fighting terrorism must be done in full respect for the rule of law and Human Rights.
6. The EU welcomes the UN Security Council Press Statement of 13 May and continues to support the efforts of the UN to help alleviate the situation in Sri Lanka. It supports an early visit by the Secretary-General to the country. The EU urges the Government of Sri Lanka to extend full cooperation to the UN in order to resolve the humanitarian crisis.
7. The EU condemns the LTTE, a terrorist organisation, in particular for the use of civilians as human shields and the forced recruitment of civilians. The EU calls on the LTTE to lay down its arms and to renounce terrorism and violence once and for all.
8. The EU expresses its deep concern about the human rights situation, and considers that ensuring respect of media freedom is crucial. It welcomes the work being undertaken by the UN Special Rapporteurs and joins their call for thorough monitoring of developments. The EU continues to call for appropriate action by the United Nations Human Rights Council.
9. The Council will keep the situation in Sri Lanka, including its humanitarian aspects, under close scrutiny and will revert to the issue as appropriate.”
