



United Nations Office
154 Fifth Avenue
San Francisco, California 94118
Phone and 415.668.2752
Email: ied@igc.org

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Universal Periodic Review

Draft Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

Sri Lanka

International Educational Development has sought compliance with humanitarian law in the armed conflict in Sri Lanka since 1983. We appreciate the many concerns reflected in the Draft Report regarding humanitarian law violations, but regret that in spite of the fact that the High Commissioner and others identify the armed conflict as the overriding issue in Sri Lanka, the process did not result in a more detailed evaluation of acts and policies of the government of Sri Lanka in light of the Geneva Conventions and other norms of humanitarian law. Article I of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 obliges all HCP to respect and ensure respect of humanitarian law in all circumstances.

We note in para. 84 of the Draft Report that the recommendations of 16 States that directly or indirectly relate to the armed conflict and/or the need for an enhanced representation of the Office of the High Commissioner do not enjoy the support of the government of Sri Lanka. We also note in paragraphs 87-112 that Sri Lanka has not made any general voluntary commitment relating to its humanitarian law obligations, but does in relation to humanitarian assistance (para.96) and IDPs (para. 108). As indicated, the vast majority of the IDPs are Tamil victims of armed conflict who are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Those providing aid must be assured of their own safety in light of the killing of over 60 aid workers in the past two years.

Many States reiterated concerns that the government has not fully complied with recommendations already made regarding human rights and humanitarian law. In fact, violations escalate. The SLMM is no longer operating. Sri Lanka's national human rights institution does not meet Paris Principles standards. Even the narrowly focussed IIGEP failed to make headway and disbanded. The Council must not allow this UPR process to delay timely and effective action on behalf of the victims of armed conflict or to prevent effective international monitoring of the overall situation.