

31/10/19

PRESS RELEASE

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka views with grave concern the news item pertaining to the Cabinet paper seeking approval for the entering into of the MCC agreement.

Despite news reports seeking to assure the public of the benign nature of the said agreement, the draft that was previously made available to us had a multitude of disadvantageous clauses for Sri Lanka. The BASL as a responsible organization took a lot of time to study the proposed MCC and submitted a detailed report which is attached to this press release. The BASL outlined the grave consequences that Sri Lanka would face as an independent and sovereign State in the event the GOSL proceeded to sign the MCC in that form.

The proposed MCC as it stood then contained many issues of a very grave nature, as explained by us to the Honourable Prime Minister in writing, which we now disclose to the public to make their own observations. In fact, on 5/8/2019, the BASL received a letter of the Hon. Prime Minister thanking us for our efforts.

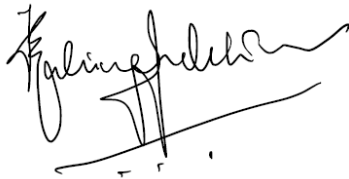
We take this step as a responsible Association as the assurance given to us previously by the Government not to take any step towards signing the agreement without amendment and making a full disclosure of the contents to the public after obtaining our views has not been honoured.

It is our belief that the draft proposals should be made available for Democratic debate before committing the Country to honour an agreement which only a privileged few have been privy to according to these newspaper reports. In the past these have been instances where the country and the people had to face the

consequences where the respective Governments of the day proceeded to enter upon agreements without educating the public about the contents.

In such circumstances the BASL holds the view that the MCC agreement should not be signed without providing an opportunity to the people to understand the true nature of the agreement.

Therefore, we urge the Government not to proceed with the proposed agreement whatever compelling short-term economic reasons there may be without honouring its commitment made to us which we accepted in good faith.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kalinga Indatissa', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Kalinga Indatissa, PC

President,
Bar Association of Sri Lanka