



## Generating Empathy, Restoring Dignity: The Curious Case of Sri Lanka

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### Abstract

At a time in history marked by the emergence of extreme right-wing movements around the globe assumed by individuals, communities or societies, Sri Lanka has a different story to tell. This paper will tell that story.

The analysis is benchmarked on two historic moments witnessed in Sri Lanka: the conclusion of the war in 2009 and the democratic awakening that emerged in 2015. The paper will begin with an engaging exploration of the historical and current contextual narratives in Sri Lanka, both of which are critical to its reconciliation process. It will then provide an account of Sri Lanka's progress in so far as the national reconciliation agenda. Thereafter, the paper will discuss key existing challenges to the process of national reconciliation. The paper makes the case for a genuine and real approach towards achieving reconciliation, one that is sustainable and meaningful in its essence.

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## **Current Context**

The story of Sri Lanka is an interesting and curious case, since Sri Lanka has in recent times become an anomaly within a global trend of extremism. In January 2015, moderate forces in the country, emerging from various sectors and stakeholders groups, —ranging from political leaders, civil society, academics, activists and general public— rallied together and successfully reclaimed the centre-stage in the political and national governance domains. The general secretary of the then government’s ruling party defected from its ruling regime and ran for presidency, obtaining electoral endorsement. He went on to win the presidential election in January 2015 and is today the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. (Abeygunawardana, 2015).

The case of Sri Lanka is also curious for another reason. The ‘political revolution’ that took place in 2015 has also been a ‘democratic awakening’ for the country. Not only did two seniors living politicians of the two main political parties come together to form a consensus government, but also this victory meant something more for the country. A leading civil society activist described the phenomenon as ““a woman giving birth to a child suffering great pain, [similarly] what citizens have done is giving birth to the ‘new political culture child.’” (Wijesuriya, 2016).

A leading lawyer from a minority community has described it as follows: ‘It is indeed a high point in the country’s political history where three experienced political leaders placed the national interests above partisan parochial interests. This was timely for a country that was heading towards a perilous precipice.’ (Yusuf, 2016).

## **The Historical Context**

The three-decades long conflict in Sri Lanka can be traced back to the discrimination and unequal treatment of sections of the Tamil population by State structures. Many Tamils believed that the State and its structures favoured the interests of the majority community, the Sinhalese, and that several changes in State practices were seen as discriminatory and unjust. Therein lies a critical point: the Tamil community’s campaign was against State structures and policies considered discriminatory of the Tamils rather than against the Sinhalese community and peoples per se. (Yusuf, 2015). However, different views exist on this aspect and the dominant view on the nature of the conflict interprets it as protracted ethnic conflict between the island’s majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils.

Successive Governments of Sri Lanka attempted negotiations with representatives of the Tamil people, which broke down for multiple reasons. Increasing discord and dissension on both sides meant that military clashes were looming and humanitarian costs of war continued unabated<sup>1</sup>. All this led to the development of Tamil militancy in the country and an all-out war. With the defeat

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<sup>1</sup> International Crisis Group, Asia Report, Sri Lanka: The Failure of the Peace Process, Asia Report, November 2006 <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/124-sri-lanka-the-failure-of-the-peace-process.pdf>

of the Tamil separatist rebels by the Government of Sri Lanka in May 2009 the armed conflict came to an end. (Yusuf, 2012). However, the root causes of the conflict still remain today and have to be addressed in order to prevent the recurrence of the past. Hence, while Sri Lanka is a post-war country, it has not yet morphed into a post-conflict country. (Yusuf, 2012).

The period immediately following the conclusion of the war in 2009 has been largely described as one of ‘missed opportunities’. The definition of reconciliation in the post-2009 era was essentially one of triumphalism of the victor over the vanquished, moreover equating reconciliation with economic advancement and physical infrastructure development. There were little or inadequate attempts at connecting the minds and hearts of the ethnic groups and communities in the country. Hence what prevailed was a ‘negative peace,’ that is the absence of war as opposed to a ‘positive peace’, which entails addressing grievances, abating insecurities, advancing justice, fostering dignity, improving social cohesion and increasing a prosperity for the country and its peoples. (Bloomfield, 2003; Yusuf, 2012 b).

