

9(2)(a)

**From:** NEW DELHI  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 July 2015 10:50 p.m.  
**To:** SEA  
**Cc:** UNHC; ISED; NAD; AMER; WASHINGTON; LONDON; BEIJING; OTTAWA; ASEAN POSTS; FM.NZTE (Seemail); FM.MPI (Seemail); FM.EducationNZ (Seemail); FM.Immigration NZ (Seemail); FM.DPMC (FPA) (contact); DS AAG; CEO; DS MLG; FM.P/S Trade; GENEVA; IDG GLO; IDG PHM; IDG DSE; IDG SED; DS IDG; NEW YORK; NEW DELHI; FM.P/S MFA; STR; FM.NAB (Seemail); NEW DELHI  
**Subject:** Formal Message: Sri Lanka: A Political Revolution Stalls  
**Categories:** Transferred to SharePoint

**Formal Message: Sri Lanka: A Political Revolution Stalls**

**Summary**

Mahinda Rajapaksa's defeat in January's Presidential elections raised hopes among his opponents that Sri Lanka was on the cusp of major progress in such areas as good governance and inter-communal relations.

**6(a)** Sirisena, meanwhile, has told the Sri Lankan people that while he will remain "neutral" in the Parliamentary elections, he will block any move by Rajapaksa to become Prime Minister after them.

**6(a)** Some major themes of the coming campaign are already emerging. Rajapaksa intends to lead a Presidential-style campaign, which focuses on his strong leadership attributes and his nationalism (with an emphasis on his winning the country's civil war and standing up to Sri Lanka's "foreign enemies"). UNP is running on a good governance platform, highlighting the anti-corruption measures it has implemented over the past six months, as well as promising further devolution of power to the provinces in a clear pitch for the ethnic minority vote. Sri Lanka's electoral system (which is a complicated form of proportional representation) is designed to make single-party rule unlikely, so a mixed result (with neither UNP nor SLFP emerging with a clear majority) remains a very plausible outcome.

**Out of scope**

**Action**

For information.

**Report**

In January, Sri Lanka underwent a political transformation when Mahinda Rajapaksa, once the country's most popular ever leader, became its first incumbent President to be defeated at the ballot box. This was characterised as a "revolution" by the broad coalition of political forces who united to defeat Rajapaksa and replace him with Maithripala Sirisena, Rajapaksa's erstwhile Health Minister.

2 Sirisena was elected as Sri Lanka's new President on a platform of good governance, national reconciliation and lowering the cost of living. During the campaign, these themes expertly exploited the three primary concerns that a narrow majority of Sri Lankans had about President Rajapaksa and his regime: that it was prone to corruption;



that it had not "won the peace" following the civil war, thereby allowing inter-communal tensions to fester; and that it had not shared the benefits of Sri Lanka's post-war economic dividend adequately with the middle and working classes. President Sirisena formed and led a self-described government of national unity featuring politicians from both of Sri Lanka's two major political parties: the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP, of which Rajapaksa and Sirisena are both members) and the United National Party (whose leader, Ranil Wickremesinghe, was appointed Prime Minister by President Sirisena).

3 Having governed for six months, President Sirisena has now dissolved Sri Lanka's Parliament and called Parliamentary elections for 17 August. While these elections were not constitutionally required to be held until 2016, President Sirisena made clear during January's election campaign that he would implement immediate constitutional and economic reforms [REDACTED] **Out of scope** [REDACTED] and then provide the public with an opportunity to elect a fresh Parliament.

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[REDACTED]  
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[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

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[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

10 UNP and the smaller political parties that united behind Sirisena's Presidential campaign have reacted badly to his decision to allow Rajapaksa to become an SLFP Parliamentary candidate. Various political leaders who supported Sirisena's Presidential campaign have described this decision as a "betrayal" of January's "revolution" and of the 6.2 million Sri Lankans who voted against Rajapaksa's re-election to a third term as President. However, at the same time, these political forces that united behind Sirisena to ensure Rajapaksa's defeat have not stuck together for the Parliamentary elections. Most of the political parties that supported Sirisena's campaign have not joined a "united front" with the UNP, but are instead contesting the election in their own right.

[REDACTED]

6(a)

11 [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

**Comment**

13 January's elections, which saw President Rajapaksa defeated, brought about significant optimism among the small majority of Sri Lankans who voted to deny him a third term in office. President Sirisena, and his Cabinet led by Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, created high expectations among their supporters that significant reform would be possible in a relatively short period of time (including by characterising their victory as a "revolution"). The First 100 Days programme, on which President Sirisena campaigned, promised voters progress on a basket of issues – including in the areas of good governance, political devolution/reconciliation, and cost of living.

14 But President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe have had to endure a period of negative press over the past few months, and their erstwhile cheerleaders in the media have started to produce more subdued assessments of their level of delivery.

6(a)

This is partly due to the success of Rajapaksa in manoeuvring SLFP MPs into blocking or delaying key government reforms, including in such areas as electoral reform and combatting corruption. This has helped give rise to the impression of a weak government and President, unable to deliver decisive political leadership.

15 [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

[REDACTED]

Out of scope

RELEASED UNDER THE  
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9(2)(a)

**From:** NEW DELHI  
**Sent:** Saturday, 18 April 2015 12:43 a.m.  
**To:** SEA  
**Cc:** UNHC; ISED; NAD; AMER; WASHINGTON; LONDON; BEIJING; OTTAWA; .. ASEAN POSTS; FM.NZTE (Seemail); FM.MPI (Seemail); FM.EducationNZ (Seemail); FM.Immigration NZ (Seemail); FM.DPMC (FPA); FM.P/S MFA (FM\_PS32@mfat.govt.nz); DS AAG; CEO; DS MLG; FM.P/S Trade  
**Subject:** Formal Message: Sri Lankan Politics: As 100 Days Milestone Looms, a Mixed Verdict for Sirisena

Formal Message: Sri Lanka: As 100 Days Milestone Looms, a Mixed Verdict for Sirisena

#### Summary

Sri Lanka's new President, Maithripala Sirisena, reaches the end of his first 100 days this Saturday, 18 April. Sri Lanka's **(6(a))** political environment has constrained his government's ability to fully deliver on its First 100 Days platform, such as the abolition of the executive Presidency and the calling of Parliamentary elections. But the Sirisena Administration has made very impressive progress on the issues of social cohesion and repairing Sri Lanka's strained international relationships. Sri Lankans are relishing a sense of peace and security, and a reduction of the politics of fear utilised by the Rajapaksa Government since 2009 as a reason for strongly directional rule.

**(6(a))** While voters appear content with the Government's efforts to control the cost of living, new overseas investment is being tempered by the belief that Sri Lanka is still in the middle of a political transition and the challenge of finding a new balance between New Delhi, Beijing and Western capitals. Both the timing of Parliamentary elections and the shape of the government that will emerge from them remain in flux.

**(6(a))**

#### Action

For information.

#### Report

Maithripala Sirisena was elected Sri Lanka's new President on 9 January. He promised that his first 100 days in office would see abolition of the country's executive Presidency and general elections so that Sri Lankan voters could choose a fresh government. Neither of these goals will be achieved by 18 April, his 100<sup>th</sup> day in office, but considerable progress across other parts of his policy programme continue to deliver Sirisena a degree of political and electoral tolerance.

2 In its first three months in office, the Sirisena Administration has operated in a **volatile political environment which has constrained its ability to fully implement its election promises**. Upon being elected President, Sirisena installed Ranil Wickremesinghe, the leader of the United National Party (UNP), as his Prime Minister. The UNP controls just 60 of Parliament's 225 seats. The new Sri Lankan Government can therefore only pass legislation with the cooperation of the majority Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the political party of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa.



[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

4 [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

5 [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

6 [REDACTED]

**6(a)**

7 [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

8 [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

9 Given faltering progress on the economic front, the Government could be expected to be struggling. But it has other important priorities which it has handled much better. The Sirisena Administration has delivered on its election promise to improve social cohesion. Tamil Sri Lankans in the North and East of the country report high levels of satisfaction with the President's first 100 Days in office.

10 The policies the Government has implemented to achieve this success have included:



- Installing a civilian governor of the Northern Province, replacing a discredited and disliked military leader.
- Lifting travel restrictions on foreigners travelling to the Northern Province, thus opening up opportunities for economic development and tourism.
- Reviewing the designation by the Rajapaksa regime of hundreds of diaspora Tamil organisations and individuals [REDACTED] **6(a)** [REDACTED] as having links to terrorism – with the intention of repealing them. (Comment: We are seeking further information on this process.)
- Engaging with the international community, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, on its domestic, post-civil war accountability and reconciliation processes.
- Engaging more constructively with the UN Human Rights Council, thereby successfully convincing its key members to give the new government “more time” in order to achieve progress on social cohesion.

