

INTERNATIONAL  
TRUTH  
AND JUSTICE  
PROJECT

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**Sri Lanka UN Peacekeepers should not re-deploy to Haiti.**

The UN should not proceed with the deployment of a new Sri Lankan peacekeeping contingent to Haiti. Credible and corroborated findings establish that Sri Lankan peacekeepers engaged in the systematic sexual exploitation and abuse of children committed by Sri Lankan peacekeepers in Haiti from late 2004 to mid-October 2007. The limited and opaque disciplinary actions taken by the government against the individual soldiers are grossly disproportionate to the gravity of the human rights violations, and fall far short of international legal standards. In the absence of genuine investigations and criminal accountability, this entrenches a culture of impunity and creates a real and foreseeable risk of recurrence. Deployment under these conditions directly contradicts the United Nations' zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and amounts, in effect, to an endorsement of impunity".

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**  
YASMIN SOOKA

Background

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established on 1 June 2004 pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1542 (2004) mandated to ensure a secure and stable environment in Haiti and to assist the transitional government restore and maintain public order, safety, and the rule of law.<sup>1</sup>

MINUSTAH had both a civil and a military component, with the military component consisting of peacekeeping troops.<sup>2</sup> As part of the

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping, MINUSTAH, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minustah>, and Security Council Resolution 1542 (2004), 30 April 2004, S/RES/1542 (2004), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/520532?ln=en&v=pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Security Council Resolution 1542 (2004), 30 April 2004, S/RES/1542 (2004), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/520532?ln=en&v=pdf>.

peacekeeping force of MINUSTAH, the Sri Lankan military contingent started its deployment in Haiti in September 2004.<sup>3</sup> By November 2007, Sri Lanka had deployed six consecutive contingents to Haiti, and had bases in Jacmel, Petit Goave, Léogâne, Killick, Brache, and Martissant.<sup>4</sup>

In August 2007, external non-UN personnel who visited Martissant, a neighborhood in Port-au-Prince, reported suspicious interactions between Sri Lankan soldiers and Haitian children.<sup>5</sup>

Following the complaint, MINUSTAH requested the Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations (ID/OIOS) to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse of Haitian children by members of the Sri Lankan military contingent assigned to MINUSTAH and deployed in Martissant.<sup>6</sup>

In November 2007, the UN investigation concluded that there was credible and corroborated evidence that, from late 2004 to mid-October 2007, at least 134 military members of the current and previous Sri Lankan contingents were involved in a sustained and organized system of sexual exploitation and abuse, setting up a prostitution ring in which nine Haitian children were sexually exploited and abused.<sup>7</sup>

The investigation found that these “acts of sexual exploitation and abuse were frequent and systematic, occurred usually at night, and at virtually every location where Sri Lankan military were deployed, including: (a) UN military vehicles; (b) military static points in Port-au-Prince; and (c) Sri Lankan military bases throughout Haiti”.<sup>8</sup> In exchange for sex, the child victims received miniscule amounts of money (on average between USD3 to USD 5), food, and sometimes mobile phones (used to contact the victims for more sex).<sup>9</sup> All victims were