While the post-2009 era has been described as one of ‘missed opportunities’, the post-2015 era can be described as one of ‘democratic awakening’. The almost instant and overnight opening of political space and commitments to good governance created fresh impetus for reconciliation and national unity in the country. Consequently, there has been progress on a variety of reconciliation initiatives in the country. This paper highlights key reform efforts in the country to date. However, it must be mentioned that said efforts have not been without criticism from a variety of stakeholders acting with diverse motivations, some more legitimate than others. Some of these criticisms will be explored in the final section of this paper.

## **Success and Progress**

One of the first measures taken in the reform agenda by the Government of Sri Lanka following the 2015 elections was the enactment of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution<sup>2</sup>. The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution is significant as it prunes the powers of the Executive President by setting up oversight independent bodies, including The Election Commission; The Public Service Commission; The National Police Commission; The Audit Service Commission; The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka; The Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption; The Finance Commission; The Delimitation Commission; and The National Procurement Commission. This has been hailed as a significant achievement of the incumbent administration particularly as it reduced the opportunities for nepotism, arbitrariness and widespread corruption and concentration of power in one individual<sup>3</sup>.

The Government also embarked on establishing institutional infrastructure and mechanisms to

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.itnnews.lk/local-news/un-human-rights-chief-lauds-human-rights-progress-in-sri-lanka/>

<sup>3</sup> Please see: (Somapala Gunadheera, Independent Commissions have a Role in Reconciliation <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/independent-commissions-have-a-role-in-reconciliation/>; <http://colombogazette.com/2016/09/01/us-says-sri-lanka-has-made-progress-on-human-rights/>; Sri Lanka: Jumpstarting the Reform Process, International Crisis Group 2016 <file:///C:/Users/admin/Downloads/Intl%20Crisis%20Group%20Sri%20Lanka%20-%20Jumpstarting%20the%20Reform%20Process.pdf>; Human Rights Situation in Sri Lanka 2016 <https://ihrcd.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/human-rights-in-sl-one-year-after-parliamentary-elections-inform-18aug20161.pdf>)

establish transitional justice process in the country. This process is being coordinated and facilitated by a specially designated secretariat, the Secretariat for Coordination of Reconciliation Mechanisms (SCRM), which comes under the purview of the Prime Minister and a high-level Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee. The Government of Sri Lanka has undertaken to spearhead a four-tier transitional justice mechanism in the country, which includes establishment of a Truth-Seeking Mechanism, an Office for Missing Persons, an Office for Reparations and a Judicial and Accountability Mechanism<sup>4</sup>.

The efforts to conduct wide-ranging and inclusive consultations with victims and citizens in general have been central to all reform measures. Two specific consultation models have been established for this purpose, both of which have now completed their tasks. The First was a Consultation Task Force composed of recognized civil society leaders throughout in the country. This central Consultation Task Force was further expanded by specialization into Zonal Task Forces, which enabled penetration into all regions and districts. Moreover also opening up to anyone overseas who wished to provide input through digital or other means. These consultations were meant to elicit the views of all stakeholders regarding the transitional justice mechanisms to be established in the country. The Consultation Task Force, that had received over 7000 submissions has completed its task and published its report and presented it to the Government of Sri Lanka.

The second concrete initiative on the transitional justice front was the establishment of an independent Office for Missing Persons. The Office for Missing Persons was created by a two-third majority in Parliament via legislative enactment. The main purposes of the Office are searching and tracing of missing persons; clarifying the circumstances in which such persons went missing and their fate thereafter; making recommendations to relevant authorities in order to reduce incidents of missing and disappeared persons;; and identifying proper avenues of redress. The Office will also have its own victim and witness protection unit<sup>5</sup>.

