



Joint Contribution on Sri Lanka to the 14th session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review

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I. Introduction

1. The Committee to Protect Journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, International Media Support, Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka, PEN International, and Reporters Without Borders welcome the opportunity provided by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights to comment on the climate for press freedom and free expression in Sri Lanka.
2. This joint submission serves to underscore our shared concern over the deteriorating situation for journalism and free expression since the Human Rights Council's previous review of Sri Lanka in 2008.
3. Since the previous Universal Period Review (UPR) in 2008, the protection of freedom of expression and press freedom in Sri Lanka has sharply deteriorated. Despite the end of the country's long-running civil war in 2009, Sri Lanka's journalists and media personnel continue to struggle to achieve a safe, open and free environment for reporting and are constantly met by attacks, threats and violent rhetoric. An entrenched climate of impunity threatens progress towards national reconciliation, including the institution of rule of law, which is necessary to improve the situation of freedom of expression.
4. In December 2009, key media and freedom of expression organizations conducted an [International Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression Mission](#) to Sri Lanka. The mission warned that the intensifying political environment would negatively impact freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, this prediction has been borne out in subsequent years. 2010 was a difficult year for press freedom owing in great part to the presidential elections. Although some respite came in 2011, it was not enough to bring about a climate in which journalists, writers or artists could work without fear of reprisal or threats. In 2012, the increasingly violent rhetoric from government spokespersons and state-owned media, in particular, created a hostile climate for free expression, peace and national reconciliation in the country.
5. The government of Sri Lanka has also done little to attempt to address the culture of impunity surrounding the killing of journalists. The government has consistently failed to bring individuals, state agencies and non-state actors to justice. This failure is unacceptable and is clearly detrimental to the climate for press freedom and free expression in Sri Lanka.
6. The 2011 report of the 18-month inquiry of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, held some promise to promote press freedom and national reconciliation, through its recognition of the persistent pattern of "attacks and obstacles placed on journalists and media institutions." Despite this, its recommendations were largely ignored by the Sri Lankan government, which instead opted for a course of heightened confrontation with the independent media.
7. Linguistic diversity remains an integral aspect of free expression, and Sri Lanka continues to suffer from an inability of Tamil speakers to access government support and

services, subverting their right to democratic participation and in some circumstances experiencing outright discrimination.

8. Finally, Sri Lankan journalists in exile continue to do their best to advocate and organise, but are hampered by the impact of bureaucracy and the lack of legal support in receiving countries, as well as the lack of coordination between government bodies, UN agencies and civil society groups.

II. Implementation of the recommendations by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) regarding freedom of expression and the right to information.

9. The LLRC is an official commission appointed by the President of Sri Lanka as part of the process of national reconciliation. In December 2011 the LLRC published a report which discussed media freedom issues.
10. The LLRC recorded that it was “deeply disturbed” by the persistent pattern of “attacks and obstacles placed on journalists and media institutions” that has continued even after the war’s end. These difficulties had been experienced even by “news websites”. The “killing of journalists” is another matter of serious concern flagged by the LLRC, which remarked that the failure to “conclusively” investigate and bring the “perpetrators” to justice does little credit to the Sri Lankan government.
11. The LLRC noted, with some severity, that even while its deliberations were in progress, there was a “deplorable attack on the Editor of the *Uthayan* newspaper in Jaffna”. Such “actions”, the LLRC warned, “clearly place great obstacles in the way of any reconciliation efforts”. Indeed, it pointed out that “any failure to investigate and prosecute offenders would undermine the process of reconciliation and the Rule of Law”.
12. The LLRC report is still being debated in Sri Lanka and diverse opinions are being voiced about the utility of its contribution to national reconciliation.
13. We are encouraged by the LLRC recommendations that have a bearing on journalism, such as the recognition that freedom of expression and the right to information provide a pivotal role in the reconciliation process; that steps should be taken to deter attacks on freedom of expression through the enforcement of criminal laws; that past incidents must be investigated; that media be provided freedom of movement; and that legislation should be enacted to uphold the right to information.
14. However, we are seriously concerned that, despite these very clear recommendations, the government of Sri Lanka seems intent on confronting the independent media, escalating the violent rhetoric against journalists, and questioning journalists’ motives in seeking restitution for years of hardship.
15. This manner of rhetoric possibly contributed to the [brutal attack](#) on Poddala Jayantha, then the General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Working Journalists’ Association, in June 2009. Jayantha, a highly awarded journalist, suffered permanent disabilities from the attack and now lives in exile.
16. In January 2006, S. Sukirtharajan, a photographer with the Tamil daily *Sudar Oli*, was shot dead by assailants on motorcycles just days after he had published photographs proving that five Tamil students found dead in the eastern city of Trincomalee had been victims of an execution by state security agencies. A [cable](#) from the U.S. ambassador to

