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**UN Watch Oral Statement**  
**United Nations Human Rights Council, 22<sup>nd</sup> Session**  
**Item 6: Universal Periodic Review of Sri Lanka**  
**March 15, 2013**

*Delivered by Jane Karpis*

Thank you, Mr. President.

In regard to the UPR of Sri Lanka, UN Watch shares the concerns expressed by Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and the US regarding gross and systematic human rights violations committed by the government.

Forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, sexual violence against women, and restrictions on freedom of expression remain prevalent.

According to the Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka, 40,000 innocent Tamil civilians died in the final stages of the civil war.

In its UPR session, a representative of Sri Lanka's Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission, the LLRC, assured the international community that "measures taken uphold standards required for accountability."

However, an impartial investigation into the war crimes has never been conducted, and the LLRC directly contradicted the UN report by clearing the military of allegations that it deliberately attacked civilians.

That said, the LLRC did have several constructive recommendations, and we regret Sri Lanka's decision to reject the requests by Austria, France, Germany, Belgium, and the USA, for these to be implemented.

UN Watch is further alarmed by attacks on the independence of the judiciary. We note the irony that on November 1<sup>st</sup>, while Sri Lanka was in this chamber presenting its UPR report, back in Colombo the government—on the very same day—launched proceedings to impeach the Chief Justice, in what human rights experts described as a politicized, and procedurally flawed, effort to curb the independence of the judiciary.

In its report, Sri Lanka claimed it had taken action to combat sexual violence, and that the protection of women is a cornerstone of government policy. Yet according to a recent BBC investigation, child rape in Sri Lanka is on the rise. From January to July alone, there were 700 reported child victims. Most alarming is that suspects in several cases are politicians from Sri Lanka's governing coalition. UN Watch stands behind Denmark's call on Sri Lanka to prosecute all sexual violence cases, regardless of rank.

Thank you, Mr. President.