Yet another significant process with high priority on the government agenda and which started almost as soon the new government came into power in 2015 has been to enact a new Constitution. The first step in the process was the establishment of a Constitutional Assembly by Parliament<sup>6</sup> with the powers to steer the preparation and passing of a new Constitution. The process began with a comprehensive public consultation process to seek ideas for a new constitution from sectors and stakeholders all around the country. This is the second specific and comprehensive consultation mechanism instituted by the new government in its reform drive (the first consultative mechanism being the Consultation Task Force mentioned earlier in the paper.) This second consultation mechanism, The Public Representation Committee (PRC), travelled to all the districts in the country, receiving a rich body of oral and written submissions and dealing with a diverse set of issues relevant to constitutional enactment. The PRC has made public its full report, including their own observations and recommendations, in all three national languages. Expert committees were thereafter appointed to incorporate views from these public

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<sup>4</sup> Sri Lanka after the Presidential Election: Address by Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, 11 February 2015 <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/sri-lanka-after-the-presidential-election/>

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> Constitutional Assembly of Sri Lanka <http://www.constitutionalassembly.lk/>

consultations and carry out further selected consultations with interest groups and experts, having now submitted reports to the Prime Minister<sup>7</sup>. The reports of these experts' committees were presented to Parliament in November 2016. The drafting process of the new Constitution will begin early 2017 and will require both a two-thirds majority in Parliament and an endorsement by the people of the country through a referendum in order to become law.

Two separate yet equally relevant measures in this transitional justice process must be mentioned. First, in February 2015, an unanimous enactment by Parliament of the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, all sections of which are now in vigour. (Cabinet of Ministers recently approved a draft Amendment to the Act facilitating the leading of evidence from remote locations outside Sri Lanka.)

Second, in August 2016, the Parliament approved the Bill to amend the Registration of Deaths (Temporary Provisions) Act No 19 of 2010 for the issuance of *Certificates of Absence*'. This act essentially creates or recognizes a third and new category of legal persons, namely those who are neither 'dead' or 'alive' but considered 'absent.' The purposes of this Act are: enabling the families of missing persons to get about their day-to-day activities without interruption or discrimination; allowing these families to benefit from access to social services as well as applying for benefits under social welfare schemes; providing for temporary management, under the supervision of the District Court of the property and assets of the missing person, and acting as a provisional guardian for dependent children of the missing person. The issuance of this certificate will not interfere with any investigations to determine the fate of a missing person.

The institutional infrastructure for reconciliation in the country includes the Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation, the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation; the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms (described earlier in the paper), and The Ministry of National Coexistence, Dialogue and Official Languages.

The Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation of which the President of Sri Lanka is the subject minister bears the task of identifying issues relating to National Integration and Reconciliation as well as adoption of measures in order to bridge the gap in cordial relations between communities. The Ministry does so both through the revision of current policies and the formulation of new policies, also overseeing their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The Office for National Unity and Reconciliation, which is chaired by the Former President of Sri Lanka, Madam Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, was established by Presidential decree in 2015 with the purpose of accelerated focus on achieving national unity and reconciliation. It is designed to be a catalyst, facilitator and coordinator of reconciliation initiatives and programs in the country, having undertaken several innovative initiatives to reform education systems, promote national unity and reconciliation, reconciliation through universities, development projects and livelihood initiatives; psychosocial healing efforts, use arts and culture to facilitate reconciliation, and implement conflict transformation programs for reconciliation.

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<sup>7</sup> Final Report <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/PRC-Report-English-Final.pdf>

Moreover, the Office for National Unity & Reconciliation has also drafted and developed the country's first National Policy on Reconciliation through consultation processes spanned over a period of one year. This National Policy on Reconciliation<sup>8</sup> is set to steer and direct the process of reconciliation in the country and be the guiding framework for all actors, both state and non-state, working in the field of reconciliation so as to ensure coherence and complementary character of initiatives. This National Policy on Reconciliation has been presented by the President of Sri Lanka to the Cabinet of Ministers. The Ministry of National Coexistence, Dialogue and Official Languages aims to implement national dialogue programs in order to establish solidarity and co-existence between communities; it is also the agency responsible for implementation of the official languages policy of the country.

Another important development has been the drafting of the five-year National Human Rights Action Plan for the years 2017-2021<sup>9</sup>. This process began in 2016 and several mechanisms have been established to steer this process. The outcome is a concrete document laying out a national plan agreed to by both the government of Sri Lanka and its people and which lays down a strategy for the next five years in promoting human rights in the country. In doing so, the government assesses measures already in place to protect and promote human rights, identifies areas that need improvement, and generates commitment for the next five years.