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<sup>3</sup> *Lanka’s peace keeping battalion for Haiti*, THE EIGHT MAN TEAM, 7 September 2004, <https://lrrp.wordpress.com/2004/09/07/lanka%E2%80%99s-peace-keeping-battalion-for-haiti/>.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, Investigations Division – Office of Internal Oversight Services, Investigation report on alleged sexual exploitation and abuse of children at MINUSTAH (ID Case No. 0483/07) [*hereinafter* ID/OIOS Report], para. 33. Further independent research has identified each contingent’s deployment timeline and commanders. See Sri Lanka Army, Annual Report 2005, AHQ/DSD/12, p. A-1, <https://parliament.lk/uploads/documents/paperspresented/performance-report-srilanka-army-2005.pdf>; Sri Lanka Army, Annual report 2006, p. 19, <https://parliament.lk/uploads/documents/paperspresented/performance-report-srilanka-army-2006.pdf>; Sri Lanka Army, Annual report 2007, p. 11, <https://parliament.lk/uploads/documents/paperspresented/performance-report-srilanka-army-2007.pdf>; *Lanka’s peace keeping battalion for Haiti*, THE EIGHT MAN TEAM, 7 September 2004, <https://lrrp.wordpress.com/2004/09/07/lanka%E2%80%99s-peace-keeping-battalion-for-haiti/>; Sri Lanka Light Infantry Regiment, archived at <https://archive.li/vcDRz>; Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, [https://alt.army.lk/slsr/4slsr\\_7](https://alt.army.lk/slsr/4slsr_7); Sri Lanka Army, *Gemunu soldiers bid goodbye to their colleagues*, 23 November 2005, <https://www.army.lk/news/gemunu-soldiers-bid-goodbye-their-colleagues>; Sri Lanka Army, *The Gemunu Watch, Assuming of Duties by the 24<sup>th</sup> Colonel of the Regiment of the Gemunu Watch*, 15 October 2018, <https://alt.army.lk/highlanders/content/assuming-duties-24th-colonel-regiment-gemunu-watch>; Major General Nishshanka Ranawana Facebook post on 19 July 2020: [https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=296813345065012&id=112160043530344&set=a.112316853514663&checkpoint\\_src=any](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=296813345065012&id=112160043530344&set=a.112316853514663&checkpoint_src=any); Nimmi Gowrinathan and Kate Cronin-Furman, *UN Peacekeepers: Keeping the peace or preventing it?*, AL JAZEERA, 2 May 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2017/5/2/un-peacekeepers-keeping-the-peace-or-preventing-it>; Ministry of Defence, *UN decorates 200 Sri Lankan peacekeepers – Haiti*, 5 April 2007; and *SLLI contingent leaves for Haiti*, THE ISLAND, June 2007.

<sup>5</sup> ID/OIOS Report, para. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at para. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at paras. 10 and 181.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at para. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at para. 11.

minors at the time when they commenced their sexual encounters with the Sri Lankan UN peacekeepers.<sup>10</sup>

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The confidential ID/OIOS report verifies that the Sri Lankan soldiers communicated via mobile phone with each other to find and solicit children to have sex with, passing along the phones and numbers to new batches of soldiers that arrived in Haiti as the older batches left, essentially operating a prostitution ring exploiting children, which extended to the incoming contingent soldiers.<sup>11</sup> Certain Sri Lankan soldiers also impregnated victims, often deceiving them, demonstrating the pernicious nature of the abuse.<sup>12</sup>

In the course of the investigation ID/OIOS interviewed complainants, victims, and witnesses; reviewed relevant documentation; and visited Sri Lankan military bases and static points.<sup>13</sup> Photos were taken of these locations for the later identification process with the victims.<sup>14</sup> National Investigations Officers (NIOs) from the Sri Lanka Corps of Military Police (SLCMP) also conducted 25 interviews with members of the Sri Lankan military contingent (three of which were conducted in the presence of ID/OIOS).<sup>15</sup>

ID/OIOS explicitly confirmed that the testimonies provided by all the victims were credible, with no evidence to indicate that they had ulterior motives to discredit the Sri Lankan military members.<sup>16</sup> Critically, the investigation established that this was not opportunistic abuse, but a pattern of organised exploitation, sustained over time and across rotations—implicating failures at the level of command and control.

Moreover, several of the victims' testimonies corroborated each other.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, ID/OIOS observed that most victims acquired fairly good knowledge of the Sinhala language and could even converse amongst themselves in this language.<sup>18</sup> Some victims could also clearly identify military ranks by insignia, military terminology, and soldier rotations.<sup>19</sup> These findings support the victims' credibility as they indicate the extensiveness of the victims' interactions with the Sri Lankan peacekeepers. Forensic evidence, bystander witness testimony, and independent investigative steps carried out by ID/OIOS (elaborated below) also corroborate the victims' testimony.<sup>20</sup>

