



HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Rt. Hon Hugo Swire MP LONDON SW1A 0AA
Minister of State
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

10 December 2015

Dear Minister,

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the recent announcement that the UK Government will provide £6.6m to Sri Lanka, part of which will support 'military reform'.

You will know that the Sri Lankan armed forces stand accused of committing war crimes, militarising Tamil areas in the North and East of the island and allegedly perpetrating acts of sexual violence against Tamil war widows.

The conduct of the Sri Lankan military is in need of serious improvement, but if the UK Government is intent on providing taxpayer's money to Sri Lanka you must be explicit about what reforms you want to see in return. In addition, we request that you clarify how this part of the funding allocation will be spent and whether any of the £6.6m pledged will be given directly to the Government of Sri Lanka.

The election of President Sirisena, earlier this year, has provided fresh impetus to address some of the key issues arising from the country's armed conflict and its aftermath.

However, we remain deeply concerned by the Government of Sri Lanka's unwillingness to implement all the recommendations of the UNHRC report, by the widespread accounts of human rights abuses and the poor treatment of Tamils and



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other minorities. We attended the Freedom from Torture parliamentary reception on Tuesday 8th December where we were informed that they have received 7 referrals for people tortured in Sri Lanka since the elections in January, including as recently as July 2015.

In light of these circumstances we would urge, at the very least, extreme caution by the UK Government when making decisions to significantly increase assistance to Sri Lanka and we would not be willing to support any changes to Home Office asylum policy in Sri Lanka which might make it even more difficult for survivors to secure protection in the UK.

Ultimately, we fear that the announcement of financial support to Sri Lanka will be seen as a 'reward' for the limited progress made by Sirisena's government, despite the fact that there are still so many fundamental matters to resolve.

We urgently ask that you reconsider this policy and we look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Siobhain McDonagh MP

Senior Vice Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils

Joan Ryan MP

Vice Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils

John Mann MP



Stephen Pound

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Stephen Pound MP

Wes Streeting

Wes Streeting MP

Stephen Timms

Stephen Timms MP

Steve Reed

Steve Reed MP

Cc - Rt. Hon Theresa May MP, Secretary of State, Home Office

Rt. Hon James Brokenshire MP, Minister of State, Home Office