As described, there have been concrete progresses towards national reconciliation. However, while the progress on reconciliation has been real, it is important to be realistic and acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. While celebrating successes, it is critical to embrace the task ahead with both humility and seriousness.

## **Strategic Challenges**

Challenges to the current reconciliation process exist at many levels overarching strategic level many deep-rooted, systemic challenges on the one hand and the operational activity-oriented obstacles on the other. The latter category is important too but is not the focus here and need to be overcome mainly through public management and implementation<sup>10</sup>.

This section focuses on the strategic challenges, for it is believed that they are the critical fault lines in the reconciliation process, which need to be addressed in order to ensure that all operational level measures and initiatives are sustained and lead to durable peace and stability.

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<sup>8</sup> President's Move for Reconciliation, Editorial, Daily Mirror, 04.10.2016 <http://www.dailymirror.lk/116784/President-s-move-for-reconciliation-EDITORIAL>; President presents 11 page draft for lasting reconciliation, The Sunday Times 2 October 2016 <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/161002/columns/president-presents-11-page-draft-for-lasting-national-reconciliation-211164.html>)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.mfa.gov.lk/index.php/en/foreign-policy/national-action-plan-for-human-rights/6587-the-national-action-plan-for-the-protection-and-promotion-of-human-rights-2017-2021>)

<sup>10</sup> International Crisis Group, Asia Report, Sri Lanka: The Failure of the Peace Process, Asia Report, November 2006 <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/124-sri-lanka-the-failure-of-the-peace-process.pdf>

## **Transitional Justice as an Approach, not a mechanism**

The current discourse in the country on rights is largely dominated by the concept of transitional justice, itself a relatively new expression in Sri Lanka<sup>11</sup>. Transitional justice as an approach largely deals with the fallouts of the war and less on the root causes of the conflict itself. Hence, there is a danger of slipping into the tempting symptomatic relief of issues as opposed to the curative approach that is more meaningful and long-lasting. It loses sight of the longer-term sustainable solutions to the ethnic conflict including societal and structural reforms. Developing shared understandings of reconciliation and broader notions of rights and democratization will help tilt the emphasis in the desired direction. Hence, the recommendation must be that in Sri Lanka the transitional justice process needs to be applied to issues outside of the narrow confines of war, and to governance issues more generally.

## **Political Space and Dynamic**

There is a sound relationship of cooperation and understanding between President and Prime Minister in the country, each the respective heads of the two main political parties in the country. However, within this grand coalition government, senior members of the two parties are not always in agreement about government policies and actions and hence periodically issue contradictory statements and criticisms of each other in press conferences and public events<sup>12</sup>. This has created an impression of instability, which is being capitalized upon by previous government stalwarts trying to stage a political comeback. Stalling and slowing down of important initiatives and decision-making have followed, often reinforcing perceptions of instability.

## **New or Emerging Conflicts**

The short sighted view of transitional justice and reconciliation as being restricted to war-time consequences or as a fight between opposites is dangerous for another reason as well. It means that new or emerging conflicts are not taken into account when finding solutions. One such example is the concerted attacks on the Muslim community in the recent past—in places of worship, public spaces and Muslim owned businesses. Despite there being a reduction in the incidences of such attacks, the impacts have now been entrenched in the country, having created distrust, suspicion and animosity towards the Muslim community even from stakeholders previously identified as moderates. Further it loses sight of other vulnerable and marginalized communities in the country who have also suffered as a result of the conflict. Another example are the forgotten communities in the Plantation Sector have their own set of issues related to inadequate development and years of neglect by authorities. This new conflict is separate from the historic conflict which resulted in the armed struggle and hence needs to be addressed separately and is likely lost in a purely wartime approach to conflict resolution and reconciliation.

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<sup>11</sup> Transitional Justice in Sri Lanka, Mahendran Thiruvarangan, Colombo Telegraph August 14 2016 <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/transitional-justice-reconciliation-in-sri-lanka/>

<sup>12</sup> Jehan Perera, The logic of coalition politics as art of the possible will continue, <http://www.peace-srilanka.org/media-centre/political-commentary/item/168-logic-of-coalition-politics-as-art-of-the-possible-will-continue-jehan-perera>

## **Lived Realities and Diverse Perceptions**

There are marked differences in what each ethnic community or group in the country perceives as the main problems to be solved and the priorities for reconciliation. Effective public communication and education campaigns as well as structured interactions between communities will be critical in developing awareness and empathy or mutual understanding of the grievances and aspirations of other groups<sup>13</sup>.

