

KHULUMANI SUPPORT GROUP

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*Transforming victims into active citizens*



His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena,  
President of the Socialist Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka  
9 July 2017

### **On Establishing the Office on Missing Persons Without Delay**

Your Excellency,

On behalf of Khulumani Support Group, the membership organisation of South African survivors of gross violations of human rights from our country's past of political conflict and violence, I am writing to express our appreciation of the actions taken by your government in adopting legislation that provides for the establishment of an Office on Missing Persons on 12 August 2016 and for the unanimous adoption of an amendment on 21 June 2017.

For Khulumani Support Group, with our country's own history of unresolved enforced disappearances, we are encouraged by these very significant developments in Sri Lanka. We know that the establishment of an Office on Missing Persons would represent a major advance in addressing the legacy of the thousands of politically disappeared from Sri Lanka's past conflicts and in providing the affected families with the truth about what happened towards affording them some measure of closure of a very painful history.

As Khulumani Support Group, we have been grateful for the working relationships we have had with victim groups, with members of the transitional justice institutions established in your country and with members of Sri Lankan faith-based communities as they have striven to work together towards achieving a lasting peace in Sri Lanka. Today, we join our partners in the struggle for post-conflict justice and sustainable peace, in congratulating you on these developments that signal that under the leadership of your National Unity Government, your country is on the journey towards a reconciliation that is based on the right to the truth, reparation and accountability – the rights that contribute to the prevention of the recurrence of violence.

We are writing to urge that there should be no further delay in setting up the Office of Missing Persons (OMP). We are aware of the anxiety that the delay is causing to affected families and we look with hope for urgent action to the gazetting of the OMP. We are convinced that this action will restore the confidence of thousands of families in the rule of law and in the potential of democratic governance.

As South Africans, we anticipate being humbled to learn from the Sri Lankan experience as the OMP begins its work, given that our own government has yet to sign, ratify and domesticate the International Convention to Protect All Persons from Enforced Disappearances in support of which we are continuing to sustain urgent advocacy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'm. jobson'.

Dr Marjorie Jobson, National Director, Khulumani Support Group