Sri Lanka has now come to light which records President Rajapaksa's brother Basil Rajapaksa, a senior minister, admitting that the "Special Task Force" of the Sri Lankan military may have carried out the killing of the five students.

17. In August 2006, the Jaffna office of the *Uthayan* newspaper—part of the same group as *Sudar Oli*—was attacked with fire bombs and seriously damaged. A diplomatic cable revealed that the U.S. ambassador in Sri Lanka was told, once again [by the President's brother](#), that this attack was in all probability carried out by the Sri Lankan Navy in league with a Tamil political party that is a close ally of President Rajapaksa.
18. In one of the most shocking incidents since the civil war was officially declared over in May 2009, the news editor of *Uthayan* was attacked with iron rods on the streets of Jaffna and left for dead shortly after local elections in the Northern province were concluded in July 2011. The newspaper had editorially supported the opposition parties, which registered significant wins in the elections. To its credit, the LLRC noted this attack and denounced it.
19. The Sri Lankan government's continuing failure to act against lawlessness—indeed its seeming eagerness to promote the rancor that contributed to the violence—suggest not a desire for national reconciliation, but its very opposite.

III. Manipulation of state owned media to attack political enemies, particularly media organizations

20. We believe that the tone of public comment in government-controlled media is unwarranted and speaks to a determination to pursue the same policies that led to the bitter estrangement between Sri Lanka's main linguistic communities.
21. The Black Tuesday campaign of 2012 is an emblematic case of the dangerous climate for free expression in Sri Lanka, and reveals both the Sri Lankan government's hostility towards journalists and the enduring culture of impunity.
22. Journalists in Sri Lanka began a campaign on 25 January 2012, in memory of colleagues who fell in the quarter-century long civil war in the island nation. This day of protest united all Sri Lanka's principal professional journalism bodies and was planned as a reminder to those in power that the vital task of national reconciliation requires more than token gestures. The campaign also aimed to dispel the climate of impunity for attacks on the media during the armed conflict, and to allow a free voice for human rights defenders who stand up for a fair and just society.
23. Government spokespersons began to mobilise their own campaign of hostile rhetoric soon after the alliance of professional bodies announced plans for the 25 January protests.
24. In the second week of January the government-owned TV channel launched an attack, bristling with unseemly aggression, against the Free Media Movement (FMM), a voluntary body with which many of Sri Lanka's leading journalists have been associated for close to two decades. While playing old footage of these journalists and activists from past campaigns, the TV channel ran a commentary on its main news programmes, attacking them in virulent terms. According to a reliable translation provided by local

sources in Sri Lanka, the commentary accused these activists of “betraying” the “motherland for gold and titles”. With mock regret that the descendants of individuals who were “killed” during the reign of the kings “live on today”, the commentary promised that those who “do no good to the country, would some day face no good”.