The ID/OIOS report explicitly identified management and command responsibility failures which contributed to the abuse.<sup>21</sup> Their

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<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at p. 3, footnote 1, ID/OIOS obtained several birth certificates that confirm their ages.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at paras. 115-135.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* at paras. 58-66, 107-113.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at paras. 4, 7-8, and 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at para. 25.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at para. 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at para. 173. In fact, none of the victims instigated the complaints in this investigation.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at paras. 44, 59-60, 65, 69, 73, 76, 94, 106, 133, and 141.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at para. 178.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at para. 176.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at para. 30.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at para. 14.

findings link the scale, gravity and persistence of the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse directly to the failure of commanders to prevent, detect and respond to the sexual exploitation and abuse.<sup>22</sup>

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The victims in this case were children—among the most vulnerable individuals in any conflict or post-conflict setting. Their age, dependency, and socio-economic precarity render any notion of “consent” legally invalid. What occurred was not misconduct, but the systematic sexual exploitation of minors by those entrusted with their protection. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, States bear an absolute obligation to prevent and punish such abuse. The organized and sustained nature of these violations—facilitated by peacekeepers operating under UN mandate—constitutes an aggravated breach of international law, engaging heightened duties of prevention, investigation, and accountability. The continued failure to act is not merely omission; it entrenches impunity and signals that the rights and dignity of children can be violated without consequence.

#### Lack of Accountability

From 3 November 2007, 114 members of the Sri Lankan military contingent were repatriated on disciplinary grounds.<sup>23</sup> However, only a few soldiers faced disciplinary actions by the Sri Lankan authorities; the sanctions imposed were administrative and manifestly inadequate when measured against the gravity of the human rights violations, which amounted to crimes including rape, and the sexual exploitation of children.

According to the Sri Lankan government, an Army Court of Inquiry was convened to investigate the allegations, but only regarding the 6<sup>th</sup> Sri Lanka peacekeeping contingent deployed in Haiti,<sup>24</sup> thus excluding all five preceding contingent deployments.

Based on this Court of Inquiry, disciplinary actions were taken against only 10 officers and 13 soldiers.<sup>25</sup> Three out of the 13 soldiers were killed in action while on operational duties in Sri Lanka at the time of inquiry,<sup>26</sup> which begs the question of why they were still in active service (in the Sri Lankan civil war) while under investigation for serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Among these 13 soldiers, only one was discharged from service; the rest were left up to their respective regimental units, which “had been ordered to take punitive action according to the gravity of the offences committed by each of them”,<sup>27</sup> but no further details were provided as to exactly how “gravity” was determined or as to what “punitive actions” were taken.

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<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at para. 182.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at para. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Annex IV – Committee against Torture, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention, Fifth periodic reports of States parties due in 2021 – Sri Lanka, CAT/C/LKA/5, received 16 October 2015, para. 108.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at para. 109.

As for the 10 officers, the Army said one officer's commission was withdrawn; one was made to retire in his substantive rank; and the other eight officers were given "corresponding punishments based on the gravity of the offenses committed",<sup>28</sup> again with no further details on what such "punishments" were.

The scope of the inquiry was deliberately limited and non-transparent, and the punishment received by even the few military personnel investigated was completely disproportionate to the crimes they committed. All of them only received disciplinary actions for what would have constitute statutory rape and sex trafficking in any country (including Haiti and Sri Lanka<sup>29</sup>), which entails serious prison sentences. Even the disciplinary actions were not the most severe, and clearly do not measure up to the gravity of the sexual exploitation and abuse they committed.

Further, there is no indication that criminal investigation or prosecution has ever been initiated against any of the peacekeepers.<sup>30</sup> The NIOs also did not conduct follow-up investigations as promised<sup>31</sup>.

This failure constitutes a breach of Sri Lanka's obligations under international human rights law and reflects a systemic unwillingness to investigate and prosecute serious crimes.

- Punishments were opaque and non-transparent;
- Some implicated individuals were subsequently promoted or retained in positions of authority, reinforcing impunity;
- The absence of prosecutions persists nearly two decades later.