11

[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

12 At the same time, Sirisena has to be conscious of the rhetorical attacks being made on him by Rajapaksa and his Buddhist fundamentalist supporters in the Colombo press, who criticise his social cohesion policies and his warming relations with the West as evidence that Sirisena is ready to “deliver Eelam” (i.e. an independent Tamil state). He refused overtures by Tamil leaders to meet him while in London, claiming he was concerned at their possible links to terrorism financing. He has prioritised his warming relations with the West, while still insisting that Sri Lanka has a “non-aligned foreign policy”.

13

[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

**Comment**

14 2015 started with an event – Maithripala Sirisena’s defeat of Mahinda Rajapaksa in the Presidential election – which signalled dramatic political change in Sri Lanka. In the 100 days following that election, Sri Lanka’s governing class has experienced a period of significant political transition. While achieving impressive results in the areas of social cohesion and repairing international relationships, the Sirisena Administration faces a challenging domestic political environment which is constraining its ability to deliver on some of its other major pre-election promises.

15

[REDACTED]

**6(a)**

[REDACTED]

**6(a)**

ENDS

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**9(2)a**

**From:** NEW YORK  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 17 March 2015 10:47 a.m.  
**To:** UNHC; SEA  
**Cc:** NEW DELHI; SINGAPORE; ...UNSC DIVISIONS; ...UNSC POSTS; ...WLN SLT; FM.DPMC (SIG, FPA); FM.P/S MFA; FM.Defence (Seemail); FM.NAB (Seemail); FM.Police (Seemail); **9(2)(a)** DFAT  
Cable Exchange; DFATD Cable Exchange  
**Subject:** FORMAL MESSAGE: UNSC: FOR CABLE EXCH: BRIEFING ON SRI LANKA: 13 MARCH  
**Attachments:** Scanned from a Xerox Multifunction Device.pdf

**Department of Political Affairs Briefing on Sri Lanka**

**Agenda Item:** **6(b)**

**Update**

**6(b)** the majority of the briefing was actually a horizon scanning exercise, the primary focus of which was Sri Lanka.

*Sri Lanka*

**6(b)**

**6(b)**

**6(b)**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] 6(b)  
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[REDACTED] 6(b)

[REDACTED] ENDS]

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9(2)(a)

**From:** SEA  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 17 February 2015 10:03 a.m.  
**To:** SEA; TND; DS AAG; CEO; ECO; DS TEG; EUR; AMER; LGL; MEDIA; NAD; UNHC; FM.DPMC (FPA); FM.MPI (Seemail); FM.NZTE (Seemail); FM.NAB (Seemail); ...ASEAN POSTS; ABU DHABI; AUCKLAND; BEIJING; BRUSSELS; GENEVA; CANBERRA; LONDON; NEW YORK; OTTAWA; PARIS; IDG GLO; PRETORIA; BRIDGETOWN; TEHRAN; FM.Sport NZ; FM.P/S Sport & Recreation; NEW DELHI; FM.EducationNZ (Seemail); ENV  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] 9(2)(a)  
**Subject:** Formal Message: Sri Lanka: Visit to New Zealand by Minister of Tourism and Sports  
**Categories:** Out, Transferred to SharePoint

**Handling Instructions**

MPI: [REDACTED] 9(2)(a)  
ENZ: [REDACTED] 9(2)(a)  
SportNZ: [REDACTED] 9(2)(a)  
NZTE: [REDACTED] 9(2)(a)

**Summary**

Sri Lanka's Minister of Tourism and Sports, Navin Dissanayake, visited New Zealand on 11-14 February to represent his country's new President, Maithripala Sirisena, at the opening ceremony and first match of the Cricket World Cup. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 6(a) This political visit, the first of several expected from the subcontinent during the Cricket World Cup, underlined the value of the tournament to our South Asian diplomacy.

**Action**

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] 6(a), 6(b)







[Redacted]

6(a)

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9 [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] **6(a), 6(b)** [Redacted] Minister Coleman outlined the Key Government's Better Public Services programme to make government more innovative and results-focused. [Redacted]

**6(b)**

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**6(a)**

[Redacted]

**6(a), 6(b)**

[Redacted]

**6(a), 6(b)**

[Redacted]

**Out of scope**

[REDACTED]

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ENDS

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**9(2)(a)**

**From:** NEW DELHI  
**Sent:** Friday, 13 February 2015 5:16 p.m.  
**To:** SEA  
**Cc:** AUS; CEO; DS AAG; DS APE; DS IDG; DS TEG; ECO; IDG GLO; IDG PHM; IDG SED; TND; UNHC; FM.DPMC (FPA); FM.MPI (Seemail); FM.NAB (Seemail); FM.NZTE (Seemail); FM.P/S MFA; FM.P/S Trade; FM.P/S Food Safety; FM.P/S Agriculture; CANBERRA; NEW YORK; GENEVA; ...ASEAN POSTS; FM.VCO (Seemail); PRD; LONDON; BEIJING; NIUE; SRU; NEW DELHI; BRUSSELS; PRD; LONDON  
**Subject:** Formal Message: Sri Lanka: Sirisena government's peace and reconciliation agenda  
**Attachments:** Sri LANKA FM Speech to Carnegie Feb 2015.docx  
**Categories:** Transferred to SharePoint

**Summary**

There is new purpose in the Sri Lanka political and community reconciliation agenda, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a)** President Sirisena and his ministers are making peace and reconciliation the focus of Independence Day commemorations in Colombo on 4 February. The ceremony included a "Pledge for Peace", which spoke of determination to see intercommunity tolerance and respect for all. The Tamil National Alliance attended the celebrations for the first time in 50 years.

[REDACTED] **6(a)** will be an eloquent spokesperson on the government's approach to reconciliation. We recommend reading the speech he gave this week to the Carnegie Foundation in the US (**attached**) in which he laid out the government's approach. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(b)**

An organised visit by HQM to Jaffna (North Sri Lanka) and Trincomalee (East Sri Lanka) has allowed for calls on regional representatives [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a), 6(b)**

[REDACTED] **6(a), 6(b)**







[REDACTED]

6(a), 6(b)

#### Tricamolee

7 [REDACTED]

6(a), 6(b)

#### Independence Day ceremony

8 The 67<sup>th</sup> Independence Day ceremony was a large affair under hot blue skies [REDACTED] 6(a) Reports claimed (and we believe) that 5000 people participated in the extended march past. The parade was led by the three services of the Sri Lanka military, included police and paramilitary commandos, and was rounded out by groups of marching children, cultural groups representing Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Tamil communities, dancers and musicians, bands and for good measure, a fully robed baby elephant, which received a huge cheer from the crowd. A loud and extended gun salute heralded the start of lengthy speeches, with the most significant of many being given by President Sirisena.

9 There were two significant political events that highlighted the celebrations. For the first time in 50 years the leader of the Tamil National Alliance attended the ceremony. Also, for the first time, the speech by the President of Sri Lanka was used to officially recognise past tragedies and to communicate publicly a need for national healing and unity. President Sirisena spoke of the need for "meditative reflection on past errors while desisting from heaping blame on each other". He also made a public commitment to work towards reconciliation and to work to unite the minds of the people of all ethnic and religious communities.

10 A 'Declaration of Peace' was also read out at the official Independence Day Ceremony. [REDACTED] 6(b) It involved a child reading an official "paying of respect to all the citizens of Sri Lanka, of all ethnicities and religions who lost their lives due to the tragic conflict that afflicted the country for over three decades, and to all the victims of violence since Independence, and a commitment to ensure that never again will the country be allowed to be traumatised by the shedding of blood of her citizens".

#### Engagement with Ministers

11 In engagement with ministers they frequently emphasised the need to achieve reconciliation and unity within the country. [REDACTED]

69a), 6(b)



[REDACTED]

6(a),6(b)

12

[REDACTED]

6(b)

13

[REDACTED]

6(a), 6(b)

**Comment**

14 This was an encouraging visit, with the government in an upbeat mood following a strong victory. Addressing reconciliation issues is fundamental to the political and economic future of Sri Lanka and so the concentration on it is welcome. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] we recommend reading the Foreign Ministers speech to Carnegie as a full statement of the government's intentions and agenda. It is copied below.

ENDS

Address by Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace  
February 11th 2015

I am profoundly grateful and touched by the warm welcome and generous introduction accorded me this evening. It is such a pleasure for me to be back once again in this beautiful and important city as Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister after nearly 8 years on the Opposition benches in Parliament.

Before I start speaking on 'Sri Lanka after the Presidential Election', let me congratulate you Ambassador Burns on your appointment as the President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace soon after you relinquished a very distinguished career at the forefront of United States diplomacy. I wish you many successful years of service providing leadership to this oldest international affairs think-tank in the United States. It is indeed an honour for me to have your gracious presence here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,



The story that I have to tell you today is a happy one. A story that shows, that although Sri Lanka and this great country are situated far away from each other, and our nations are unequal in size, there is much that binds the people of our two nations. Their commitment to democracy, freedom, liberty, good governance and the rule of law and their dedication to uphold, protect and preserve the pluralistic nature of society. These are the values which the people of Sri Lanka chose to reaffirm at the Presidential election held just over 33 days ago when they used the power of the ballot to elect Mr. Maithripala Sirisena as their President.