25. On January 10, the government-owned newspaper accused the FMM of petitioning the European Union to terminate the bilateral trade preferences Sri Lanka enjoys. Two former convenors of the FMM and, by subtle implication, the current holder of that post, were accused of seeking to undermine a concession that benefits many industries in Sri Lanka. The report used suggestive and extremely hostile rhetoric, describing the individuals named as “anti-national elements” who were sustained on “foreign funds”.
26. Prior to the FMM’s planned demonstrations of 25 January, the government secured a court injunction restricting the protests to a narrow area around the Fort Railway Station, a major landmark in Colombo. Though the FMM and its allied organisations made it clear that they were not seeking confrontation, gangs of stick-wielding toughs reportedly took over the site where the demonstrations were planned. Placards carried by these gangs explicitly identified the FMM as an ally of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).
27. On 25 January, the government-controlled newspaper, the Daily News, carried an [editorial](#) which warned that any effort to “sabotage the progress of the country by disruptive elements [would] be put down”. The editorial identified the FMM, which coordinates the activities of all other professional bodies in the country—including journalists’ bodies organised on linguistic and ethnic lines—as “one of those organisations which have been in the forefront of lambasting the Lankan state on numerous issues”. The FMM, the editorial warned, “has been steeped in controversy and has a lot of soul-searching to do.” The Daily News editorial then proceeded quite gratuitously to ask about the current whereabouts of the FMM’s leadership: “We wonder where its ‘Founding Fathers’ are today? Are they in this country or in some safe Western Comfort Zone?”
28. We denounce these insinuations about individuals who were involved in human rights and media freedom campaigns in Sri Lanka through the difficult years of the civil war. There is, moreover, no mystery about their current whereabouts, since most were forced into exile by the events of January 2009, one of the worst months of a dark quarter century for journalism in Sri Lanka. The escape of these journalists into exile does not diminish the importance of the cause that they took great risks to advocate: media freedom as an imperative in the process of building peace.

IV. Failure to properly investigate violence against journalists and media workers.

29. We denounce the lack of convictions for the numerous deaths and attacks upon journalists in Sri Lanka.
30. At the last review of Sri Lanka during the UPR process, on 13 May 2008, the Hon. Mahinda Samarasinghe, Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights of Sri Lanka stated:

The Government is perturbed by the alleged attacks on media workers and especially repulsed by the killing of media workers. The Government in no way condones or endorses any such attacks. All complaints will be impartially and thoroughly investigated.

Only a few weeks later, on 29 May 2008, 36-year-old journalist Paranirupasingam Devakumar was hacked to death in Sri Lanka. At the time of his death, Devakumar worked as Jaffna correspondent for the news program News First of the TV station *Sirasa/MTV*. As with all other deaths of journalists while President Mahinda Rajapaksa has been in office, no one has been charged or tried for the murder of Devakumar.

31. On 6 October 2008 Rashmi Mohamed, another *Sirasa/MTV* correspondence, was killed by a suicide bomber from the LTTE. None of the identified and still living LTTE leaders have been prosecuted for authorizing the attack by the suicide bomber.
32. Lasantha Wickrematunge, the editor in chief of *The Sunday Leader*, an English-language newspaper, was murdered on 8 January 2009 on a busy street in Colombo in front of numerous witnesses. Despite repeated calls for an investigation there has been no progress, even though on 28 January 2009, government defense spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella stated that the government was aware of the identity of the murderers and that the President would make the facts known on 15 February 2009. The President has never released the identities of the murderers. In May 2010 Rambukwella took the post of Media Minister.
33. In the final five months of the war in Sri Lanka at least three journalists or media workers were killed. On 12 February 2009 Punniyamurthy Sathyamurthy was killed in an air strike. He worked for a Tamil news website based in Canada. On 5 March 2009 Sasi Mathan, who worked for *Eelanaatham Daily*, was also killed in an airstrike. The exact date when the journalist Isai Priya was murdered is not known. However, pictures of her dead body are featured in the British Channel 4 documentary *Sri Lanka Killing Fields*. Representatives of the Sri Lanka government have publically confirmed Priya's identity, but claim she was a legitimate military target. From the pictures, it appears she was sexually abused and then executed. If true, these actions of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces would likely constitute war crimes under international law.
34. Prageeth Eknelygoda, a political reporter and cartoonist for *Lanka e News*, was abducted on the night of January 24, 2010. Eknelygoda was described by colleagues as a political analyst who supported former army chief turned opposition presidential candidate Sarath Fonseka. Sandhya Eknelygoda said that police initially refused to accept a criminal complaint, and only began to look into Prageeth's disappearance two weeks later. A complaint she filed to Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission has not resulted in any more information, though the commission launched an investigation on February 12. Ms. Eknelygoda's attorneys have filed a case in the Court of Appeal, asking the government to reveal if they are holding him, that is still being adjudicated. Over the years Ms Eknelygoda and her two teenage sons have continued to make

appeals at every level of the government, from cabinet ministries down to local police offices, searching for any news of her husband's fate. No person or institution in Sri Lanka has been able to tell her anything about the fate of her husband.