Lived realities both during war and peacetime are interpreted differently by different groups, for both realities and perceptions of said realities differ according to ethnicity, political and social reality, and/or cultural orientation. In the Tamil-dominated North and East, where much of the war was fought, the challenge of transitional justice involves addressing the effects of the war in terms of: a) security, so people feel a sense of safety, freedom and normalization of life; b) economics, so people can recover private lands, establish homes, livelihoods, education and access public services; and c) politics and governance, so as to make local government institutions inclusive and responsive to people's needs. Many people residing in conflict-affected areas prioritize reparations: return of land and compensation<sup>14</sup>.

## **Political Solution**

The aspiration for a political solution seems to be a pervasive and strong underlying priority among a large section of the Tamil people in the country. Communities in the north and east demand a federal solution to the inter-ethnic conflict with greater devolution of power to local government structures and a decentralized form of central government. There are serious tensions between extremist elements on both sides of the divide as some call for unitary state while others call for a federalism that is just short of separation. Fortunately the current government is well aware of this challenge.

## **Victim-hood**

There is a general acceptance and understanding in the country that victims need to be central to all reconciliation and transitional justice processes. However, there is a lack of clarity as to what constitutes a victim to be addressed in the current reconciliation and transitional justice processes. The main categorization is constituted by 'victims of gross human rights violations,' 'victims of armed conflict,' and 'victims of violence.' However, the current governance processes, especially the transitional justice and reconciliation processes, speaks of victims in general and will benefit from clarification. The process of determination varies depending on the definition and categorization of victims, which will in turn determine the required responses.

## **Managing Public Expectations and Effective Communication**

There has been little understanding and perspective on the significance of establishing defined expectations for transitional justice and reconciliation processes and mechanisms. There needs to

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<sup>13</sup> Transitional Justice in Sri Lanka, Mahendran Thiruvarangan, Colombo Telegraph August 14 2016 <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/transitional-justice-reconciliation-in-sri-lanka/>

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem



be a distinction between agreeing on concrete goals and benchmarks to the extent possible for the reconciliation process (language framing being a critical issue in this regard) and the desirable final purposes of the whole endeavour. It remains important to provide the public with a vision of how and where the process maybe going and what benefits it offers to all stakeholders. Creating unrealistic expectations can be costly as it results in disenchantment down the line, a phenomenon already beginning to emerge among activists and sections of the public. The public, and especially the victims should not receive promises impossible to fulfil in a reasonable time-span. Processes of reconciliation always take much longer than planned and often offer very few visible signs of progress, even when such a progress actually takes place. Again, not seeing palpable signs of progress may frustrate the stakeholders and have an effect that is opposite from the one intended. Realistic expectations so as to timeline and goals are a more prudent strategy; so being that said expectations must also be effectively communicated. We thus contend that more effective public outreach, communication and awareness raising campaigns are critical for generating a fresh national narrative and thereby facilitate readiness and cooperation from the population at large.

### **Views of the majority community**

When advocating reconciliation and unity, the fears and anxieties of all communities must be acknowledged, understood and addressed. An over-emphasis on the grievances of the Tamil community alone is the natural tendency, yet it can lead to new waves of conflict and at must be avoided at all costs. The reason to say this is because the Sinhala community, even though is the majority in Sri Lanka, has its own share of concerns<sup>15</sup>. Many actions from the ethnic majority that discriminated against minorities sprang initially from a widespread perception amongst the Sinhalese that they had been discriminated against by the British during the era of colonization in pre-independence Sri Lanka. Sinhalese have also suffered injustice from state institutions and continue to do so<sup>16</sup>. Thus any solution meant to solve the problems of Tamils and Muslims, must not be designed at the expense of the Sinhalese. Not only would such “solutions” be unfair and unjust, they would also reveal themselves to be unsustainable in the long run.