Despite an election campaign which was greatly flawed and one-sided, the rainbow coalition of the opposition scored a decisive victory on the 8th of January on a platform promising far reaching democratic reforms. Asia's oldest democracy reasserted its belief in and commitment to democracy by dislodging an emerging dictatorship in typical South Asian style – laid back and non-violent. Instead of the stones, pellets and bullets of the Arab Spring, Sri Lanka's 'Rainbow Revolution' succeeded through the power of the ballot.

Over 81.52% of registered voters exercised their franchise on 8th January, silently, peacefully and decisively resulting in a swift transfer of power the very next day. The firm resolve of the Army Commander, Inspector General of Police, and the Attorney General must also be commended in the face of moves to declare a state of emergency and disrupt the counting in the early hours of 9th January.

The people of Sri Lanka, through this singular act, conveyed several powerful messages:

-reaffirming their faith in the best traditions of democracy, they showed how formidable a power elections can prove to be;

-they also indicated to the world their vision for their country by choosing to vote for a leader who promised them good governance, the rule of law, strong democratic institutions, reconciliation, sustainable economic development, peace, and most importantly, the creation of a new political culture devoid of divisive politics and the preservation of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nature of society;

-they also sought through this election to set standards for their leaders to abide by. Calling for an end to impunity and corruption, people demanded that their elected leaders and public officials are made accountable for their actions and inactions.

Of course, to most who did not expect this change from Sri Lanka, and those who were sceptical about Sri Lanka's long cherished democratic culture, the election results on 9th January came as a shock or what one would call a jaw dropping moment.

The whole world broke out in applause for Sri Lanka during the wee hours of the morning of the 9th of January. After a long time, Sri Lanka is once again the centre of the world's attention for the right reasons. Although this change brings with it great responsibility that the new Government must live up to, President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the Government are deeply conscious of this fact.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a unique moment in our country's history and its Parliament. Why do I say this? It is not because of the large voter turnout. It is not even because all communities played an equally important role in electing this leader or the peaceful transition of power that took place. I say this because it is important to not lose sight of the fact that the people gave their mandate to President Sirisena to create a new political culture. As a result, we today have a very special Parliament.

**For the first time in our nation's history, the two main political parties, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) have reached consensus to move forward in unison for a common cause – that is to work towards achieving important national objectives in keeping with the aspirations of the people of our nation**

Following the election, President Sirisena was appointed as Chairperson of the party that was earlier headed by the former President, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). Although this phenomenon may have seemed strange to



observers of Sri Lankan affairs, this act made it possible for the President and the Government to secure the support of the Sri Lanka Freedom party which has a majority in Parliament. Working together with so many different partners is a new experience for us which requires the Government to chart its path carefully and mindfully, through consensus building. It is nevertheless, a necessary path to tread to implement the important 100 Day Work Programme or Reform Agenda of the Government which has been endorsed by the people, enact key legislation required for this purpose and take important steps required to heal the wounds of our nation.

**The support that the Government receives from the Leader of Opposition as well as parties that have not joined the Government such as the Tamil National Alliance and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) are vital for the success of the Government's reform agenda and valued by the Government.**

Based on this collective approach to governance, Ladies and Gentlemen, for the first time in our nation's history, the Government succeeded, at its 67th Independence Day Celebrations on 4th of February to officially recognise past tragedies and the need for healing and unity. Addressing the nation on this solemn occasion which the leader of the Tamil National Alliance attended for the first time in 50 years, President Sirisena spoke of the need for meditative reflection on past errors while desisting from heaping blame on each other. He made a commitment to work towards reconciliation and unite the minds of the people of all ethnic and religious communities.

The Government's 'Declaration of Peace' at the official Independence Day Ceremony included:

- paying respects to all the citizens of Sri Lanka, of all ethnicities and religions who lost their lives due to the tragic conflict that afflicted the country for over three decades and to all the victims of violence since Independence, and
- a commitment to ensure that never again will the country be allowed to be traumatised by the shedding of blood of her citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government made up of a collection of political parties that I like to call the 'rainbow coalition' and the parties that support the Government including the Tamil National Alliance recognise fully the importance of this moment. We are conscious that this opportunity must not be squandered and must instead be fully seized for the sake of the present and future generations of our country and to reach our nation's fullest potential. Therefore, the Government, since its very first day in office, commenced work on implementing the 100 Day Programme on which it campaigned and was elected to office.

-The most important issue for the Sri Lankan polity, and the longest pending, is reconciliation. While meaningful reconciliation would take time, as it involves a process of healing, it is nevertheless an essential factor for the country's progress. Recognising this, the Government, within days of assuming office, appointed two very senior former civil servants as Governors in the former conflict affected Provinces of the North and the East with a view to initiating measures to strengthen civilian administration. These posts were previously held by military personnel.

Along with this step commenced a series of additional measures to address the particular requirements and grievances of the people in these areas including seeking tangible solutions to the complicated issue of land ownership.

The Government has already commenced discussions on introducing a policy of progressively reducing High Security Zones in the Northern Province and releasing land to the public.

-Steps are being taken to remove any remaining restrictions on visiting places of worship in the Northern Province and reconstructing all damaged places of religious worship.

-Restrictions placed on persons visiting the North were lifted with immediate effect.

-Involvement of the military in civilian activities has ceased.



-Resettlement related issues of the internally displaced are being addressed in consultation with the relevant entities. All Sri Lankan refugees living overseas have been invited to return on a voluntary basis. The Government has already begun exploring possibilities of extending assistance to such returnees.

-Carrying out its pledge to ensure media freedom, all restrictions on media personnel including the practice of referring visas for clearance to the Ministry of Defence were immediately discontinued.

-All foreign media personnel who wish to visit Sri Lanka are now welcome to do so and travel to and report from any part of the country, freely, without fear of intimidation.

-All news websites that were blocked were unblocked within a matter of days.

-An open invitation was extended to all media personnel living in exile to return to the country.

-Demonstrating its commitment to engage actively with civil society and the human rights community including human rights activists, the NGO Secretariat was shifted away from the purview of the Ministry of Defence and placed under the Ministry of Policy planning and Economic Affairs. Together with the Deputy Minister under whose purview this Secretariat now rests, I hope to engage with these groups on a regular basis to the extent possible and also have the relevant NGOs involved in the reconciliation process.

-The Department of Immigration and Emigration which was also under the purview of the Ministry of Defence was shifted out and placed under the Ministry of Public Order.

-Independence has been restored to Government institutions. Ministers are once again given their due place in policy making while public officials are respected and the environment required for them to carry out their rightful functions has been restored.

-Work is already underway to repeal the controversial 18th amendment to the Constitution which removed independent appointments to Commissions and lifted term limits of the Executive President. The Government will re-introduce provisions of the 17th amendment which will cause the establishment of the Constitutional Council that will provide for the establishment of independent Judicial Service, National Police, Public Service, Elections, Bribery and Corruption, and National Human Rights Commissions.

-Necessary amendments to the Constitution to cause the transfer of executive powers exercised by the President to the Prime Minister, the Cabinet of Ministers and to Parliament are in the process of being drafted. The current President who, upon taking oaths affirmed to the nation that he will not contest another Presidential election has suggested that not only must the powers of the Executive Presidency be curtailed but the term limit too must be reduced.

Having discontinued the practice of drawing undue importance to the post of President, he has shunned the use of terms such as 'His Excellency' to refer to him. Consistently emphasising the merits of abandoning ostentation, President Sirisena, instead, ensures that all of us adopt a pragmatic approach to governance, focusing all our energy on building a compassionate and moral society where the rule of law and good governance practices are upheld and attention is paid to serving the public.

-Believing on the assurance that the passage of the Assistance and Protection to Victims and Witnesses Bill will be expedited, action is to be taken on this matter in Parliament this month.

-Introduction of an ethical Code of Conduct for all representatives of the people, the enactment of the Right to Information Act, and the National Audit Act are also currently being worked on for implementation within 100 days.

-A National Executive Council inclusive of representatives of parties represented in Parliament has been set up and meets regularly for consultations on the implementation of the 100 Day Programme and issues of national importance. Parties that are not a part of the Government such as the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) are also represented in this National Executive Council.



-On 20th January, the Prime Minister gave an assurance in Parliament that the 13th amendment to the Constitution will be implemented. This will be done while ensuring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State.

-Compliance with applicable legal provisions pertaining to the arrest and detention of persons will be enforced and the possibilities of working with international partners, particularly the ICRC in providing access to detainees and in the establishment of a comprehensive database will be explored.

