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Subject: Philip Alston

Sri Lanka rejects UN call for war crime inquiry
 Fri, Jan 8, 2010, 09:30 pm SL Time, ColomboPage News Desk, Sri Lanka.



Jan 08, Colombo: Sri Lanka today strongly rejected a call by the United Nations Special rapporteur for a inquiry into possible war crimes committed during its final stage of battle against the LTTE Tamil Tigers.

Philip Alston, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, announcing Thursday (07) that the unauthenticated video aired on British television last August showing alleged execution of Tamil prisoners by the Sri Lankan soldiers is authentic, called for an inquiry into possible war crimes during the final stages of the conflict.

Strongly opposing Alston's report, the government as a UN member nation demanded the Special Rapporteur to remain balanced and objective.

Sri Lanka Minister of Human Rights and Disaster Management Mahinda Samarasinghe said in this instance Prof. Philip Alston has been very subjective.

"We don't accept his conclusions, and we believe his conclusions are highly subjective and biased," the Minister said.

Alston, who has commissioned three experts in forensic pathology, forensic video analysis, and firearm evidence to examine the video, after concluding that investigations carried out by the government had not been thorough, or impartial said the video was authentic.

"The conclusion clearly is that the video is authentic," he told a news conference in New York on Thursday calling the government to respond to these allegations.

However, Alston added that there are a small number of characteristics of the video which the experts were unable to explain.

On Friday the government said the special rapporteur is on a crusade to vilify Sri Lanka, especially during the election time.

"We believe he is on a crusade of his own to force a war crime inquiry against Sri Lanka," Minister Samarasinghe said of Alston adding that he

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should have shared the information first with the government in question before going to the press.

"It seems to us that Prof. Alston is playing a different agenda altogether and he has given his own interpretation to the experts opinion. We will study the experts report and seek legal and technical advice and formulate a consolidated Government position," the Minister said.

The government has categorically denied the allegations raised by the video and had its own experts examined the video. The government experts have determined that the video was fabricated.

The Special Rapporteur has rejected the government's findings saying that two of the government's four experts were from the own military whose actions have been called into question.

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