35. There have been many assaults and abductions of journalists and media workers in Sri Lanka. In May and July 2008, journalists and media activists Keith Noyahr and Namal Perera were attacked, both sustaining serious injuries. On 8 September 2008 the journalist Radhika Devakumar was the target of an attempted murder, but survived injuries from the gunman's attack. On 23 January 2009, Upali Tennakoon, editor of the Sinhala-language, pro-government weekly newspaper *Rivira*, was attacked and sustained serious injuries. During the evening on 1 June 2009, Poddala Jayantha was taken into a white van, where he was badly beaten with iron bars and wooden poles and burnt with a cigarette lighter. After the beating Jayantha was dropped on the roadside. Witnesses have said six men had forced him into the van. Jayantha sustained permanent injuries that will affect him for the rest of his life. On 26 February 2009, Nadesapillai Vithyatharan, editor of Tamil newspaper *Sodar Oli*, was abducted in Colombo. The police said they had him in their custody after a few hours and he was released two months later. There has been no explanation of how, after Vithyatharan's abduction, he wound up in police custody. On 30 July 2011, Gnanasundaram Kuhanathan, the news editor of *Uthayan* newspaper in Jaffna, was attacked on his way home from his office and he sustained life-threatening head injuries.
36. Since 2008, there have been a number of high profile arson attacks and other physical attacks on offices of media houses, radio stations and online media. On 6 January 2009, the main control room of the TV channel *MTV/Sirasa* was destroyed by a powerful explosion from a claymore mine left by a group of masked men who forcefully entered the office. The station was attacked again on 22 March 2010 by a stone-throwing mob that injured four people. This attack was carried out in full daylight and the entire incident filmed by security cameras. Although the police have identified the attackers, there have been no convictions of the perpetrators, possibly because three of them are elected officials. On 25 March 2009, a grenade was thrown at the office of *Uthayan* newspaper in Jaffna town, causing considerable damage. On 30 June 2010, the TV station *Siyatha* was stormed by 12 armed men who set it on fire. On 30 January 2011 the office of the website *Lanka E News* suffered an arson attack.
37. Media outlets outside the city centers of Colombo and Jaffna have also been frequently attacked or threatened. Few newspapers in Sri Lanka are fully operated and published outside Colombo or Jaffna. Since 2005, Mohamed Ibrahim Rahmathullah, editor in chief of his own provincial Tamil newspaper, *Vaara Uraikal*, in Kattankudy in Eastern province, has been known for exposing governmental corruption and abuses. Rahmathullah has faced numerous threats and attacks by local politicians, and has been brutally assaulted both in his home and in public, most recently inside a Mosque in January 2012. In April 2009, thugs with swords attacked him; in September 2010, unknown men attacked him; and in February 2011 thugs with iron rods attacked him. In March 2011, Rahmathullah's newspapers were seized following a complaint made against him by a local politician.

Despite these threats and attacks, Rahmathullah is determined to continue with his journalism. No perpetrators have been brought to justice, despite his having always reporting the attacks to the police.

V. Sri Lankan Media Workers in exile

38. According to information gathered by Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka, more than 65 Sri Lankan journalists have gone into exile since 2005, as a result of threats related to their work and fear of government persecution. Most live in Europe while a minority have been granted refugee status in other countries such as United States, Canada, and Japan. Here is an incomplete estimate compiled for the purposes of analysis:

- United Kingdom – 11
- Germany – 5
- Switzerland – 22
- Norway – 2
- Austria – 1
- France – 10
- Ireland – 1
- United States – 7
- Canada – 3
- Japan – 1

39. The exact numbers may be slightly higher than these figures and there may be journalists in countries that do not appear on this list.

40. The journalists who have reached the receiving countries listed above have been granted political asylum or are in the process of doing so. In at least three cases, they have been attached to study programs designed for exiled writers and journalists, which may give them time to settle in before applying for asylum.

41. Each country has its own refugee policy and the European Union ensures common standards through legislation. However, it is important to note that Switzerland is the only country that took steps to speed up the application process through its embassies and to grant a temporary entry visa, ensuring Sri Lankan journalists would be provided with immediate support. In a few cases, Norway and the U.S. took steps to evacuate threatened journalists by making special arrangements through their embassies.

42. Sri Lankan media workers living in exile in European countries and elsewhere face two main problems: (a) the impact of bureaucracy and the lack of legal support upon their work; and (b) a lack of coordination between government bodies, UN agencies and civil society groups.

a. Impact of bureaucracy and the lack of legal support upon the work of exiled journalists.