In terms of victim compensation, only one Sri Lanka victim (outside the nine interviewed by ID/OIOS), who met a Sri Lankan commander in December 2006 in Haiti, received compensation from the Sri Lankan government in 2017 for her daughter (whom the Sri Lankan commander fathered) in a one-time payment of \$45,243.<sup>32</sup> According to the UN, the Sri Lankan government accepted the paternity claim without proof of DNA (which is in fact contrary to UN requirements<sup>33</sup>) and the commander was said to have been dismissed from service.<sup>34</sup> However, such payments are extremely rare, and even this one was made only over a decade later.<sup>35</sup> This ad hoc and delayed payment cannot be characterised as effective remedy. It reflects neither a victim-centred approach nor a

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<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> Sri Lanka Penal Code, Sections 363-365, and Haiti Penal Code, Arts. 279-280.

<sup>30</sup> Paisley Dodds, *AP Exclusive: UN child sex ring left victims but no arrests*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12 April 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/africa-arrests-united-nations-only-on-ap-e6ebc331460345c5abd4f57d77f535c1>.

<sup>31</sup> ID/OIOS Report, para. 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> In 2014 (before this specific Sri Lankan paternity claim was granted compensation), the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and of Field Support implemented interim measures in field missions to facilitate the pursuit of claims of paternity and child support in cases where a child has been born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations or related personnel. A DNA sample collection protocol was developed, and compensation is granted only where paternity has been confirmed either through DNA testing or through admission by the father. See UN Missions, Conduct in UN Field Missions – Paternity Claims, <https://conduct.unmissions.org/remedial-paternity>.

<sup>34</sup> Paisley Dodds, *AP Exclusive: UN child sex ring left victims but no arrests*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12 April 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/africa-arrests-united-nations-only-on-ap-e6ebc331460345c5abd4f57d77f535c1>.

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*

system of accountability, but rather an isolated and inconsistent response.

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Simply being dismissed from service is also an insufficiently serious punishment given the gravity of the offense. This singular event has been lauded by the UN as Sri Lanka's "best practices",<sup>36</sup> but the Sri Lankan government's own statement betrayed its façade of ensuring accountability – then Defence Secretary, Karunasena Hettiarachchi, signed the payment order but told AP that he knew little about the paternity payment, or whether there had been any other such claims on Sri Lankan peacekeepers.<sup>37</sup> He said, "I think in general we don't have a bad record of our peacekeepers."<sup>38</sup> This dismissive and willful ignorance further illustrates the rare, inconsistent, and random nature of the payment, which was more of a publicity stunt to impress the UN than as a demonstration of the Sri Lankan government's genuine effort to ensure accountability.

Instead, the officers allegedly involved have been consistently promoted and rewarded after their deployment in Haiti, receiving awards for their military service and one even serving an ambassador post after retirement from military service.<sup>39</sup>

Due to such impunity, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse have continued to emerge – in 2013, a Haitian teenager was allegedly raped and sodomized by a Sri Lankan peacekeeper; the Sri Lankan government sent Major General Jagath Dias, an alleged war criminal, to investigate the case.<sup>40</sup> Dispatched to Haiti, Dias did not even speak to the alleged abuser, nor did he interview medical staff who examined the victim; yet he declared the soldier free from responsibility and allowed him to stay in the Sri Lankan military.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Katy Daigle and Paisley Dodds, *UN Peacekeepers: How a Haiti child sex ring was whitewashed*, AP NEWS, 26 May 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/international-news-peacekeepers-as-predators-colombo-haiti-ap-top-news-96f9ff66b7b34d9f971edf0e92e2082c>.