-A vote on account to provide certain relief measures to the public was presented to Parliament as pledged on 29th January and adopted by a majority of 163 votes on 7th February.

These details that I listed out are just a few of the Government's achievements and what it intends to do. They are important indicators that the Government headed by President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe are committed to delivering on their promises to the people.

I am sure you are all eager to find out about issues of accountability in relation to the conflict that plagued Sri Lanka for several decades. What President Sirisena pledged under item 93 of the 100 Day Programme in this respect is to ensure justice with regard to such matters through national independent judicial mechanisms. Although the Government has only just completed 30 days in office, this matter has already received due consideration and has undergone detailed discussion signifying the importance accorded to this issue that is a vital component of the healing process of our nation. As you know, the Commission on Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation too, in addressing issues of accountability, identified a series of incidents which warrant further investigation and if the material so warrants, the institution of prosecutions.

Accordingly, steps will be taken in the coming weeks to begin the process of setting up necessary mechanisms to investigate into incidents, and where sufficient evidence is available, conduct criminal prosecution in such cases. We will engage with the international community in this process including the United Nations and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Additionally, discussions will commence during the end of this month with officials from South Africa to institute a truth-seeking mechanism suitable for our circumstances, which will function in parallel to the accountability mechanism. Unlike the South African version, it will not be for the purpose of amnesty but to facilitate the healing and reconciliation process of the victims.

The Government will also explore ways and means to harness the potential of the Sri Lankan diaspora to contribute to local reconciliation and development efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is evident from our country's history dating back to thousands of years that the people of Sri Lanka have always been outward looking, has welcomed the continual absorption of influences from the outside world, and has maintained contact with lands beyond its shores. This is evident in the multi-layered make-up of our population, its manners, its traditions, culture, architecture, food and attire. It is also evident from recorded history that Sri Lanka has held a significant position in the maritime history of the pre-colonial and ancient world and that the Kings of our sea-faring nation had sent emissaries to the courts of their contemporaries including Augustus Caesar's Rome. Relations between the great Emperor Ashoka of India and his contemporary in Sri Lanka led to the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka which had a civilizational impact on our country. There are many written accounts by foreigners of their visits to Sri Lanka including by a pilot in Alexander's fleet and Chinese Pilgrim Scholar Fa Hsien.

After gaining Independence in 1948, Sri Lanka carried forth its engagement with the world and took pride in the pursuit of a foreign policy based on "friendship towards all and enmity towards none". Considering the country's geographic location mid-way between east and west, its historic role of engagement with the world, and an educated and highly literate population, it was natural for Sri Lanka to pursue this policy.

Sri Lanka takes modest pride in the fact that it was in Colombo, in April 1954 that the Prime Ministers of India, Myanmar, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, then Ceylon met and decided to convene the Bandung Conference or



the Asia-Africa Conference in 1955. Sri Lanka was also among the first 25 countries that witnessed the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement and was host to the organisation's Summit in 1976. Having joined the United Nations in 1955, Sri Lanka has contributed consistently to the United Nations system in numerous capacities, taking a lead in norm setting processes including the Law of the Sea Conference, disarmament and human rights and continues to this day to contribute to peacekeeping operations.

It was therefore uncharacteristic for Sri Lanka to have shifted away from this traditional foreign policy for some years in what is best described as an aberration. Sri Lanka now seeks to renew its engagement with the world community. Just before my departure to London on Saturday evening, I signed a letter inviting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Sri Lanka.

I look forward to inviting the Secretary of State when I meet him tomorrow, to visit Sri Lanka as well. I will also invite the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon to visit Sri Lanka when I meet him on Friday. Shooting at the moon, we would also like to see the President of the United States of America visiting Sri Lanka. If it were to happen, it would be the first visit by an American President since Sri Lanka achieved independence in 1948.

Having stressed the importance of discontinuing the previous Government's adversarial policies in international relations throughout his election campaign, President Sirisena did not forget to give due recognition to Sri Lanka's relations with the world community even in his brief remarks following his oath taking ceremony on the evening of 9th January. In his address to the nation soon thereafter on 11 January and in his remarks on Independence Day on 4th February, the President stressed that it is essential to maintain cordial and fruitful international relations. The aim of the Government, he said is to build the widest friendships internationally that recognises and respects our individuality as a nation. It remains our policy to extend friendship to all nations.

The Government of President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremasinghe, therefore, pursue a policy of renewed engagement with the international community. We look at the world as an opportunity and not as a threat. We will embrace the world so as to get the best the world can offer for the betterment of the Sri Lankan people. Ours will be a pragmatic foreign policy not based on ideology but on the needs of our people.

In implementing its 100 Day Programme as promised, and efforts to renew its engagement with the world, the Government requires the support, partnership and understanding of the international community. It is our fervent hope in this regard that the United States will be a pivot in our effort to revive Sri Lanka's relations with the western hemisphere and as expressed by the Assistant Secretary of State during her visit to Sri Lanka recently, that "Sri Lanka can count on the United States to be a partner and a friend in the way forward, whether it is on rebuilding the economy, preventing corruption and advancing good governance, ensuring human rights and democratic participation for all citizens."

I would like to quote in this context from a recent article written by the moderator of this event Mr. Fredric Grare that was published in the Carnegie portal this month. In this post-election analysis he suggests and I quote:

"To help control corruption and promote reconciliation, it may be time to consider relieving some of the pressures on Sri Lanka applied by the United States and Europe. Gradually unfreezing development aid and giving Sri Lanka enhanced trade benefits under the GSP+ trade agreements if Sri Lanka works toward achieving genuine reconciliation and fighting corruption."

unquote

Mr. Grare, thank you for those words. Our plea today is exactly this. This audience is aware of how, in 1948, America helped restart the European economy with the Marshall Plan, a recovery plan that in time restored Europe's economic wellbeing. It is our hope that America will partner us through a similar endeavour to help us realise the kind of economic development required to meet the aspirations of our people.

Since time immemorial, Sri Lanka's natural assets and geographical location in the Indian Ocean made Sri Lanka a transit and destination point for sea-faring nations. Our present-day interactions with the international community, including the United States must factor in Sri Lanka's location as a hub in the Indian Ocean. In this context, what we wish for is to pursue our relations with the United States to be as comprehensive as possible encompassing a



multitude of areas of cooperation. There are several areas of common interest for both countries including the promotion of international peace and security, ensuring maritime security, and combating terrorism and religious extremism. Our two countries are bound by our commitment to pursue and protect democracy and human freedom. Throughout its history, the people of Sri Lanka, just like in the United States, have struggled to retain their sense of independence.

In this context, historically, the governments and people of the United States have always been held in high regard by the people of Sri Lanka. The American people and their governments harboured no colonial designs against the people of Sri Lanka. And they did not stand in the way of our own drive for independence. More recently, they stood by Sri Lanka in its fight against terrorism. While America remains Sri Lanka's largest customer, we wish to further promote trade and investment both ways to make our economic and trade relationship more comprehensive and balanced, benefiting the people of both countries.

My first official visit to the United States and meeting with Secretary of State Kerry tomorrow will be a first step in our efforts to renew and re-engage with the United States for the mutual benefit of the people of both countries. In fact, I would like to assume that the people of the oldest modern democracy in the world, the United States, and arguably the oldest modern democracy in Asia, Sri Lanka, expect no less.

I would like to leave with you some thoughts on how the world at large including all of you as individuals could help Sri Lanka at this unique moment of its history.

First, I invite all of you to visit us. Join this exciting moment of our history and carry our story out to the world.

Second, help Sri Lanka through increasing trade and investment. Encourage your entrepreneurs to capitalise on the new investment opportunities that have opened up in Sri Lanka. Job creation is key in alleviating the economic situation of the country. Increased trade and investment opportunities are important factors that will assist the reconciliation process and ensure its success that is vital for Sri Lanka's sustainable growth, peace and development.

Third, I urge the international community including the human rights community to be patient. This is a time of fragile transition. The Government of Sri Lanka is committed to the success of this journey of strengthening democracy, good governance and the rule of law while ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights of all her citizens.

But remember, this is also a sensitive process involving the participation of a multitude of political parties that are essential to ensure the success of this journey. There are still some extremist elements within and outside the country who, for obvious reasons, want this journey derailed. Therefore, I urge you to allow us time and space while supporting us in this journey of national reconciliation and healing, institution building and regaining the true Sri Lankan identity.

Finally, tell our story to those who might be able to derive something meaningful from it; to those who would gain inspiration from it, especially those who may be in what might seem like irreversible states of despair – with either authoritarianism or civil strife, conditions which we believed not so long ago that we would have been destined to have perennially repeated in our country. Tell our story to those who may have lost faith in democracy and the power of the ballot. They must not lose heart.

