

INTERNATIONAL
TRUTH
AND JUSTICE
PROJECT

PRESS RELEASE: SISIRA MENDIS REWARDED NOT INVESTIGATED

24 July 2017

Johannesburg: Sri Lanka has once again shown its utter disdain for victims of torture and the UN system, by renewing the employment of [Sisira Mendis](#) who ran the country's most notorious torture site at the height of the war in order to reward him. This is despite Colombo's commitments two years ago to the UN Human Rights Council to vet its public and security officials.

"Sri Lanka is constantly rewarding and protecting alleged perpetrators - with [top army positions](#), diplomatic postings, and even appointments to [the body](#) designed to protect witnesses," said the ITJP's Executive Director, Yasmin Sooka. "Where is the respect for the victims? I am stunned by this provocative action without any investigation being initiated".

Mr. Sisira Mendis was the Deputy Inspector General of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the police from March 2008 to June 2009, when he was also responsible for the Terrorism Investigation Division (TID). He ran what's widely referred to as "the fourth floor" - a term which Sri Lankans use as a shorthand for describing torture.

A [UN report](#) in 2015 named Mr. Mendis and described interrogation rooms used for torture in his headquarters that were equipped with "metal bars and poles used for beatings, barrels of water used for waterboarding, pulleys and apparatus" (para 13).

Mr Mendis was brought out of retirement to become the chief of national intelligence under the Sirisena Government; [news](#) reports say the cabinet has now extended Mr Mendis in this role for another year.

W ITJPSL.COM
E ITJPSL@GMAIL.COM

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
YASMIN SOOKA

"This is tantamount to entrenching impunity in the country and sends a message that torture is acceptable in Sri Lanka," said Ms Sooka.

I [REDACTED]
T [REDACTED]
J [REDACTED]
P [REDACTED]

Last November, the Sri Lankan Government sent Mr Mendis to Geneva as part of its [delegation](#) to the UN Committee Against Torture, which said it was "alarmed" by his participation. Mr Mendis [declined](#) to answer the Committee's questions regarding his past. The Committee's concluding observations in December 2016 (para 13) formally asked the Government of Sri Lanka to provide detailed information on Mr Mendis' role and responsibilities with regard to the allegations of torture and to initiate a credible vetting process.

"The refusal to take seriously the allegations against Mr Mendis is also an affront to the UN Committee Against Torture and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which named him in their 2015 investigation. The international community must make it clear this sort of undermining of the Convention Against Torture will not be tolerated", commented Yasmin Sooka.

ends

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