43. Many Sri Lankan media workers have little or no understanding of the refugee system and have no access to legal assistance. Most depend on personal contacts to find legal support, which in most of the cases causes a huge financial burden. Some asylum applications were repeatedly turned down as a result, for example in Britain and Ireland, because of technical irregularities, despite compelling evidence of genuine risk. In Britain and Ireland, lengthy legal proceedings have kept some journalists in limbo for long periods and pushed them close to psychological breakdown. In one such case, a journalist who arrived in Ireland moved to Britain to apply for asylum without knowing the regulations. He was deported back to Ireland where he has been held in an immigration detention centre for almost two years, with serious consequences for his mental health.
44. The lack of interest in individual cases on the part of most of the institutions that deal with asylum seekers often adversely affects the professional capabilities of journalists or their ability to work. One exiled photojournalist with 25 years of experience, who worked for an international news agency, was forced to give up his profession because of the asylum process. He suffered a stroke as an indirect consequence, which permanently affected his ability to work.

b. Lack of coordination between government bodies, UN agencies and civil society groups with respect to exiled journalists.

45. There is a lack of coordination between government bodies, UN agencies, and civil society groups with respect to Sri Lankan journalists seeking asylum. This is of the utmost importance when considering the plight of journalists who end up in prison, immigration detention centers or similar facilities while trying to reach a safer destination. The biggest obstacle these journalists face is the reluctance of international agencies, such as the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), to recognize them as refugees and to provide them with legal protection, despite the intervention of high-profile and respected media and human rights groups. In at least eight such cases, journalists remain stranded without legal recognition in several countries in South and South East Asia. In some cases, the response of UNHCR towards these journalists has been shocking in view of strong evidence that their safety was at risk. In 2012, UNHCR turned down a refugee application submitted by a female journalist whose husband, also a journalist, was killed during the war. She was forced to leave the country with her five-year-old child. As a result of the refusal, mother and child were placed in a detention centre. This clearly illustrates the need for greater coordination between agencies such as the UNHCR and Western rights groups.
46. Although the exiled journalists have no intention of abandoning their profession or remaining permanently in their host countries, they are often forced to give up journalism because of structural pressures.
47. The foreign policies of European countries towards Sri Lanka, aimed at promoting and strengthening its democratic machinery, are being undermined by their refugee policies. The continued imposition of rigid conditions on exiled Sri Lankan media workers effectively drowns their commitment and talent in a quagmire of bureaucracy, when they should be seen as an important resource for promoting these values.

48. While the phenomenon of exiled Sri Lanka media workers is now widely known, no substantial research has been carried out into the conditions of their life in exile and their fate as a group. Such research would lead to an understanding of the rigid and intransigent character of the Sri Lankan state as well as identify serious shortcomings in the refugee policies of western democracies.

VI. Linguistic Diversity

49. PEN International is concerned about the harmful impact of the post-conflict environment in Sri Lanka upon linguistic diversity.

50. Section 12 of the Constitution of Sri Lanka provides for equal protection and prevents discrimination on the basis of language, with the caveat that government employees may be required to learn a language within a reasonable amount of time.

51. Linguistic diversity is protected under Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Further protections may be found in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (Articles 1-9), adapted by the UN General Assembly in 1992 (47/135). The 1996 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights (Barcelona Declaration), while not adapted by the General Assembly, also protects language communities and linguistic rights.

52. The armed conflict in Sri Lanka was strongly impacted by language, which continues to have a lingering effect upon reconciliation. Beginning in 1956, Sinhala served as an official language in Sri Lanka for over twenty years. Tamil was upgraded to a national language in the 1978 Constitution along with English, but did not receive full official recognition until 1988 with a Constitutional amendment.

53. There is a wide linguistic gulf between Sinhala, an Indo-Aryan language, and Tamil, a Dravidian language, and few Sri Lankans speak both languages fluently. However, Sri Lankans themselves have noted that the differences between the languages do not inherently create animosity between Sinhalese and Tamils.

54. During the 1980s, books became symbols of ethnic tensions and vessels for Sri Lankans to explore the armed conflict. For example, the Jaffna Library was destroyed in 1981, reportedly by armed policeman, resulting in the loss of ancient Tamil texts inscribed on palm leaves.

