

Oral statement by the

**Norwegian Refugee Council – Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre to the 25th session
of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

Item 2 – 26 March 2014

Internal displacement in Sri Lanka¹

Mister Chair, Members of the UN Human Rights Council, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We welcome the High Commissioner's report, and we also welcome the draft resolution on *Promoting Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka* as it includes a call upon the Sri Lankan government to facilitate durable solutions for its internally displaced people.

The war in Sri Lanka ended almost five years ago, yet tens of thousands of people who were forced to flee their homes because of it remain without a durable solution today:

1. **Up to 90,000 people remain internally displaced** with host communities and in camps.
2. **Tens of thousands of returned IDPs** have not been able to rebuild their homes, access basic services and restore their livelihoods.
3. **Several thousand IDPs were moved to permanent relocation sites**, but not all were given a voluntary or fully informed settlement choice.
4. An unknown number of **long-term IDPs, including Muslims from the north, were deregistered** as IDPs but have not reached a durable solution.

The military occupation and state acquisition of land has been a major obstacle preventing IDPs from returning to their homes.

Returned and relocated IDPs have been subject to monitoring by members of the military or the Criminal Investigation Department.

¹ This statement is based on NRC-IDMC, [Sri Lanka: Almost five years of peace but tens of thousands of war-displaced still without solution](#), 4 February 2014, which includes all sources used.

When trying to restore their livelihoods, they have to compete with agricultural and tourism businesses run by the military.

Mister Chair,

It is difficult to imagine a meaningful process of reconciliation in Sri Lanka which does not take into account the situation of those citizens who have experienced internal displacement because of the war – the majority of them belonging to the country's Tamil and Muslim minorities.

We would therefore like to encourage the members of the UN Human Rights Council to adopt the draft resolution.

Further, we would like to encourage the Government of Sri Lanka to address the situation of current and former IDPs by taking five key steps:

1. Adopting an IDP policy which meets international standards;
2. Defusing tensions between different ethnic communities;
3. Restoring land to IDPs and reducing the military presence;
4. Reinvigorating employment; and
5. Assessing and addressing the concerns of those most in need.

Thank you.