### **The forgotten minority community**

It must be mentioned that the Muslims, though not direct protagonists in the armed conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan State, have ben inflicted considerable suffering during the years of fighting in the North and East of the country, the former theatres of conflict. The forcible eviction of the entire Muslim community from the Northern Province by the LTTE, the massacre of hundreds of Muslims while worshipping in mosques in Eastern Sri Lanka, the takeover of lands belonging to the Muslims in the Eastern Province, the deprivation of the livelihoods of Muslims in the conflict areas and the lack of adequate security to the Muslims were a few of the phenomena that greatly contributed to the sense of insecurity and unease among Muslims during the conflict and to this day. Unlike the Tamil community, which challenged State structures as a means of addressing grievances, the Muslims took a separate

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<sup>15</sup> Salma Yusuf, “Sri Lanka: From Winning the War to Winning the Peace presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Politics and International Affairs”, 16 – 19 June 2015, Athens, Greece: link to conference abstracts <http://www.atiner.gr/abstracts/2014ABST-POL.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem

political path and preferred to engage with the State and work within the mainstream of Sri Lankan politics. This created a great deal of misunderstanding between the Tamil and Muslim communities and caused a strain in their relationship.<sup>17</sup>

While a national narrative is crucial for advancing the reconciliation agenda, it must be warned that a one-sided or simplistic narrative can do more damage than no narrative at all. We must aim for a shared narrative that embraces the multiple lived experiences and not for a common simplistic narrative that subsumes or dissolves the nuanced realities lived by different communities and groups.

That being said, it must be remembered that reconciliation is both a process and a goal. Hence, it will necessarily require time and patient cooperation to bear fruit. Reconciliation cannot be imposed or forced on a nation as an event<sup>18</sup>. It requires both a strategy and a systematized response mechanism by the state and other stakeholders to deal with the likely obstacles that will emerge along the way.

Although concrete and immediate aspects of reconciliation must be at the core of achieving national stability, longer-term goals such as developing robust institutional mechanisms and creating effective coordination systems, as well as designing a rigorous reporting strategy and an overarching vision for reconciliation, remain crucial aspects of the whole process<sup>19</sup>.

‘While we have succeeded in delivering the child safely, the child has to take its first steps in a polluted environment. Along a dirty street.’<sup>20</sup> (The cited author goes further to say ‘what has emerged at present is a golden opportunity for the country to unite as a nation. If this opportunity is lost it is difficult even to think whether another such opportunity will arise.’ The path ahead is a long and winding one: Sri Lanka has come a long way but there is a considerable distance to travel before reconciliation becomes real.

The following extract from the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation sums up the path ahead for the country:

“Let us try to go beyond political opportunism to envision a country for the future; to ask ourselves what kind of legacy do we want to leave for future generations? Will it be one of missed opportunities and failed chances or one that they claim with pride? Do we take the easy way out and respond merely to the needs of the present, or trust in the future and look towards

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<sup>17</sup> Salma Yusuf, “Sri Lanka: From Winning the War to Winning the Peace presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Politics and International Affairs”, 16 – 19 June 2015, Athens, Greece: link to conference abstracts <http://www.atiner.gr/abstracts/2014ABST-POL.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Reconciliation After Violent Conflict – Policy Summary, A Handbook, International IDEA <http://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/reconciliation-after-violent-conflict-handbook>

<sup>19</sup> Salma Yusuf, Nation-building in Sri Lanka, The Potential and The Promise, OpenDemocracy, 14 May 2012 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/author/salma-yusuf>; Salma Yusuf, Sri Lanka’s Tryst with Reconciliation: Where are we today? Journal of Human Rights in the Commonwealth, Volume 1 No.2, 2013 <http://journals.sas.ac.uk/jhrc/article/view/1713/1650> )

<sup>20</sup> Professor Sarath Wijesuriya, ‘A victory for law-abiding citizens,’ in ‘One Nation, Great Power: First Anniversary of the Assumption of Office by the President,’ 2016 January Publication by the Office of the President

building a stronger, more vibrant and active democracy that can ensure justice and equality for all? Those are the questions that will have to be debated in the Constitutional Assembly and in the wider society...”<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, the words of the Greek philosopher, Michael Dertouzous holds true to the Sri Lankan context: ‘It is an unfinished revolution.’(Dertouzous, 2002).

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<sup>21</sup> Final Report <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/PRC-Report-English-Final.pdf>

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