<http://www.mea.gov.lk/index.php/en/media/media-releases/5864-foreign-minister-samaraweera-speaks-at-carnegie-endowment-for-international-peace-in-washington>



**Extract from Briefing - Visit by Hon Minister of Tourism and Sport of Sri Lanka Navin Dissanayake to New Zealand, 10-15 February 2015**

**Bilateral Meeting Brief: Minister for Sport and Recreation**

**Meeting details**

- Meeting with Sri Lanka Minister for Sport and Tourism, Navin Dissanayake (Diss-anayaka).
- Location: George Hotel, Christchurch
- When: 5.30pm, Thursday 12 February

**Attendees**

Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman, Minister of Health and Sport and Recreation  
The Honourable Minister Navin Dissanayake – Sri Lankan Minister of Tourism and Sports  
Dr Lanka Dissanayake – Wife of Minister  
High Commission for Sri Lanka, Canberra  
His Excellency Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe – High Commissioner  
Aruna Abeygoonsekera – Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka  
Sir Paul Collins – Chair Sport NZ  
Peter Miskimmin – Chief Executive Sport NZ

[REDACTED] 9(2)(a)  
[REDACTED] 9(2)(a)

[REDACTED] 9(2)(a) – MFAT, Deputy High Commissioner, New Zealand High Commission, New Delhi

**Talking Points**

**Introduction**

- On behalf of the New Zealand government I wish to welcome you to New Zealand and to convey my congratulations on your appointment as Minister for Tourism and Sport. We are very pleased to be hosting you so soon after the Presidential elections. Please also pass on my congratulations to your President on his election success.

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

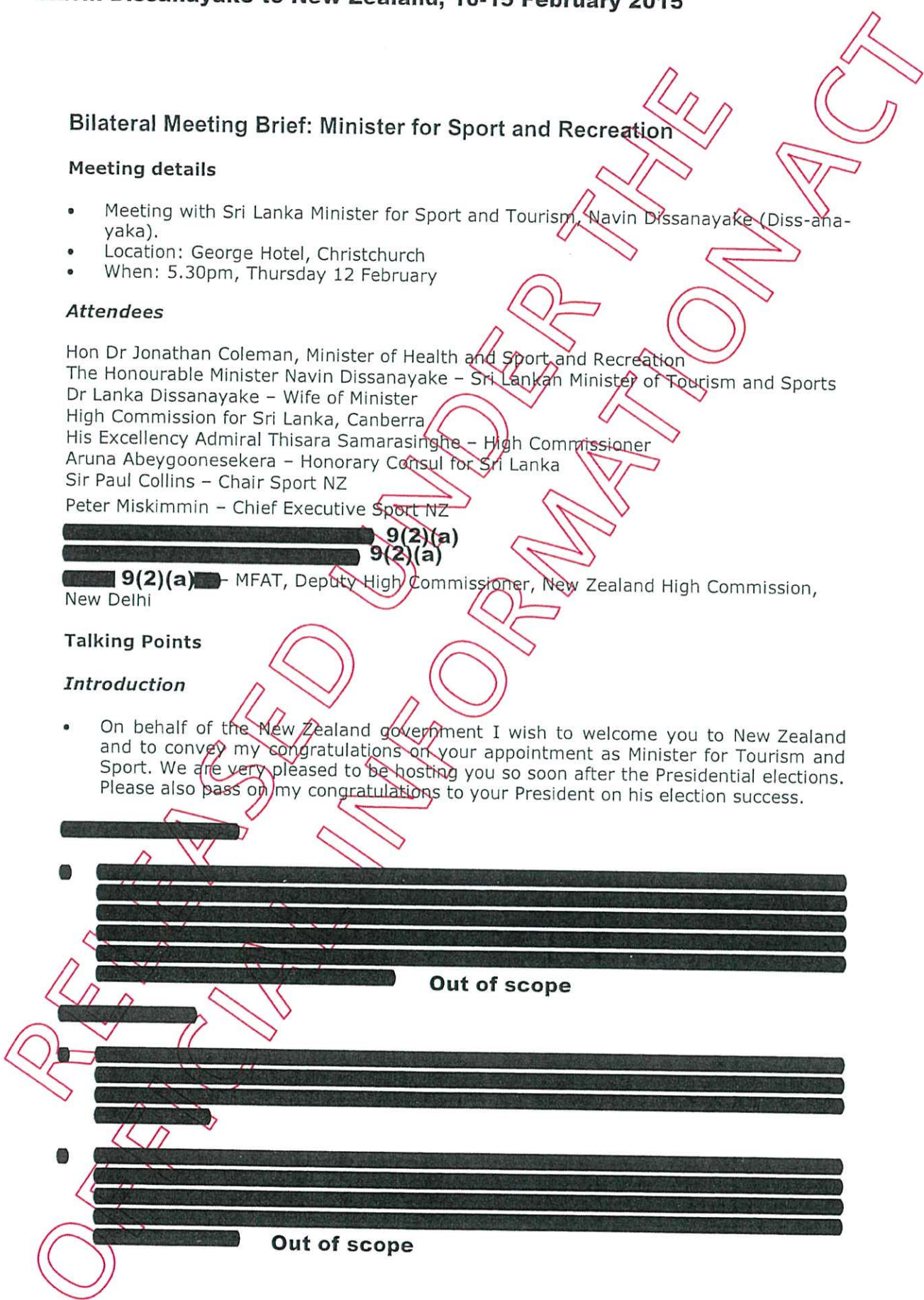
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- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

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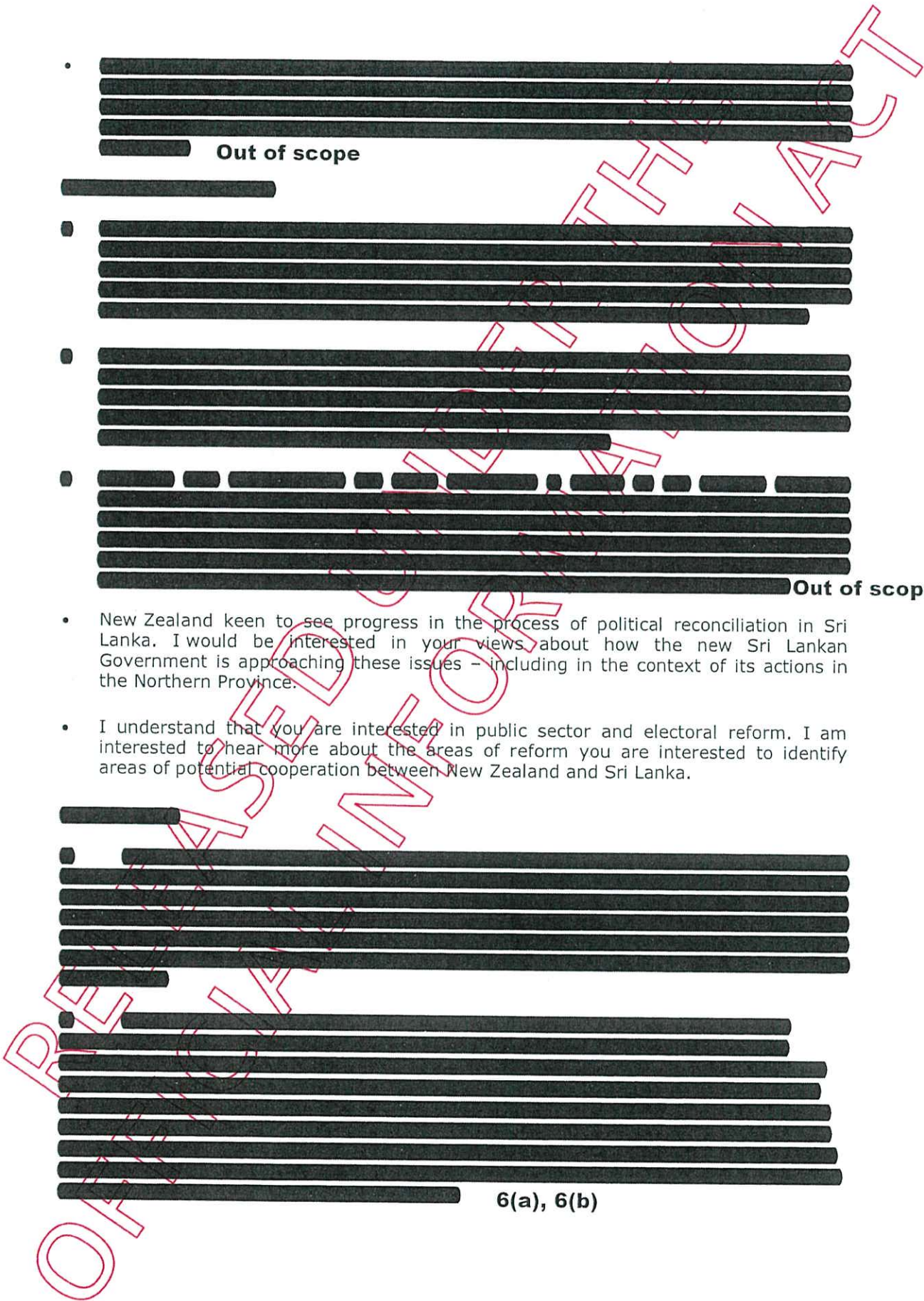
- New Zealand keen to see progress in the process of political reconciliation in Sri Lanka. I would be interested in your views about how the new Sri Lankan Government is approaching these issues – including in the context of its actions in the Northern Province.
- I understand that you are interested in public sector and electoral reform. I am interested to hear more about the areas of reform you are interested to identify areas of potential cooperation between New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