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*

<sup>38</sup> *Id.*

<sup>39</sup> See e.g., Sri Lanka Army, *51st Army Chief of Staff Assumes Office*, 28 July 2017, <https://www.army.lk/news/51st-army-chief-staff-assumes-office>; Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment, *Retiring Major General Deepthi Jayathilaka Honoured in His Mother Regiment*, 20 July 2020, <https://alt.army.lk/slsr/content/retiring-major-general-deepthi-jayathilaka-honoured-his-mother-regiment>; Nissanka Ranawana's Facebook post on 19 July 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=296813345065012&id=112160043530344&set=a.112316853514663>; Sri Lanka Army, *Major General Ajith Kariyakarawana, New DCOS Assumes Office*, 16 April 2018, <https://www.army.lk/news/major-general-ajith-kariyakarawana-new-dcos-assumes-office>; Chandana Wimalasiri's LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chandana-wimalasiri-58690a214/>; Sri Lanka Army, *Retiring Major General R Elvitigala's Service Praised*, 15 November 2023, [https://www.army.lk/news/retiring-major-general-r-elvitigala%E2%80%99s-service-praised#:~:text=Major%20General%20R%20Elvitigala%20USP%20enlisted%20in%20the%20Regular%20Force,IMA\)%%20in%20the%20Intake%2031A](https://www.army.lk/news/retiring-major-general-r-elvitigala%E2%80%99s-service-praised#:~:text=Major%20General%20R%20Elvitigala%20USP%20enlisted%20in%20the%20Regular%20Force,IMA)%%20in%20the%20Intake%2031A); Sri Lanka Army, *Army Chief Extends Best Wishes to Retiring Major General A.L Illangakoon*, 12 May 2023, <https://www.army.lk/news/army-chief-extends-best-wishes-retiring-major-general-ailangakoon#:~:text=Major%20General%20A.L%20Illangakoon%20enlisted,Sri%20Lanka%20Corps%20of%20Military>; The Republic of Maldives – President's Officer, *Sri Lankan Ambassador to Maldives pays farewell call on President*, 10 September 2019, <https://presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Press/Article/22105>; and Sri Lanka Army, *Retiring Colonel of the Regiment Major General K P A Jayasekera WWV RSP VSV USP NDC PSC Accorded Military Salute*, 7 November 2019, <https://alt.army.lk/highlanders/content/retiring-colonel-regiment-major-general-k-p-jayasekera-wwv-rsp-vsv-usp-ndc-psc-accorded>.

<sup>40</sup> Katy Daigle and Paisley Dodds, *UN Peacekeepers: How a Haiti child sex ring was whitewashed*, AP NEWS, 26 May 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/international-news-peacekeepers-as-predators-colombo-haiti-ap-top-news-96f9ff66b7b34d9f971edf0e92e2082c>.

<sup>41</sup> *Id.*

The Sri Lankan government has further claimed that no officer or soldier tainted by allegations related to sexual misconduct would be sent on future UN peacekeeping missions, and that a declaration would be issued to the effect that Sri Lanka Army personnel assigned to a particular UN mission are free from blemish and have not been convicted for any offense related to sexual misconduct.<sup>42</sup> This seems to take advantage of a self-created loophole: if a soldier/officer is never investigated and prosecuted for allegations of sexual misconduct, he would of course not have been convicted for them, and would thus still be able to go on UN peacekeeping missions. Indeed, in 2016, Sri Lankan military officials have confirmed to Associated Press (AP) that some of the peacekeepers involved in the sexual exploitation and abuse were still in active duty.<sup>43</sup>

A request for information (RTI) submitted in September 2017 asking for details regarding the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in Haiti committed by Sri Lankan peacekeepers also yielded no result, but revealed further inconsistencies in the government's statements that suggest the complete lack of accountability.<sup>44</sup>

The lack of genuine investigation and accountability measures by the Sri Lankan government reflect the impunity for the gross human rights violations committed by the same security forces against Tamil civilians during its civil war and in its aftermath.<sup>45</sup> Some of the identified perpetrators were implicated in those violations as well,<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Committee against Torture, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention, Fifth periodic reports of States parties due in 2021 – Sri Lanka, CAT/C/LKA/5, received 16 October 2015, para. 111.

