



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on SRI LANKA

*2925th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 23 February 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU has been following closely developments in Sri Lanka. The EU is deeply concerned about the evolving humanitarian crisis and vast number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) trapped by the fighting in northern Sri Lanka, as well as the continuing reports of high civilian casualties. To prevent the loss of civilian life, the EU stresses the need for the provisions of international humanitarian law and the principles of the laws of war to be respected by parties to a conflict. The EU calls on the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to comply with these laws.
2. The EU calls for an immediate cease-fire thereby providing for the establishment of full and unrestricted access, allowing humanitarian aid to be safely delivered and allowing civilians to leave the conflict area. The EU condemns the LTTE's use of violence and intimidation to prevent civilians from leaving the conflict area.
3. The EU urges the Sri Lankan Government to ensure that the temporary camps for IDPs and the screening process for access to them are in compliance with international standards and that independent monitoring be allowed. The UN, the ICRC, and other humanitarian organizations need to have full access to these camps. These above conditions must be met for the EU to be in a position to provide the required humanitarian assistance.

P R E S S

4. The EU remains convinced that the long standing conflict in Sri Lanka cannot be resolved by military means. A military defeat of the LTTE will only reemphasize the need to find a political solution in order to ensure a lasting peace. The EU recalls the Co-Chairs Statement issued on 03/02/09 and reiterates its intention to send a Troika as soon as possible.
 5. The EU calls on the LTTE to lay down its arms and to renounce terrorism and violence once and for all, end the inhuman use of child soldiers and forced recruitment, and participate in a political process to achieve a just and lasting solution. The EU calls on the authorities of Sri Lanka to engage in an inclusive political process, which addresses the legitimate concerns of all communities.
 6. The EU remains deeply concerned about grave violations of human rights, in particular the cases of enforced disappearances, extra-judicial killings as well as harassments, intimidations, attacks on the media and human rights defenders and the climate of impunity. The EU calls on the Sri Lankan authorities to take decisive action to tackle human rights abuses, to guarantee press freedom and to disarm paramilitary groups in Government controlled areas. The EU views with concern the draft 'Prohibition of Forcible Conversions' bill.
 7. The EU underlines the importance of the Sri Lankan authorities to cooperate in the GSP+ investigation into the effective implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of the Child."
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