*13. Report of the German Federal Government on its human rights politics (translated)*

*Reporting Period: 1. October 2016 – 30. September 2018*

**Sri Lanka**

**Development of the human rights situation during the reporting period**

The government of President Maithripala Sirisena continued the reform process he started with his term in 2015 also during this reporting period.

In general the government endorsed the Resolution 30/1 and the follow-up resolution 34/1 of the UNHCR, which commits Sri Lanka to promote human rights and the reconciliation process after the 1983 – 2009 civil war. However, Sri Lanka only made slow progress in implementing these commitments and passing a new constitution.

More action was still required for the return of land occupied by the military during the civil war. A judicial accountability mechanism to investigate alleged crimes during the civil war also remained unaddressed. The government rejected any international involvement in such a judicial body. The anti-terrorism legislation was also not reformed. That legislation has resulted in many arbitrary arrests and difficult obstacles for fair trials. The “Prevention of Terrorism Act” is still in force, but it wasn’t applied on new cases since 2015. The act is supposed to be replaced by a constitutional “Counter Terrorism Act”. President Sirisena announced in 2018 that he wanted to reintroduce the execution of death sentences for drug criminals.

Freedom of speech, press and assembly were provided, even if there were isolated reports of intimidation from human rights activists, and complaints about insufficient protection from the police. Demonstrations against government politics were able to take place unhindered.

The courts work independently again. Investigating authorities and justice started to investigate unusual and unexpected deaths, corruption and disappearance of journalists. The government signed an agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which granted the ICRC access to all detainees.

The government presented a national action plan for the protection and promotion of human rights in November 2017. They also passed a new law on the right to information. The reconciliation process between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority was continued.

The “Office of Missing Persons” enacted in May 2016 to resolve the fate of the missing persons, started its work and submitted first concrete proposals. An “Office for Reparations” was planned to adopt by law in parliament in October 2018.

**Implementation of human rights commitments and policies**

Sri Lanka has ratified all nine core human rights conventions. Sri Lanka actively sought the cooperation with UN institutions during the report period. The government said in front of the UNHRC in 2015, that it was prepared to deal with the past and it has issued a standing invitation to all UN mechanisms. Various UN Special Rapporteurs availed to this invitation. In 2017 Sri Lanka was subject of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The government accepted the majority of the proposals.

**German and EU Engagement in Sri Lanka**

During the reporting period Germany promoted the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka with specific projects in peacebuilding, memorialisation and conflict prevention. The re-establishment of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP+) by the EU for Sri Lanka has resulted in the implementation of 27 international agreements on human and labour rights, environmental protection and good governance.

On the 10th of December 2017 the German-French human rights award was awarded to Ms. Shreen Abdul Saroor for her engagement against gender-specific violence.