<sup>43</sup> Paisley Dodds, *AP Exclusive: UN child sex ring left victims but no arrests*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12 April 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/africa-arrests-united-nations-only-on-ap-e6ebc331460345c5abd4f57d77f535c1>.

<sup>44</sup> The RTI asked for the names of peacekeeping officers repatriated from Haiti in 2007 following allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, the findings of the Court of Inquiry (in the form of reports or investigative notations), a list of allegations, and details of disciplinary actions taken. The Sri Lanka Army refused to provide any information and instead requested the RTI applicant to provide a copy of his national identity card (NIC), even though there is no legal basis for this demand, which the Right to Information Commission of Sri Lanka confirmed. The Army also downplayed the number of soldiers repatriated by providing a vague number, even though the exact number had long been published by the press. The small number of those being punished does not align with what was previously reported by the Sri Lankan government either. The Army further claimed that, since the allegations took place in 2007 and it was then 2018, republishing the details about this issue “would tarnish the name of the SLA [Sri Lanka Army] in the international fora and could be used for propaganda purposes by interested parties”, seemingly disregarding the fact that not publishing these details would also tarnish the name of the SLA due to the lack of transparency and real accountability. The RTI Commission ruled that the Army must provide the requested information, as the inquiry was no longer ongoing and should be disclosed to the public. Notwithstanding this ruling, the Army has not responded to this RTI until the present day. See *G.Dileep Amuthan v. Ministry of Defence*, RTICAppeal(In-Person)/70/2018.

<sup>45</sup> Paisley Dodds, *AP Exclusive: UN child sex ring left victims but no arrests*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12 April 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/africa-arrests-united-nations-only-on-ap-e6ebc331460345c5abd4f57d77f535c1>.

<sup>46</sup> For example, the first Sri Lanka contingent commander K.A.D. Amal Karunasekera was arrested by the Sri Lankan Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in 2018 in connection with the abduction and assault of Keith Noyahr, an editor of newspaper *The Nation*, on 22 May 2008, when Karunasekera was the Director of Military Intelligence. (He was released on bail in September 2018.) He was also investigated for his involvement in the killing of Lasantha Wickrematunge, the editor of *The Sunday Leader*. See *Arrest of Sri Lanka's ex-military intelligence chief leads to breakthrough*, ECONOMY NEXT, 6 April 2018, <https://economynext.com/arrest-of-sri-lankas-ex-military-intelligence-chief-leads-to-breakthrough-9935/>; *Alleged death squad leader reinstated in special team under Army Chief*, DAILY FT, 13 May 2019, <https://www.ft.lk/News/Alleged-death-squad-leader-reinstated-in-special-team-under-Army-Chief/56-678065>; *Bail for Rtd. Major General Karunasekera*, HIRU NEWS, 10 September 2018, <https://www.hirunews.lk/goldfmnews/199565/bail-for-rtd-major-general-karunasekera>; and Mandana Ismail Abeywickrema, *The Militarisation of Sri Lanka's Diplomatic and Administrative Services*, SUNANDA DESHAPRIYA, 29 January 2011, <https://sunandadeshapriya.wordpress.com/2011/01/29/the-militarisation-of-sri-lankas-diplomatic-and-administrative-services/>. The fourth Sri Lanka contingent commander A.W.M.A.W. Nissanka Ranawana and his second-in-command W.A. Mahinda Weerasuriya both served in the 55 Division which was part of the Sri Lankan armed forces in the frontlines during the final phase of the civil war; the third Sri Lanka contingente second-in-command K.P. Aruna Jayasekera was similarly involved in the civil war and received

which illustrate the serious consequences of impunity for human rights violations by the same perpetrators that spread across different phases and locations and the urgency of ensuring accountability.

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### Failure of Vetting and Screening

Subsequent vetting and screening mechanisms—developed jointly by the UN and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka—have failed to provide adequate safeguards.

- Screening processes were at first bypassed by the Sri Lankan Army, with deployments proceeding without full clearance;
- Screening relied heavily on publicly available information, without access to comprehensive or confidential externally held evidence;
- No formal training was provided to screening personnel;
- The process was subject to political pressure and institutional interference;

Screening has functioned as an administrative exercise—not as a substitute for accountability—and cannot mitigate the risks posed by unresolved allegations.