[REDACTED]

• [REDACTED]

• [REDACTED]

**6(a), 6(b)**





[Redacted]

6(a)

[Redacted]

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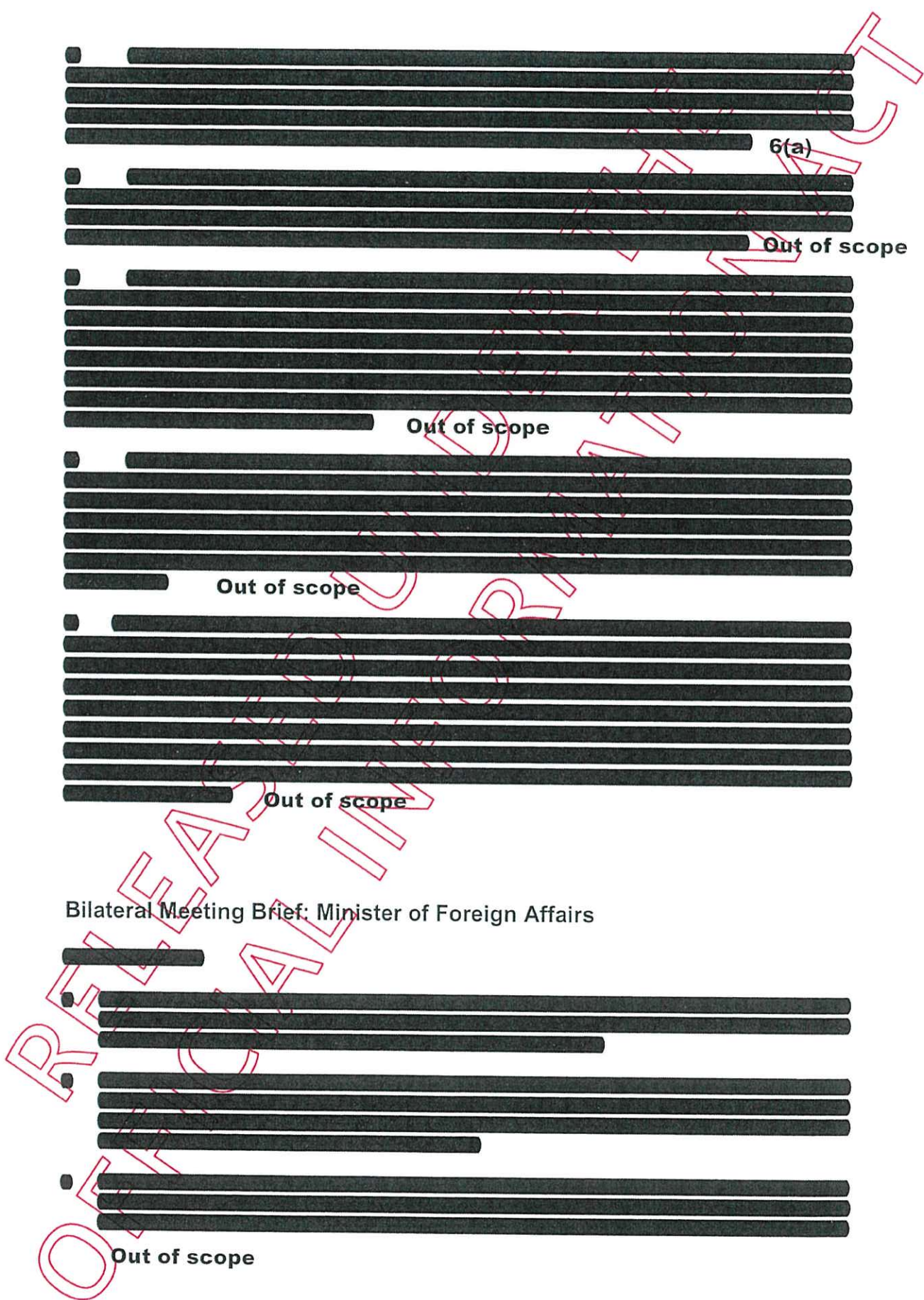
Bilateral Meeting Brief: Minister of Foreign Affairs

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Out of scope





[REDACTED]

Out of scope

## Background

*Sri Lanka Political update*

2 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a)** It is very concentrated on: promoting reconciliation between Sri Lanka's various ethnic and religious communities (including via a gradual demilitarisation of the North); combating cost of living pressures [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a)** and reforming Sri Lanka's public service in order to root out corruption. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a)**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a)** New Zealand has supported the Sri Lankan Government's progress to date with reconciliation and political devolution. We have reiterated at the highest levels the importance of maintaining the pace of progress towards reconciliation and political devolution in Sri Lanka.

4 In March 2014, the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) voted to open an international inquiry into alleged war crimes committed by both the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE during the civil war. The Council also reiterated its call on the Government to implement the recommendations in the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a)**

5 The report from the investigation is set to be released during the upcoming Human Rights Council session in March. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(b)**

6 In the past week a Sri Lankan government spokesperson has indicated the government is planning to launch its own investigation under an independent judiciary (possibly derived from the Commonwealth) into the final stages of the civil war - something Sirisena promised in the lead up to the elections. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a)**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **6(a)**



[REDACTED]  
6(a)

