

INTERNATIONAL
TRUTH
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PROJECT

Press Release: Putting the Wolf to Guard the Sheep – Perpetrator Protection in Sri Lanka.

W ITJPSL.COM
E ITJPSL@GMAIL.COM

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
YASMIN SOOKA

Johannesburg (13 February 2017): At least one alleged perpetrator of torture named in a UN report has been appointed to the body in Sri Lanka supposed to protect victims and witnesses, known as the National Authority for Victim and Witness Protection. At least two other appointments are very troubling, says the new ITJP dossier released today, *Putting the Wolf to Guard the Sheep*.

“Nobody testifying against the state or security forces should expect witness protection under the current system,” said ITJP’s Executive Director, Yasmin Sooka, “quite the reverse –they would risk their lives if they asked for protection from the state; these appointments clearly show the new Government’s aim is to protect the perpetrators”.

Other controversial appointments to the protection authority set up by the Government of President Sirisena include the official in charge of “rehabilitation” of former combatants at the end of the civil war. A UN Investigation found reasonable grounds to say torture occurred in these “rehabilitation” camps and the UN Committee Against Torture recently recommended the Government of Sri Lanka investigate this. The ITJP dossier cites testimony from 14 survivors of “rehabilitation” who say they were tortured during the time this official was in overall charge. Another appointment is a member of the Attorney General’s department alleged by independent international experts to have played a role in preventing witnesses from testifying against the security forces in the case of the killing of 17 aid workers from the French NGO, *Action Contre La Faim*, in Muttur in 2006.

“These appointments are in clear contravention of Sri Lanka’s commitment to vet public and security officials, made in the UN resolution it co-sponsored in 2015,” said Ms. Sooka.

For more information read the full dossier at: www.itjpsl.com

Also see ITJP’s dossier on Mr. Sisira Mendis sent to UNCAT:

<http://www.itjpsl.com/assets/press/Press-Release-Sisira-Mendis.pdf>