55. Today, Sinhalese represent roughly 74 percent of the population. Sri Lankan Tamils constitute 12.6 percent and Indian Tamils roughly 5.5 percent. About 7.1 percent of the country is Muslim and less than 1 percent identify with other ethnicities.¹
56. We applaud the pledge by President Rajapaksa to declare 2012 as the Year for a Trilingual Sri Lanka and his launching of a 20-year National Action Plan which aims to make the country a trilingual nation by 2020.
57. We recognize the work of the Official Languages Commission (OLC) to investigate and advise the government about linguistic diversity in the country. The OLC pledged to make the entire public service bilingual (Tamil-Sinhala) within 15 years and proposed financial incentives to encourage the learning of the respective languages.
58. We further note the importance of certain aspects of the National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (2011).
59. However, several impediments remain in place that prevent the achievement of linguistic diversity.
60. As of 2011, birth, death and marriage certificates were only issued in Sinhala.
61. Not only is there a lack of Tamil-speaking public officials, those that do exist often receive communications in Sinhala from the central government in Colombo, placing them at an immediate disadvantage.
62. Historical texts continue to be used to promote a Buddhist narrative of the country. The *Mahavamsa* is an epic poem in the ancient Pali language which has been held as proof that Sri Lanka is a Buddhist nation, implying that the Sinhalese are authentic Sri Lankans, while Tamils and Muslims serve as usurpers. The use of this text—and the exclusion of others—embodies the need for better cross-cultural education.
63. The OLC, mentioned earlier, continues to be under-resourced, hampering its ability to investigate complaints and provide guidance to the government on language diversification.
64. There is evidence that linguistic diversity is not being embraced and the opposite is happening—that the country is becoming “Sinhalized” through the promotion of Sinhala culture at the expense of Tamil culture.

¹ Minority Rights Group International, “No War, no peace: the denial of minority rights and justice in Sri Lanka”, 2011.

65. Tamil place names have been replaced with Sinhala names, especially in areas occupied by government military forces, where the changing of street names from Tamil to Sinhalese has been documented. At least two cases occurred in the city of Jaffna in which Tamil place names were changed to Sinhala names and the areas subsequently became pilgrimage sites.
66. The government appointed Government Agents, a senior administrative post, who only speak Sinhala or English in the primarily Tamil Mannar and Trincomalee districts.
67. Tamils in the Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces live in majority Sinhala-speaking areas. They continue to experience problems with documentation and access to government resources because officials speak only Sinhala and do not have translators.
68. The government offers incentives to learn and write in English because of its importance in communicating with the outside world—often at the expense of Tamil.
69. Even diplomatic presentations abroad are presented either in English or Sinhala. According to Cartoonists Rights International, a January 2012 Independence Day presentation at the embassy in Washington, DC was conducted almost entirely in Sinhala, despite assurances that a translator would be procured for its audience of Tamil and English speakers.
70. The National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights has advocated a 24-hour human rights hotline, yet fails to mandate Tamil-speaking employees. Similarly, the plan calls for free legal advice for IDPs, but does not provide for Tamil lawyers or legal professionals.

VII. Recommendations to the government of Sri Lanka

- Give serious consideration to the recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission that have a bearing on journalism, such as the recognition that freedom of expression and the right to information provide a pivotal role in the reconciliation process.
- Work to ensure the culture of impunity is not allowed to stand. Cases of violence and threats against journalists must be swiftly and thoroughly investigated and perpetrators brought to justice; the lack of convictions over deaths must be reversed.
- Take steps to deter and prevent attacks on freedom of expression through the enforcement of criminal laws; investigate past incidents; provide freedom of movement to the media; and enact legislation to uphold the right to information.
- End hostile government rhetoric against Sri Lankan journalists.

- End discrimination against minority languages, including Tamil, and take effective steps to preserve and promote linguistic diversity throughout Sri Lanka, especially in government services and education.
- Strengthen and fund the Official Languages Commission so that it may properly carry out its mandate to investigate and promote linguistic diversity in Sri Lanka.
- Carry out substantial research into the conditions of exiled Sri Lanka media workers, regarding their lives in exile and their fate as a group with a view to supporting them; similarly, UNHCR and receiving countries must uphold their legal obligations by streamlining asylum processes and providing support for refugees.