[REDACTED] Out of scope  
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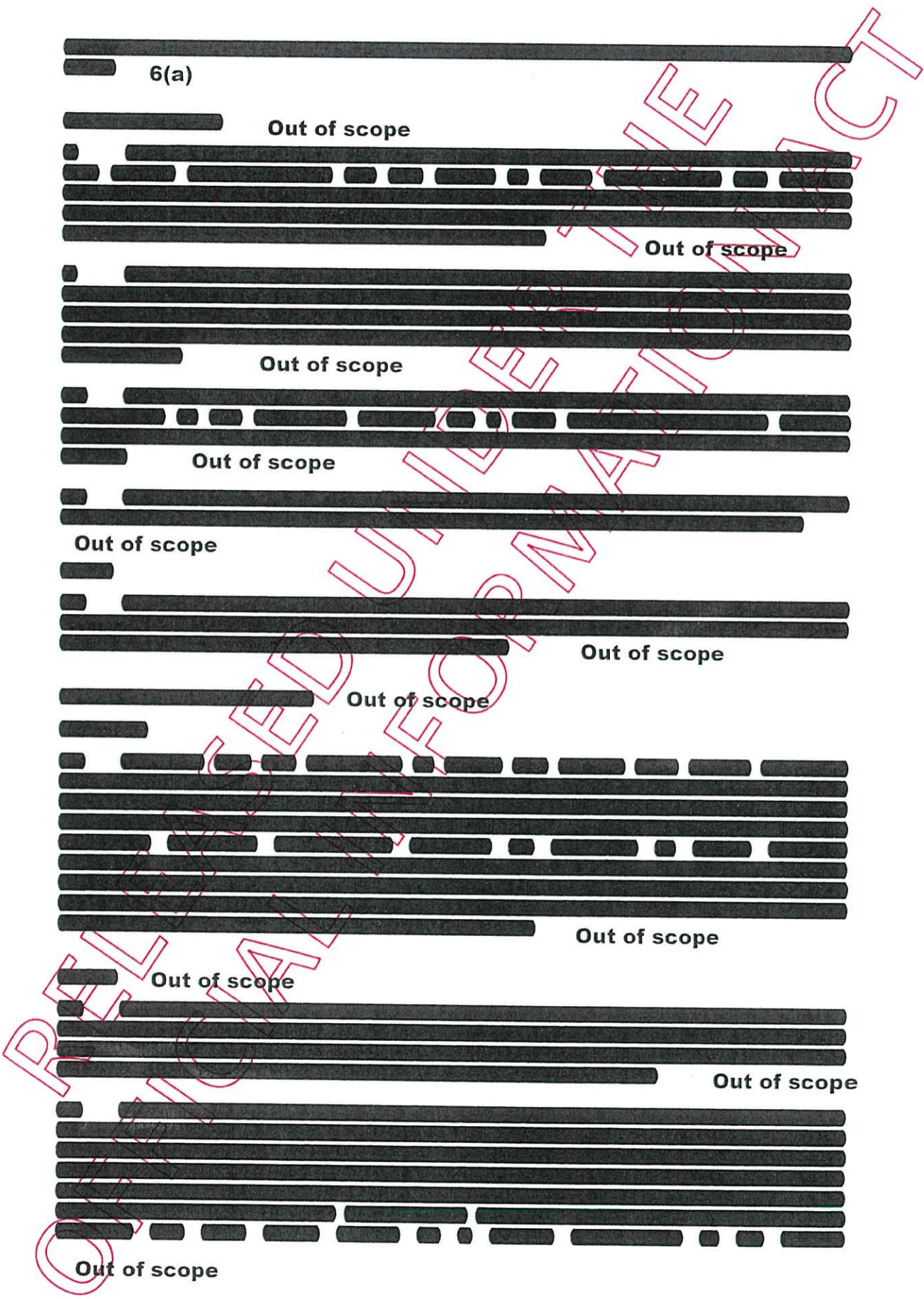
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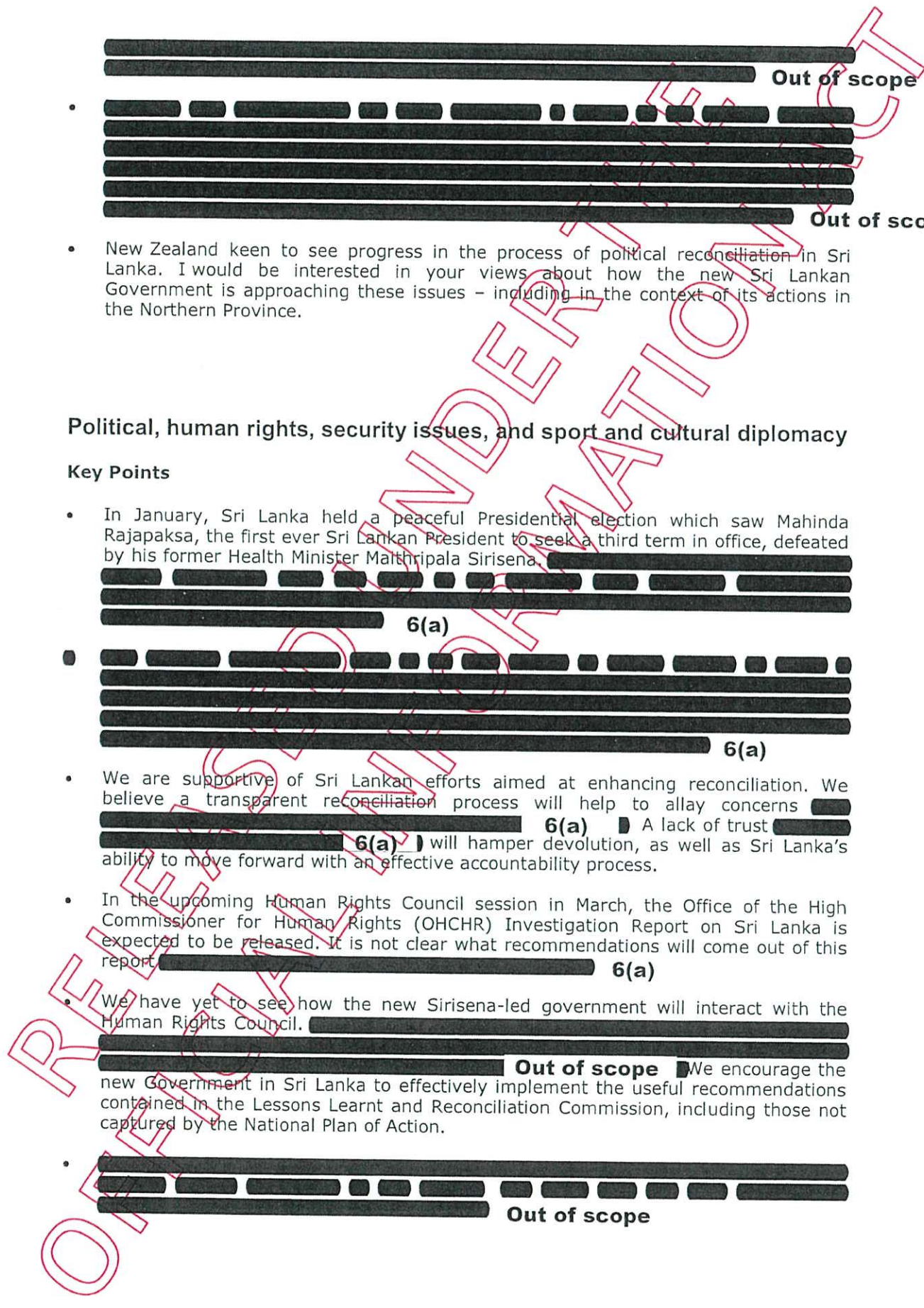


- [Redacted] **Out of scope**
- [Redacted] **Out of scope**
- New Zealand keen to see progress in the process of political reconciliation in Sri Lanka. I would be interested in your views about how the new Sri Lankan Government is approaching these issues - including in the context of its actions in the Northern Province.

### Political, human rights, security issues, and sport and cultural diplomacy

#### Key Points

- In January, Sri Lanka held a peaceful Presidential election which saw Mahinda Rajapaksa, the first ever Sri Lankan President to seek a third term in office, defeated by his former Health Minister Maithripala Sirisena. [Redacted] **6(a)**
- [Redacted] **6(a)**
- We are supportive of Sri Lankan efforts aimed at enhancing reconciliation. We believe a transparent reconciliation process will help to allay concerns [Redacted] **6(a)** A lack of trust [Redacted] **6(a)** will hamper devolution, as well as Sri Lanka's ability to move forward with an effective accountability process.
- In the upcoming Human Rights Council session in March, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Investigation Report on Sri Lanka is expected to be released. It is not clear what recommendations will come out of this report. [Redacted] **6(a)**
- We have yet to see how the new Sirisena-led government will interact with the Human Rights Council. [Redacted] **Out of scope** We encourage the new Government in Sri Lanka to effectively implement the useful recommendations contained in the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, including those not captured by the National Plan of Action.
- [Redacted] **Out of scope**





**From:** NEW DELHI  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 28 January 2015 4:38 a.m.  
**To:** SEA  
**Cc:** AUS; CEO; DS AAG; DS APE; DS IDG; DS TEG; ECO; IDG GLO; IDG PHM; IDG SED; TND; UNHC; FM.DPMC (FPA); FM.MPI (Seemail); FM.NAB (Seemail); FM.NZTE (Seemail); FM.P/S MFA; FM.P/S Trade; FM.P/S Food Safety; FM.P/S Agriculture; CANBERRA; NEW YORK; GENEVA; ...ASEAN POSTS; FM.VCO (Seemail); PRD; LONDON; BEIJING; NIUE; SRU  
**Subject:** Formal Message: Sri Lanka: New Government Makes Busy Start  
**Attachments:** Sri Lanka - Hindu.docx

**Formal Message: Sri Lanka: New Government Makes Busy Start**

**Summary**

- Now into its third week, Sri Lanka's new government has made a busy start – placing an early emphasis on stamping out corruption, addressing cost of living concerns, and starting the process of political reconciliation and devolution.

- [REDACTED]

**6(a), 6(b)**

- New Zealand will have an opportunity in the coming period to engage at the political level with the new government: HOM is undertaking a series of Ministerial calls in Colombo next week, and the Minister of Sports and Tourism will represent President Sirisena at the opening match of the Cricket World Cup in Christchurch on 14 February.

**Action**

- SEA – To consider two further letters of congratulation to Sri Lankan Ministers.
- SEA – To note HOM travel to Sri Lanka next week, and provide instructions (if any) on key messages.
- SEA/NDI – To engage further with Sri Lanka in Canberra and Colombo regarding visit of Sports and Tourism Minister Dissanyaka for opening game of Cricket World Cup.

**Report**

Sri Lanka's new Government, which is now into the third week of its 100 Day Plan to reform the country's political system, has made a busy start. President Sirisena, working closely with his Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe, has so far emphasised three priority areas: reforming the Sri Lankan system so as to reduce corruption and devolve back to Parliament the significant powers that accumulated under his predecessor, Mahinda Rajapaksa; addressing voter concerns about the cost of living, especially as it pertains to basic commodities; and enhancing inter-communal relations, by demilitarising the North and East of the country.



[Redacted]

6(a)

2

[Redacted]

6(a)

3

[Redacted]

6(a)

Cost of living

4

[Redacted]

6(b)

5

[Redacted]

6(a), 6(b)

6(a), 9(2)(b)(ii)

Political management and reconciliation: a balancing act

6

[Redacted]

6(a)



[REDACTED]

**6(a)**

7 The Sirisena Administration has taken some important early steps towards political reconciliation and devolution. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**6(a)** Next week, the Sri Lankan Government will be [REDACTED]

**6(a)** flying Heads of Mission to former Tamil Tiger strongholds Jaffna (in the Northern Province) and Trincomalee (in the East) as part of Independence Day celebrations. HOM will attend these celebrations.