### Recommendations

#### **1. Immediate Suspension of Deployment**

We call on the United Nations to halt the deployment of any Sri Lankan contingent to Haiti until credible accountability measures are in place.

#### **2. Independent Investigation**

Establish an independent, international investigation into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, with:

- Specialised investigators trained in sexual violence and child protection;
- A mandate to examine command responsibility and systemic failures.

#### **3. Criminal Accountability**

Require the Government of Sri Lanka to initiate prompt, impartial, and effective criminal investigations and prosecutions, including:

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several awards for his actions during the operations. He was also rumored to become the Defense Minister in a future NPP (National People's Power, the parliamentary front led by opposition party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna/JVP) government. *See Troops in full control of Visuamadu and Chalai*, DAILY NEWS, February 6, 2009, <https://archives.dailynews.lk/2009/02/06/fea03.asp>; Shanika Sriyananda, *The crawl to terminate Sea Tigers*, SUNDAY OBSERVER, 15 March 2009, <https://archives.sundayobserver.lk/2009/03/15/sec10.asp>; *LTTE plays its final trump*, 21 June 2009, <https://prasannadesilva.wordpress.com/2009/06/21/ltte-plays-its-final-trump/>; Sri Lanka Army, *The Gemunu Watch, Assuming of Duties by the 24th Colonel of the Regiment of the Gemunu Watch*, 15 October 2018, <https://alt.army.lk/highlanders/content/assuming-duties-24th-colonel-regiment-gemunu-watch>; and Pani Wijesiriwardena, *Sri Lanka's JVP-NPP collaborates with ex-military officers and business representatives*, 6 March 2023, <https://southasiajournal.net/sri-lankas-jvp-npp-collaborates-with-ex-military-officers-and-business-representatives/>. The fifth contingent commander Ajith Kariyakarawana, while serving as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Sri Lanka Army, attended a ceremony in 2018 honoring the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka, another armed force that perpetrated mass atrocities in Sri Lanka during the civil war. *See Chief of the Indian Army Staff arrives in Sri Lanka*, NEWS TUBE, 14 May 2018, <https://english.newstube.lk/news/1639-chief-of-the-indian-army-staff-arrives-in-sri-lanka>.

- Direct perpetrators;
- Commanders and superiors responsible by omission or failure to act.

#### 4. Reform of Vetting Mechanisms

Ensure that any future screening process:

- Meets international best practice standards;
- Is independent and free from political interference;
- Has access to UN and OHCHR confidential information;
- Applies a robust “reasonable grounds to exclude” standard.

#### 5. Victim-Centred Reparations

Establish a comprehensive reparations framework, including:

- Verified paternity testing in line with UN standards;
- Long-term financial, medical, and psychosocial support;
- Recognition of victims’ rights to truth, justice, and dignity.

#### 6. UN Accountability and Oversight

The UN must:

- Enforce its zero-tolerance policy on SEA;
- Ensure transparency in SEA cases;
- Refuse deployment where credible allegations remain unresolved;
- Strengthen oversight of troop-contributing countries.

#### Conclusion

Individual members within Sri Lanka’s armed forces turn over with the passage of time, but the culture of human rights violations and impunity does not – the Sri Lankan soldiers’ continuous passing down of mobile phones and numbers between batches to find and solicit Haitian children to have sex with attests to this.

Deployment in the absence of accountability is not a neutral administrative decision—it is an endorsement of impunity. Peacekeeping cannot and should not be sustained on compromised standards. Where there is credible evidence of systematic abuse and no accountability, deployment must yield to justice. For this reason, Sri Lanka should not be allowed to resume participation in UN peacekeeping missions, particularly in Haiti, given their past history of sexual exploitation and abuse.

ends

**INTERNATIONAL**  
**TRUTH**  
**AND JUSTICE**  
**PROJECT**