The international dimension and New Zealand interests

8 The above domestic priorities have had international dimensions. For example, the new government has:

- [REDACTED]

**6(a), 6(b)**

- [REDACTED]

**6(a), 6(b)**

- Made clear that it wishes to have a more constructive relationship with Sri Lanka's critics in the international community, especially in Europe and North America, who charged the Rajapaksa regime with ignoring political devolution and reconciliation. The government is preparing a **6(a)** response to the report of the international investigative body set up by last year's Human Rights Council resolution.

- [REDACTED]

**6(a), 6(b)**

9 [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**



10 HOM will be spending next week in Sri Lanka, first to take part in Independence Day commemorations in Jaffna, Trincomalee and Colombo, and then to undertake calls on key Ministers identified above and in our Formal Message of 14 January. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 6(a)

[REDACTED]

Out of scope

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9(2)(a)

**From:** NEW DELHI  
**Sent:** Saturday, 10 January 2015 12:10 a.m.  
**To:** SEA  
**Cc:** APD; AUS; CEO; DS AAG; DS APE; DS IDG; DS MLG; DS TEG; ECO; IDG-GLO; IDG PHM; IDG SED; ISED; LGL; NAD; EUR; AMER; STR; TND; UNHC; FM.Defence (Seemail); FM.DPMC (FPA); FM.Education/NZ (Seemail); FM.Immigration NZ (Seemail); FM.MPI (Seemail); FM.NAB (Seemail); FM.NZTE (Seemail); FM.P/S MFA; FM.P/S Trade; FM.P/S Food Safety; FM.P/S Agriculture; BEIJING; BRUSSELS; CANBERRA; LONDON; NEW YORK; GENEVA; OTTAWA; WASHINGTON; TOKYO; ...ASEAN POSTS  
**Subject:** Formal Message: With Rajapaksa Defeated, Sri Lanka Undergoes A Dramatic Political Transformation

**Formal Message: With Rajapaksa Defeated, Sri Lanka Undergoes A Dramatic Political Transformation**

**Summary**

- Mahinda Rajapaksa became the first President in Sri Lanka's history to lose at the ballot box today, suffering a narrow but clear defeat at the hands of his former Health Minister, Maithripala Sirisena.
- Power has transferred between the men swiftly and cleanly, and Sirisena is due to be sworn in at an inauguration ceremony in Colombo tonight.

• [REDACTED] 6(a)

• [REDACTED] 6(a)

• [REDACTED] 6(a)

- The international community, including Sri Lanka's most trenchant critics, has praised the electoral process and Rajapaksa's swift acceptance of his defeat. Its focus is now turning to the new government's priorities, including how it might approach issues of reconciliation and devolution at home and in Geneva.

• [REDACTED] 6(a)

**Action**

[REDACTED] 6(a)

**Report**

Defeat, then a swift transfer of power



██████████ **6(a)** Sri Lanka underwent a dramatic political transformation today (9 January), with voters rejecting an incumbent President at the ballot box for the first time in the country's history. Mahinda Rajapaksa, who in December called a Presidential election two years before his second term was due to expire, was narrowly but clearly beaten. The President received the votes of 5.77 million Sri Lankans (47.6 percent), less than the 6.22 million (51.3 percent) who voted for his major opponent and former Health Minister, Maithripala Sirisena.

2 For President Rajapaksa, the political end came swiftly and he handled it with considerable dignity. Around 4.30am this morning, before the final election results had even been announced, the President met Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe to negotiate the terms of a transfer of power. ██████████

██████████  
██████████  
██████████  
██████████  
██████████

**6(a), 6(b)**

3 Sirisena's team moved quickly to claim power, and he will be sworn in as Sri Lanka's 7<sup>th</sup> President tonight in an inauguration ceremony at Independence Hall in Colombo, which we will attend. This ceremony will further clear the way for Sirisena to name and swear in his Cabinet over the weekend.

Where did Rajapaksa lose? A minority backlash and significant Sinhalese desertions

4 By any standard, Rajapaksa's defeat represents a remarkable reversal of fortune for a politician who only five years ago was the most popular President in Sri Lanka's history. Credited with ending Sri Lanka's civil war, and masterminding a post-war economic recovery, Rajapaksa was re-elected in January 2010 with almost 58 percent of the vote. In yesterday's election, he shed ten percentage points of support compared with 2010's election. While no credible exit polls were conducted, the Sri Lankan electorate that has elected the new President is predominantly urban, Sri Lanka's ethnic and religious minorities, and the young

5 ██████████ **6(a)** (Christian and Hindu)

Tamils and Muslims make up around 30 percent of the Sri Lankan electorate, and they voted in record numbers yesterday to oust the President. Indeed, all of Sirisena's victory margin has been generated from the Northern and Eastern Provinces – areas which were once controlled by the Tamil Tigers, and whose residents feel they have been let down without genuine post-war reconciliation or political devolution. Even though only 1.3 million of yesterday's 12 million votes were cast in the North or East, Sirisena attracted more than three-quarters of the vote there and so ran up a 650,000-vote margin that proved unassailable.

6 Rajapaksa was unable to overcome the Opposition's advantage in the North and East, as he had done in 2010, because he also suffered significant vote erosion in his Sinhalese base. While still winning southern polling districts Galle, Matara and his hometown of Hambantota, the President suffered significant swings towards Sirisena. This underlines the impressive electoral feat Sirisena was able to achieve yesterday: he appealed both to Sri Lanka's minorities and to a significant portion of Rajapaksa's Sinhalese base. As an evolutionary rather than revolutionary candidate, with his own strong Buddhist credentials, it is apparent that Sirisena has been able to win a large minority vote without himself being branded as a minority representative.

██████████ **6(a)** a peaceful election and transition

7 The electoral process, including the polling day and its immediate aftermath, was fundamentally peaceful. Election-related violence was infrequent and minor. Sri Lanka's domestic election monitors, electoral authorities, and law enforcement agencies are united in describing it as one of the most peaceful elections in Sri Lanka's history. This outcome belied pre-election concerns, expressed by some in the international community, that the Rajapaksa regime might foment violence in Opposition areas in order to suppress turnout. We had seen no first-hand evidence to support this contention during the campaign (our FM of 6 January refers) and the peaceful atmosphere continued right through election day. In fact, turnout surged, especially in the Tamil-majority areas in



the North and East (Jaffna, for example, doubled its 2010 vote). The election overall has had the highest turnout in Sri Lanka's history: 82 percent.

8 [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] **6(a), 6(b)**

9 In the end, Sri Lanka has experienced a remarkably swift and peaceful transfer of power, suggesting that its democratic institutions are significantly more robust than some critics of Rajapaksa's "creeping dictatorship" might allow. The country's Elections Commissioner, Mahinda Deshapriya, carried out his duties fearlessly and impartially, including challenging the state media (including on election day) when he felt it was inappropriately favouring the President.

The new line-up: a diverse coalition pushing for constitutional change

10 [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] **6(a)**

11 [REDACTED] **6(a)** One of the major planks of Sirisena's campaign was abolishing the "Executive Presidency" (thereby devolving many powers back to Parliament and to the Prime Minister), a step which involves amending the Constitution. Such amendments require a two-thirds Parliamentary majority.

12 Sirisena's first governing task, to be undertaken this weekend, is to form a Cabinet. He has already signalled, as part of his good governance and anti-corruption drive, that he wishes to have a significantly smaller Executive than did President Rajapaksa, who had more than 100 Ministers. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] **6(a)**

13 The Sirisena Administration's first big public test will be its handling of a visit next week to Sri Lanka by Pope Francis. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

14 It will also look to implement an economic agenda, which has yet to be sketched in significant detail, that seeks to deliver on Sirisena's promise to share the dividends of Sri Lanka's economic growth with a greater cross-section of the country's population. This economic agenda will feature anti-corruption measures, as well as steps (such as cuts in duties) aimed at reducing the costs of basic commodities, including milk powder. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] **Out of scope**

The international community: reactions and reconciliation



15 Sri Lanka's significant democratic transition has been acknowledged, even by some of its more trenchant critics in the international community. US Secretary of State John Kerry was the first major international leader to release a statement on the electoral outcome – praising both the democratic process, and Rajapaksa's acceptance of the result. [REDACTED]

**6(b)**

16 The first leader to reach out directly to President-elect Sirisena was Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. [REDACTED]

**6(a)**

17 [REDACTED]

**6(a), 6(b)**

[REDACTED]

**6(a), 6(b)**

Comment: Protecting and advancing New Zealand's interests

19 [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

20 [REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**



22

[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

23 We should not underestimate the scope of the political change that Sri Lankan voters have unleashed. The Rajapaksa family has been in power for a decade. It has dozens of its members and associates in political and official roles, who will now be leaving government en masse. It will take some time for the new Sirisena Administration with its many elements to bed in and settle down.

[REDACTED]

**Out of scope**

ENDS

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